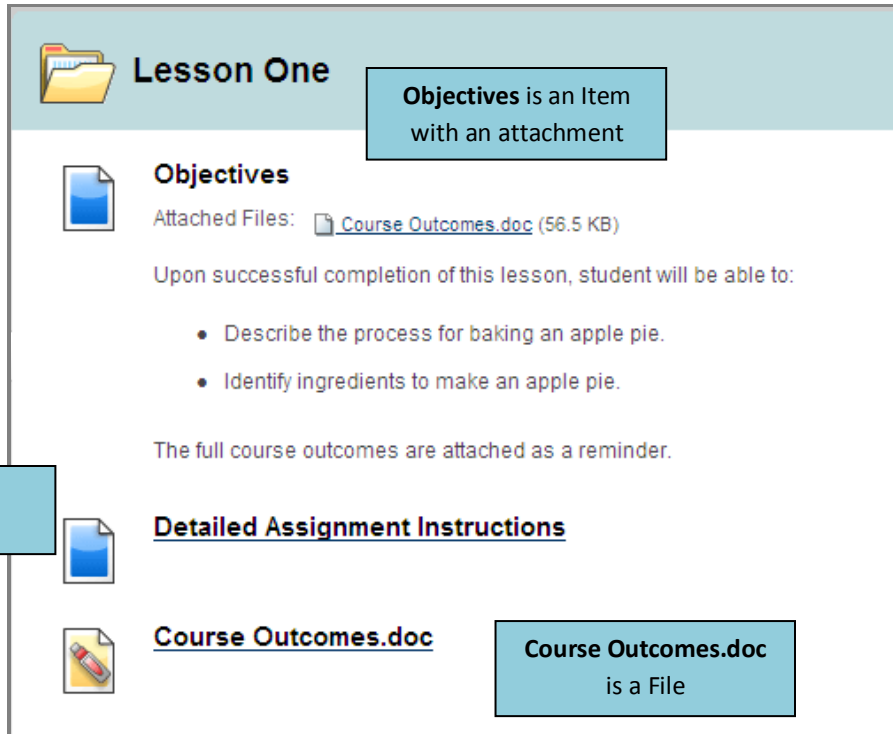


Best Practices: Items, Blank Pages, and Files

Items, Blank Pages, and Files are three different types of content in Blackboard. While Items, Blank Pages, and Files may seem similar, there are different recommended uses and best practices for each. This handout provides some quick tips for your course.



The screenshot shows a Blackboard course page titled "Lesson One". It contains three main elements:

- Objectives (Item):** A document icon next to the title "Objectives". A callout box states: "Objectives is an Item with an attachment". Below the title, it says "Attached Files: [Course Outcomes.doc](#) (56.5 KB)". The text below reads: "Upon successful completion of this lesson, student will be able to:" followed by a bulleted list:
 - Describe the process for baking an apple pie.
 - Identify ingredients to make an apple pie.
 Below the list, it says: "The full course outcomes are attached as a reminder."
- Detailed Assignment Instructions (Blank Page):** A document icon next to the title "Detailed Assignment Instructions". A callout box on the left states: "Detailed Assignment Instructions a Blank Page".
- Course Outcomes.doc (File):** A document icon next to the title "Course Outcomes.doc". A callout box on the right states: "Course Outcomes.doc is a File".

Items versus Blank Pages

Items	Blank Pages
Text appears within frame	Appears as a clickable-link
View text directly on screen – no clicking	Click on link to view text in a new <i>page</i>
Minimizes clicks to new pages	Functions like a content folder with one item
Best Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To-Do lists • Objective lists • Brief instructions (one-paragraph or less) • Short text-based information • Describe attachments 	Minimizes scrolling with a content area Best Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text-based information • Longer instructions or descriptions (one-paragraph or more)




Attachments versus Files

Attachments	Files
Can be added to most content types, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Items and Blank Pages• Course Links and URLs	Can only add the file and enter a name, but cannot add a description about the file
Best Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 99% of course documents should be added as <i>attachments</i> to a content type• Allows for easier viewing and printing• Clarifies purpose of document to student through description (unlike files).	Best Uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In a Learning Module with an explanation on previous page• If the title is <i>extremely</i> self-explanatory

Best Practices for All Attachments or Files

- Always include a brief description of the attachment and purpose
- Description should include why students should view it or how they should use it
- File name should be clear and concise
- File naming conventions should not include special characters, or exceed 30 characters
- Use PDFs or RTF for documents to ensure readability
- Save files with Microsoft 2003 file extension, such as *.doc*, or *.ptt* (not as *.docx* or *.pttx*)
- Always include file extension in Link Title
- Do not use “click here” as the Link Title to ensure accessibility

Attached files			
File Name	Link Title	File Action	
 Course Outcomes.doc	Course Outcomes.doc	Create a link to this file	Mark for removal