For Instructors
Using the Blogs tool in a Blackboard course at Heartland Community College.

Blogs are similar to Journals except Blogs are more open and public rather than potentially being private like Journals. Using a classroom Blog would allow students to share their thoughts on subjects with the other students and the instructor in the course. After logging into your course in Blackboard you will be taken to your courses landing page. Remember if your Edit Mode is showing off in the upper right corner be sure to change this to Edit Mode on to make changes to your course. Simply click this Edit Mode button to change this to Edit Mode on. To create a Blog tool link click on the Create Item (plus button) in your course navigation and drop down to and click Create Tool link. This time we will choose Blogs. This will open up more options screen allowing you to Type in a Name and choose the type of tool you'd like to add. In this case I am just going to call this section "Tom's Blog" and drop down the "type" option and choose Blogs. If you want this area to be available to users immediately you will checkmark the box to make it available. You can make this area available at a later date after you've set your Blog area up as well. Then click submit. Position your Blog link were you would like it to appear in the Course Navigation Menu. To begin using the Blog tool click on your Blog link. Initially you will be presented with just one option on the Blogs page, Create Blog. Click the button Create Blog to begin creating a new Blog. You'll be taken to the Create Blog page where you can give your Blog a name and Instructions to students for using the Blog. You could choose to create multiple Blogs if you'd like to separate out topics of discussion. For this Blog I am going to title it "Thoughts on Aviation" and in the Instructions section I will type in "As an aspiring private pilot I have learned quite a bit about aviation technologies, information about flight dynamics, flying in different types of weather and safety and security when flying. Throughout the semester I will be posting my thoughts on these topics and look forward to your comments. This section is open to all students to read and comment on but it will not be graded. I look forward to hearing your thoughts as well." Part 2 allows you to set the Blogs availability and part 3 deals with the Blogs Time and Date Restrictions. If you only want the blog to be available for a set time period enter that information in part 3. In part 4 you can specify the Blog Type, whether it is Individual to All Students or a Course wide blog as well as Allow Anonymous Comments. Part 5 is similar to Journals in that it allows you to set the index/organize the Blog entries by Monthly or Weekly and Allow Users to Edit and Delete their own Entries, Allow Users to Delete Comments. However there is no option for making the blog private or public because by their very nature all blogs in Blackboard are public meaning all students enrolled in that course and section can see the other entries and comments to your blog you've made. When you are satisfied with the name, instructions and options click submit in part 6 to create your blog. Back on the Blogs page you will see your blogs name, along with information about type of blog, modified date and the number of entries. If you decide you want to change some aspect of your blog along the way you can always click on the down pointing chevrons next to the blogs name and choose edit. To open up the blog simply click on the name of the blog and you will be taken into that blog. From here you can begin to create blog entries by clicking the button Create Blog Entry. Under Create Blog Entry you can enter a name of the entry, and a message to post. If you want to attach a file to the blog entry you can do so under part 2 and then click Post Entry to post your blog entry. You can also save your Blog entry as a draft using the Save Entry as Draft button. The use of a classroom Blog is one way to get all students engaged in the course critically thinking about the material in a way that isn't necessarily for a grade but still contributes to the overall learning environment of a course.