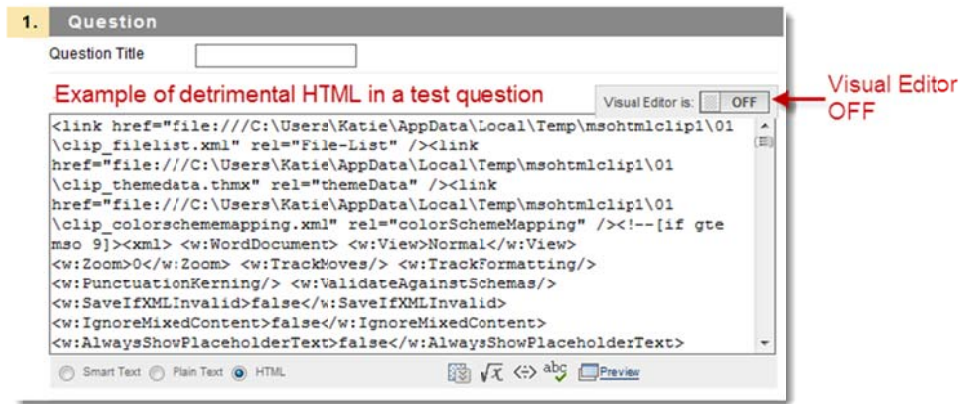


## Blackboard 9: Instructor Tips for Testing

### Using a Previously Created Test

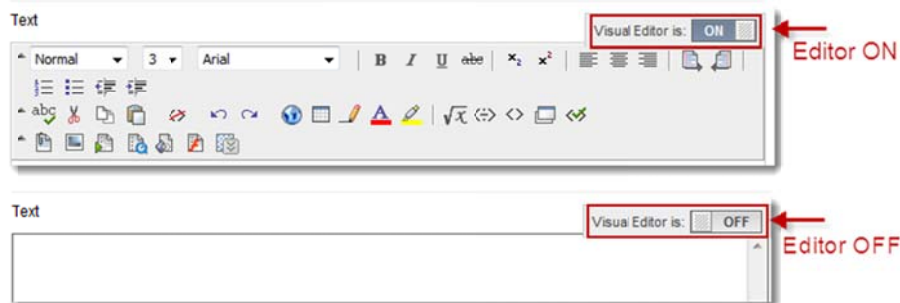
1. Spot check tests to ensure that detrimental HTML code hasn't appeared in questions. To check, look at questions and answers with the Visual Editor OFF. When looking at a question or answer with the Visual Editor OFF, you should only see the text of the question, and not code as seen in the figure below. If code appears, you can delete the code. The text for the question is usually at the bottom. If you have this occur and need assistance, contact [blackboard@twu.edu](mailto:blackboard@twu.edu).



2. For essay tests or questions, use the assignment feature instead of a test and direct students to create their essay in Word and attach it to the assignment.
3. Break single long assessments into multiple shorter ones. Instead of a two hour test, have four 30 minute sections, each implemented as a separate test.
4. Remove any "disable print" code that may have been put into a test previously. This code does not disable printing on our current version of Blackboard. Currently there is no way to disable printing in Blackboard using HTML code.

### Creating a New Test

1. Turn OFF the Visual Editor before copy/pasting any text into Blackboard. Turn off the Visual Editor by clicking the button next to "Visual Editor is:"



2. If you are creating a test with a large number of questions, consider using the [Test Generator](#) to bulk import questions into a test.
3. For essay tests, use the assignment feature instead of a test and direct students to create their essay in Word and attach it to the assignment.



- Break single long assessments into multiple shorter ones. Instead of a two hour test, have four 30 minute sections, each implemented as a separate test.

## Deploying a Test (Test Options)

- Open Test in New Window: No.** Pop-up blockers may prevent students from being able to even open tests that open in new windows.
- Make Link available: Yes**
- Multiple Attempts** can be beneficial for students, but is not necessary. You can select to allow multiple attempts or restrict to a set number of attempts to allow for possible issues.
- Do **not** check **Force Completion**. Students are only “locked out” of tests when Force Completion is set. We recommend setting a timer instead.
- Set timer** allows the instructor to see how long a student spent on a test, regardless of how many times they closed their browser, had a connection time out, or were boosted by their Internet service provider. Since force completion is off, the student can reenter the test. The test timer continues to record time even if the student has exited the attempt.
- If setting release dates and times for a test, you must select **both** Display After and Display Until.
- Passwords for tests are especially useful when testing students in groups (eg: class of 120, testing 30 at a time in a proctored setting). Passwords should be changed after each group is tested.
- Do **not** check **Hide Results for this Test Completely from Instructor and the Grade Center**. This setting will not allow the instructor to ever see the scores on a test and should not be used for a test that needs to be graded.

1. Open Test in New Window  Yes  No

2. **Test Availability**

2. Make the Link Available  Yes  No

Add a New Announcement for this Test  Yes  No

3.  Multiple Attempts

Allow Unlimited Attempts

Number of Attempts

4.  Force Completion

Test must be completed the first time it is launched.

5.  Set Timer

Set expected completion time. Selecting this option also records completion time for this Test.

Hours  Minutes

6.  Display After

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Display Until

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

7.  Password

Require a password to access this Test.

Password

3. **Self-assessment Options**

Include this Test in Grade Center Score Calculations

Grade Center items excluded from summary calculations are also excluded from weighting. Also note that if some weighted items are included in calculations and other weighted items are not, grade weight calculations will be skewed.

8.  Hide Results for this Test Completely from Instructor and the Grade Center

If this option is checked, the instructor will not be able to see any student grades, view answers, aggregate results, or download result details. To protect student privacy, this choice cannot be reversed later without deleting all attempts.

**Note:** When deploying a test, do not use Adaptive Release to set date and time restrictions for the test. Instead, use the Display After/Display Until feature on the test options.

## Administering the Test

- If you are offering a test to a large class within a limited time span (eg: Students can only access the test on Monday from 2-4pm), offer the test as a timed test, without multiple attempts and do not check force completion. If a student is booted out of the test for any reason, they will be able to reenter and complete the test.
- Consider not offering on-campus tests on Blackboard during the peak internet hours (11am-1pm).

3. Keep tests short (30---45 min max expected time to complete), and instruct students to take the test in one sitting with no breaks. Longer tests can be broken into two or three Blackboard tests.
4. If a test is proctored on campus, stagger times so smaller groups of students are testing rather than large groups (more than 15). Turn off force completion to allow students to continue if timeouts do occur.
5. If force completion is checked on a test do NOT recommend that students save answers.
6. Schedule tests with a reasonable test-taking window. If the test is due Friday, a student who has technical problems is more likely to be able to get help during normal business hours.

## Providing Help for Students

1. Post the [Student Tips for Testing](#) prior to tests and encourage students to read them before beginning a test.
2. Prepare a practice test for students, allowing them to see how a Blackboard test works. Some faculty members offer a syllabus or plagiarism quiz at the beginning of the semester to acclimate students to Blackboard tests.
3. Provide students with instructions (and the preferred method of contact) for test resets. (Reminder: Tests will not need to be reset if you do not set Force Completion)
4. Provide students with information for the IT Helpdesk. While the Helpdesk can assist students with many issues, for test security reasons, helpdesk analysts are not able to unlock tests for students.

**IT HelpDesk Regular Hours** (940-898-3971 or [helpdesk@twu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@twu.edu))

Monday - Thursday 7:30 am - 9:00 pm

Friday - 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

Saturday - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Sunday - 3:00 pm - 9:00 pm

## Frequently Asked Questions about Tests

### Will unchecking force completion compromise the security of a test?

Force Completion prohibits students from exiting a test and returning at a later time. If a test is set for a timed period, the instructor can see how long a student spent on a test, regardless of how many times they closed their browser, had a connection time out, or were boosted by their Internet service provider. With force completion off, students can exit and reenter a test, however the test timer continues to record time even if the student has exited the attempt.

An example:

**Scenario 1:** A test is posted with a 45 minute time limit with force completion turned off. Student 1 begins the test at 2:30pm. At 2:40, the student's computer crashes. The student reboots their computer and accesses the test again at 2:45. The student does **not** need to ask for their test to be reset. The test timer, on the Blackboard server, is still running. At 3:05, 35 minutes after the time the test was first accessed, the student clicks submit. Because they did not exceed the 45 minute time limit, the test is scored normally and the student receives a grade.

### If I set a timer, will students be forced to submit the test when time is up?

No, Blackboard allows students to continue taking the test past the time limit. Tests that have exceeded the time limit are not automatically graded and the instructor must approve or adjust the grade for the test.

**Scenario 2:** Student 2 enters the same test with a 45 minute time limit at 3:00pm with force completion turned off. Student 2 looks at the test questions and exits the test. The student spends the next two hours researching the answers to the test questions. The student enters the test again, answers the questions and clicks submit at 6:00pm. **They are not immediately presented with a score.** When the instructor looks at the Grade Center they do not see a score corresponding to the student's attempt. Rather, they see an exclamation point. The instructor clicks the exclamation point and sees that the student spent 3 hours on the attempt. The instructor can set the grade based on the student not completing the test within the given time frame.

### **How can I ensure that students do not cheat on a test administered through Blackboard?**

Unless you are giving a blackboard test in a proctored computer lab, you need to assume that any blackboard test is unproctored, and essentially open book /open note /open cell phone. Some things you can do:

- Make your expectations clear to students. If collaboration is not allowed, say so.
- Use multiple types of assessment so that cheating in one venue doesn't affect all assessments in the course.
- Use randomization. Construct question pools and set Blackboard to randomly select questions from a question pool so each student has a different test. However, randomization can increase the probability of technical problems, so always combine randomization with disabling Force Completion.
- Set a time limit on the test. Students who exceed the time limit can still submit it, but will get a "needs grading" icon and you can decide whether to accept their work.
- Use passwords to limit access to groups of students when testing groups on a proctored test (e.g.: class of 120, testing 30 at a time in a proctored setting). Change the password between each group.

### **What role does feedback play in a test?**

Students can see feedback in two places:

- 1) Immediately after completing the test, the type of feedback specified is shown.
- 2) In the Grade Center. Students can click the grade for the test and view the feedback you have made available.

Therefore, consider the following options for providing feedback, depending on the nature of the test:

- Initially, display only the score, and not the correct answers. After the test is due change the setting to display scores and correct answers, which they will be able to see in View Grades.  
**or**
- For a proctored test, allow students to see full feedback at the end of the test and then limit feedback to score only after the testing period is over.

### **Students are telling me they are getting Access Denied messages during tests. Is this true? Why is this happening?**

Access denied errors occur when multiple mouse clicks are made when clicking submit or next buttons on the test. Students should only click once when submitting a test or moving to the next question. If force completion is not set on a test, students will be able to reenter the test and submit it. If force completion is set on the test, the instructor will need to reset the test and have the student retake.

If you are preparing a test and would like a consultation about settings, security or options, please e-mail [blackboard@twu.edu](mailto:blackboard@twu.edu).