

# Instructional Designers: Rich Content Editor HTML Cheatsheet

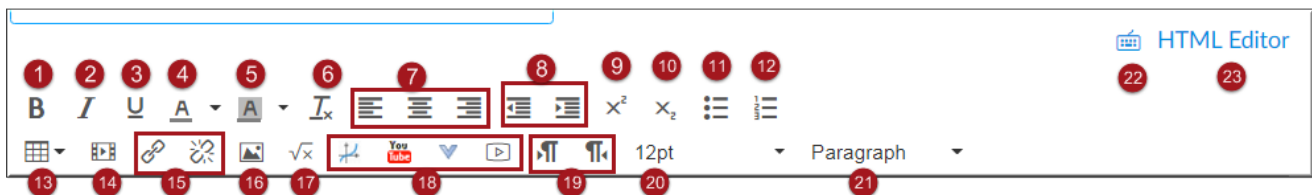
Posted by [Susan Nugent](#) Aug 31, 2017

**Updated 8/26/17.** A new option (see 14 below) was added in the [August 26, 2017 release](#). This new option allows users to add media without switching to HTML code. I also wanted to note that the new [Teacher mobile app](#) has a simplified version of the rich content editor toolbar that is available when editing content in the app. Big shout out to the community's mobile guru [Ryan Seilhamer](#) for pointing this out in the comments below.

**Updated 9/16/16.** Please note this cheatsheet is subject to change with Canvas updates. In the [August 6, 2016 release notes](#) the rich content editor got some updates and added functionality with pages and the syllabus. You may also want to check out the following discussion about the changes.

[Friendly advice: Disable "Use remote version of Rich Content Editor AND sidebar"](#)

Below is an image of the toolbar highlighted with numbers of each command. Each numbered command has a code example with some tips on using in the HTML Editor.



## 1-Bold

### Code example:

```
<strong>Some Text</strong>
```

### Notes:

The Strong element is used bold text. It is generally not recommended to use the strong element to create page headings. Use the actual heading elements to create this type of structure. See number 20 below for details on why.

## 2-Italics

## Code Example:

```
<em>Some Text</em>
```

## Notes:

Italics should be used to emphasize text and should be used sparingly on webpages. Depending on font it can be hard to read italicized text on monitor.

## 3-Underline

## Code Example:

```
<u>Some Text</u>
```

## Notes:

This element can be used to emphasize text; however, in on webpages underlined text is often confused with hyperlink text. I generally don't recommend using this element.

## 4-Text Color

## Code Example:

```
<span style="color: #ff0000;">Some Text</span>
```

## Notes:

This command creates a span element and inline CSS (the style attribute) to create the colored text. The style attribute can be applied to any text element such as paragraphs and headers. In the toolbar there are only about 40 colors to choose from; however, in the code view you can change the color to any color you want by altering the hex color code. Two of my favorites place to find hex color codes are <http://www.colourlovers.com/colors> and [Adobe Color CC](#).

## 5-Background Color

## Code Example:

```
<span style="background-color: #ff9900;">content</span>
```

## Notes:

This command uses the span element and inline CSS (the style attribute) to create the background color. This should be used cautiously with text. If the background color and text color do not have enough contrast between them, the text can be hard to read. In the example below the text is hard to read. This can be especially hard on color blind people or people like who are losing their sight to old age. For further reading, view this Smashing Magazine article, [Design Accessibly, See Differently: Color Contrast Tips And Tools](#). On a side note, the Jive editor does not have background color element in the toolbar and does strip it when you try to add in code view so I had to use an image for this example.

Be careful how you color and highlight text. It may become unreadable.

## 6-Clear Formatting

### Notes:

This option is handy for getting rid of the extra HTML code that sometimes comes over when you copy and paste text from other locations such as from Word or other websites. It is important to note that this option works with most elements but doesn't seem to work with the background element (see number 5 above). You can go to code view to remove the span element. If you are designer, I recommend using the text editor that has a good find and replace command to remove any extra HTML and CSS code that you don't want before moving the text to Canvas. I use Dreamweaver's find and replace for this type of task a lot and it saves me quite a bit of time.

## 7-Text Alignment

### Code Examples:

There are three alignment options. These attributes can be applied to headings and paragraph elements. The left alignment is the default in the editor. **Note:** It is best to only use center and right alignment for headers or short lines of text. It is generally not recommended for longer lines of text because the text is hard to read.

```
<p style="text-align: left;">Paragraph of text</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Paragraph of text</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Paragraph of text</p>
```

### Notes:

For further reading I recommend the WebAIM articles, [Writing Clearly and Simply](#) and [Text/Typographical Layout](#).

## 8- Outdent/Indent

### Code Example:

What this option does depends on element it is applied to in the code. See examples below.

When applied to paragraph element the style attribute is applied to the paragraph element with padding of 30 pixels.

```
<p style="padding-left: 30px;">Some text</p>
```

When applied to an unordered or ordered list a new nested list is created.

```
<ul>

<li>Some Text</li>

    <ul>

        <li>Some indented text</li>

    </ul>

</ul>
```

### Notes:

See 11 and 12 for more details on lists.

## 9-Superscript

### Code Example:

```
H<sup>2</sup></sup>0
```

### Notes:

Be sure to only select the text that should be superscript when applying this command. You can always switch to code view to fix any issues that you might not be able to fix with the toolbar.

## 10-Subscript

### Code Example:

```
2<sub>4</sub>
```

### Notes:

The same applies as number 9 above.

## 11-Unordered List

### Code Example:

```
<ul>

<li>List Item</li>

<li>List item</li>

<li>List Item</li>

</ul>
```

### Notes:

Unordered lists are good for list of items where the sequence of the items does not matter. Lists can be nested using the indent option. I have found this to be tricky sometimes so I prefer to edit lists in code view. See example of nested list in number 8.

## 12-Order List

### Code Example:

```
<ol>

<li>Do this first</li>
```

```
<li>Do this second</li>

<li>Do this third</li>

</ol>
```

## Notes:

Order lists are good when you are giving students a set of an instructions for homework assignments. You can alter the list number to display letters if preferred. This must be done in code view. See example code below.

```
<ol type="a">

<li>Do this first</li>

<li>Do this second</li>

<li>Do this third</li>

</ol>
```

## 13-Table

### Code Example:

Table code involves several different elements. See code example below.

```
<table border="0">

<caption>Caption</caption>

<tbody>

<tr>

<td>Row 1</td>

<td>28</td>

</tr>

<tr>

<td>Row 2</td>
```

```
<td>23</td>

</tr>

</tbody>

</table>
```

## Notes:

The new toolbar has a much improved table editor so you may not need to switch to code view that much now. I will note that tables should only be used for tabular data; however, the majority of people do not use them this way. This stems from some [bad web design hacks](#) from the late 90s which can still spark heated debate about their use in designing webpages. The key point to remember is that you want your pages to be accessible to all. For further reading, visit the WebAIM article, [Creating Accessible Tables](#).

## 14-Insert/Edit Media

This is a new edition to the toolbar in the [August 26, 2017 Canvas release](#). This option allows you to add a share link or embed code from a video on video sharing site like YouTube, Vimeo, or Teacher Tube without needing to switch to HTML view. If you add the share link the embed code will auto populate. You can determine the video dimensions and provide an alternative source for the video.

## 15-Link

### Code Example:

```
<a href="
http://www.google.com
">Google</a>
```

## Notes:

The color of the link is controlled by the CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) that is linked to the HTML document. See [Canvas Styleguide](#) for more details. For further reading, read the WebAIM article, [Links and Hypertext](#) and [Accessible CSS](#).

## 16-Picture

## Code Example:

```

```

## Notes:

Images can be pulled from the web or Canvas files. Images do have several attributes you can add to it. When you add or edit the image in the editor the dialog box has options for adding alternative text and changing the width and height attributes. It is important to note that students must use this option to embed images in discussions. Be sure to vote for [Upload an image directly to a discussion as a student](#) when it becomes available for voting. For further reading, read the WebAIM article, [Accessible Images](#).

## 17-Symbol

## Code Example:

```

```

## Notes:

When this option is used in the editor the equation editor will display. You can use the editor options or write the equations in [LaTeX](#). The equation will be rendered as an image with the LaTeX as alternative text.

## 18-Embedded Objects, Media Comment & Other LTI Tools

## Code Example:

```
<iframe width="640" height="360"src="//www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/WetLiIvTwZE?rel=0" frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>
```

## Notes:

When using the [LTI](#) and [Media Comment](#) tools the content in most cases will be embedded objects. The main issue with some of the LTI Tools is unsecure content. Canvas is hosted on secure server and almost all browsers will now block unsecured embedded content on secure webpages. You can also paste [embed code from YouTube](#). You can also embed documents such as [GoogleDocs](#) and [Microsoft Documents](#).



## 19-Text Direction

### Code Example:

```
<p dir="rtl">Some text</p>
```

### Notes:

This attribute is essential for setting how script languages will display on the webpage. For more details, go to the WC3 article, [Structural markup and right-to-left text in HTML](#)

## 20-Font Sizes

### Code Example:

```
<span style="font-size: x-large;">some text</span>
```

### Notes:

Uses the span element and inline CSS (the style attribute) to create the larger text. It is generally not recommended to use this option. See number 20 below on why.

## 21-Paragraph and Header Elements

### Code Example:

The paragraph element wraps the paragraphs. Paragraphs will have specified paddings and margins from the linked CSS document. You can use the style attribute to change the font and margins if desired to have a different look than the default editor settings. I generally don't recommend doing that for all your pages because you must edit each element to make this change. That is too much work. A better option would be to get your IT people at your institution to setup [KennethWare](#). I am working with ours to hopefully get this setup for our instance of Canvas.

### Paragraph

```
<p>Some body text</p>
```

### Heading 1

```
<h1>Some Header text</h1>
```

## Preformatting

```
<pre>Some Text that will display as you type it</pre>
```

## Notes:

Paragraphs and headings are considered structural elements in HTML and are essential to making your pages accessible to all. For further reading, visit the WebAIM articles, [Semantic Structure](#) and [Designing for Screen Reader Compatibility](#). I also recommend viewing the recording of the CanvasLIVE webinar [Mobile Series: Just-in-Time Design \(2014\)](#) and joining the [Canvas Mobile Users](#)

## 22-Keybaord Shortcuts

The keyboard shortcut icon was added recently and provides a quick view of the keyboard shortcuts you can use with rich content editor. See the following discussion about the keyboard shortcuts and other hidden gems in Canvas.

[Your ideas of Canvas' best kept secrets](#)

## 23-HTML View

Use the HTML editor to switch to code view so you can edit the code. Please note there are only certain [HTML elements \(Tags\) that are allowed](#) in the editor and any elements added that are not allowed will be stripped out of the page when you save the page.

## Additional Resources

- [Learn the Basics of HTML](#) - via the W3C website
- [HTML Dog Tutorials](#) - easy to understand tutorial for beginners
- [Sitepoint HTML Reference](#) - a comprehensive guide to all the HTML elements

20025 Views Tags: rce, css, code, code-snippets, html, rich content editor, text



[Kelley L. Meeusen](#) in response to [Ellen B Cutler](#) on page 11

Sep 5, 2017 1:57 PM

Hi [Ellen B Cutler](#)

Yes, I am sure this looks rather strange to those who are not HTML savvy, but the whole point of [Susan Nugent's](#) posting is to provide tips for folks who want to explore some of the great options available to those who want to experiment with HTML, or are HTML coders. This Canvas Community is for every Canvas user, regardless of their skill levels; and as such, it must include info for those who want to explore the HTML side

of Canvas. Believe me when I tell you that the vast majority of content in this Community is dedicated to new and intermediate Canvas users who stick entirely to the User Interface tools, and never go near HTML. I should also add that this discussion is posted in a Community Group space intended for folks who use and have a skill set for more advanced functionality - the Instructional Designers Group.

If you are just getting started with Canvas and would like a more appropriate place to start learning I would suggest [Getting Started with Canvas](#). You will find great resources in there, organized around three types of users: Admins, Instructors and Students. Great stuff!

I regularly offer a workshop for my faculty (and in some venues, to Canvas users across the country) on HTML called "**Do Not Fear the Code**." This course teaches non-coders who might be afraid to even click on the HTML editor, how to use simple snippets of code, in simple ways that produce powerful results. You would be amazed at how excited many of them get when they find out how easy this is to do - even the technophobes, and sometimes especially the technophobes.

Canvas provided a space (Canvas instance) where I have loaded the content from my workshop to make available to members of the Community, and we now have close to 1,000 folks enrolled in there. We have around a third enrolled as teachers so that they can contribute new hacks to the space, and the rest as students so that they can learn all the thricks they wish to learn. It is called the "**CanvasHacks Demo Course**". If you shoot me a direct message with your email address, I would be happy to enroll you. It might surprise you what even a technophobe can do within just a few minutes with some of these easy hacks.

And for the record, I am not a coder. In fact, I don't even play a coder on television!

I hope this helps,

Kelley



[Ellen B Cutler](#)

Sep 2, 2017 10:12 PM

I SOOOO wish this was written in English. Do you people not ever consider that there are technophobes and digital ignoramuses such as myself that are forced into using this stuff? You just make it harder to learn.



[Tom Gibbons](#)

Sep 1, 2017 5:58 PM

I was going to bookmark this, but apparently I already had, and completely forgotten about it. It's most excellent.






[Ryan Seilhamer](#)

Aug 31, 2017 12:14 AM

It's worth mentioning that with the Canvas Teacher app, a mobile RCE is now available. It's MUCH more limited than the web version, but it exists.

●●○○○ AT&T Wi-Fi 

1:55 PM

  99% 

Cancel

Edit Announcement

Done

## Title

Welcome to week 2

## Description

Hi students. Remember to read chapter 2 before Monday.



## Options

Delay Posting



Users must post before seeing replies





**Michelle Tuten** in response to [Stefanie Sanders](#) on page 14

Mar 16, 2016 1:34 PM

Something else related to links is that if you need to make sure that the link opens in a new window or you need to make internal page links, you'll want to use the shortcut key Ctrl/Command+K

Nugget of [info about shortcut for links](#), courtesy of Stephanie Sanders



**Heather Garcia** in response to [Jan Chavarie](#) on page 14

Oct 16, 2015 9:41 PM

Nope, you can't use the HTML comment tag. I also tried it, and the commented out text was deleted. You might find some more useful information in this thread: [Re: Acceptable HTML Elements](#). There's a suggestion to use a div tag as a workaround, but I haven't tried it yet. Good luck!



**Jan Chavarie**

Oct 5, 2015 10:52 PM

Can we use the HTML Editor to comment out part of a page? In html, these tags will comment out information but not delete it: <!-- preceeds text area to hide and --> ends the text area to hide. On the one page we tried, upon Save - the commented out text was deleted! Is there another way, in either the Rich Text Editor or the HTML Editor to comment out/hide text or any other data?

Jan



**Adam Nemeroff** in response to [Stefanie Sanders](#) on page 14

Jun 23, 2015 1:27 AM

So where else can I use these styles from the style guide you provided? Are they allowed via style="..."



**Stefanie Sanders**

Jun 20, 2015 7:38 PM

## 14-Link

### Code Example:

```
1. <a href="www.google.com">Go to Google</a>
```

### Notes:

The color of the link is controlled by the CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) that is linked to the HTML document. See [Canvas Styleguide](#) for more details. For further reading, read the WebAIM article, [Links and Hypertext](#) and [Accessible CSS](#).

[Susan](#), I just stumbled across a change in link creation behavior resulting from a recent update to TinyMCE, on which the Canvas RCE is based. For details, see this discussion question: [Creating a bold-text link in the RCE?](#)

Does anyone have any insight into this?



[John Sills](#)

May 7, 2015 2:24 PM

EXCELLENT resource thank you for sharing. This will be invaluable!



[Mary Wiseman](#)

May 7, 2015 1:13 PM

Thank you for creating this Susan...it will be on my bookmark bar.



[Stefanie Sanders](#) in response to [Tom Gibbons](#) on page 15

May 6, 2015 12:36 PM

Thank you! This one goes straight into my bookmarks.

"The second rule of learning HTML: **Steal.**" LOLOL.



[Gerol Petruzella](#) in response to [Tom Gibbons](#) on page 15

May 6, 2015 10:44 AM

[Tom Gibbons](#), who cares about mess when there's frogs? :-D Thanks for sharing this.



[Tom Gibbons](#)

May 5, 2015 11:44 PM

Lovely. Following the organizational structure of the RCE is kind of genius.

My HTML module is a bit of a wreck in terms of organization, but in the interest of sharing, there may be things in it that are useful: [What is HTML: Advanced Canvas Trainings](#)



[Gerol Petruzella](#)

May 5, 2015 4:47 PM

What a great resource, [Susan](#)! Many thanks for sharing.



[Stefanie Sanders](#)

May 5, 2015 12:58 PM

Awesome, [Susan](#)! This is unbelievably helpful. I'm going to add a link to this document to any and every blog that even *mentions* HTML!



[Catherine Coltman](#)

May 5, 2015 8:42 AM

Thank you for sharing.



[Ryan Seilhamer](#)

May 4, 2015 11:48 PM

Wow, so very helpful! Thanks for sharing!



[Chris Hofer](#)

May 4, 2015 2:49 PM

Nice! This is something I think I'll post for our faculty at some point on our Canvas Dashboard. Bookmarking it now!



[Kona Jones](#)

May 4, 2015 2:47 PM

This is really useful [Susan](#)! Thanks for sharing!!