Parent guide to Canvas

April 2020

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Introduction

Canvas is an online learning environment that we have been using at King Alfred School for over three years. Prior to the Coronavirus outbreak, we were using Canvas to set homework and to share revision resources. Some teachers were also using testing grading, feedback and quizzing features. We are now using Canvas as our sole learning platform during the Coronavirus Crisis.

We have tried to recreate the structure of a school day online. The Head of year posts a "callover" at the start of every day that all students attend. At every timetabled lesson, teachers have prepared something to be available on Canvas. This may be work that students have to do or a video conference lesson. Students can hand in work through Canvas and teachers will feedback to them. Students can message others in their class and their teachers for help.

Finding your child's work

You can find Canvas by searching for King Alfred Canvas or https://kingalfred.instructure.com/. Log into Canvas using your email address and the password you were issued.   You can reset your password in the login screen.

In the website, you can access different areas through the global navigation menu (on the left). Homework that will be due soon will be listed under *Coming up*. You can find individual subjects through the courses link. The inbox link will allow you to send messages to teachers. The calendar link will take you to an overview of all homework.

Change between children here

Selecting an individual piece of homework will give you more information about it.

You can view homework from one class at a time or multiple classes here

Click Calendar to go to this view

The date the homework appears is the due date

Roman Dinner Party

Due: 4 Oct at 23:59

Calendar Details   Year 9 Latin with Florence (9 L/Lt1)

Dear all,

Re-read pages 24/25 in your textbook on Roman food for some inspiration. Design an exciting menu invitation, inviting guests to your very own Roman dinner party.

I look forward to seeing what you come up with.

Valete,

Florence

Canvas emails and app

We have set up Canvas for parents to receive weekly emails that show any homework that has been set. These emails can be set so that you get daily, weekly or instant information or disable them completely. You can change the frequency of these emails through account notifications. You can be sent notifications to a different email address or via text message. To set this up go to account settings and add contact method.
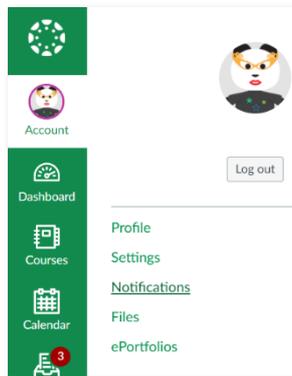
The newly redesigned Canvas Parent app for Android and iOS devices allows you to access all the homework for your child from your phone. Search for *Canvas Parent* in the app store or play store. You can log in with the same details as you use to get onto the website.

Notifications

Email notifications can be set so that you get information at regular intervals or disable them completely. You can also customise the app notifications.

From the global navigation select account and notifications.

If you want to change how often you get homework updates, change the *Due Date* setting.

You can be sent notifications to a different email address or via text message. To set this up go to account settings and add contact method: ⊕ Contact method

Frequently Asked Questions and Queries

What is the Canvas VLE?

A virtual learning environment (VLE) is an online system for delivering learning materials to students via the web. These systems include courses, webpages of information, discussion forums, assignments (homework), calendar, collaboration and email tools. Canvas is a VLE.

Help, my child cannot get on to Canvas.

Step one: as there are many different schools using Canvas, ensure that your child is going to the correct Canvas page. The King Alfred School Canvas page is at http://kingalfred.instructure.com.

Step two: double check that the username and password are typed correctly. The username is the first name and the first initial of the surname (so for Bruce Wayne the username would be brucew). The password is the same as the school password.

Step three: please contact Peter Nickson on petern@kingalfred.org.uk and we'll try to resolve it as soon as possible.

Are there any official Help Guides for Canvas?

There are a number of Help Guides for Canvas at the following location: http://help.instructure.com/. These are kept updated on a regular basis

Does my child need a phone to use Canvas?

No. Canvas needs a device with an internet connection to work and all the features of Canvas are available on the website. However, if they have a phone or tablet we highly recommend that they install the Canvas student app.

What happens if Canvas 'goes down' and my child cannot complete their work?

In the event that a student is not able to complete work because of a technical problem with Canvas then please contact us on petern@kingalfred.org.uk. Extensions will be given to any work.

Where is the video conference for my child's lesson?

To find the video conference you need to know the name of the subject. If you have a Maths video conference starting soon, go to Courses > Maths > Conference and then click join. If you expect to see a conference but none appears, please let the teacher know.

Home	▾ New conferences		
Conferences			
Assignments	Year 11 Physics with Peter (11T1/Ph) conference	In progress	Join

My child can't get into the conference

In the first instance, please let the teacher of your lesson know about problems accessing a conference. Make sure you are using the google chrome browser or try a different device. If that fails to work, please contact Peter on petern@kingalfred.org.uk.

What does the date mean for assignments set on the Calendar?

This is the date that homework is *due in*, not the date that the work was set.

What do all these terms like file, assignment, module and discussion mean?

At the end of this document, I have put a Canvas Glossary page where these and other terms are explained.

I have some suggestions/improvements for Canvas

We always welcome feedback from you about how to improve Canvas and where to go next. Following from parental suggestions over the last couple of years we've changed the emails to be sent once a week and we've added the dropdown to switch between your children. If you would like to contribute towards the discussion of how to improve Canvas at KAS, please email petern@kingalfred.org.uk.

Glossary of key terms

All Courses

When a student clicks on Courses in the navigation menu and All Courses, they can see all the courses they are signed up for in Canvas.

Announcement

An announcement is a message from the teacher that appears on the course. The message can be seen by all students on the course. Sometimes teachers use the announcement for setting work when they are not in lesson or important information like test dates.

Assignment

An assignment is a piece of work set by a teacher. Prior to the Coronavirus lockdown these were all homework.

Calendar

Students have access to a global calendar on the main part of Canvas. They can see this in the outside menu. The global calendar shows information from up to 10 different courses. Students can choose which courses to display on the calendar by selecting/unselecting them. When students click on an item in the calendar, they will see more details about the task.

Coming Up

The "Coming Up" list appear in the Dashboard in Canvas. This is a list of tasks students have been asked to do for the following week. They can click on the link to see each task in more detail.

Comment

A comment is a blank text box that appears in an assignment. Teachers could use the comment box to help explain to a student what they need to do to improve, congratulate them on a particular answer or give them targets to aim at for next time. When a comment has been posted, students are notified in Canvas. Students can reply to the comment at any time and teachers are notified.

Courses

Students have courses for each of their classes. Students can access their courses from the Courses button in the global navigation menu. Students are able to rename a course to make it easier for them to remember.

Dashboard

The dashboard is the first thing you see when opening Canvas. For students, they see a to-do list. For parents, this contains their child's courses. These are usually the ones that they are currently studying. Students can add or remove courses to the dashboard.

Discussion

A discussion is a forum. A teacher can post a question or a task and students reply to it. They may reply in writing or with a picture or video. Sometimes students can post their own question for other students to answer. All the morning Callovers are discussions.

Grades

When students click on Grades in the menu they see the gradebook for the course they are studying. The gradebook is a place where students can get feedback for an assignment that they have done. The teacher can give feedback in lots of different ways: a comment, mark/grade, a rubric or acknowledgement that the work has been done. Only the students and the teacher can see their grades.

Modules

A module is a collection of resources that have something in common. This could be linked to coursework, a topic or a whole unit of work. Modules have titles and sub-headings to make it easier to organise work. They can include pages, links to other websites, assignments, discussions and quizzes into a Module. Modules are a good way to organise resources for students.

Navigation menu

This is the vertical menu that appears in Canvas. There are two menus – a global navigation menu and a course navigation menu. Each course navigation menu may be different as teachers choose what features they wish to use on the course.

Notifications

Notifications are reminders that are sent to students (via email and the app) when feedback of work, new announcements and discussions are added to a Canvas course. You can control the notifications you receive by clicking on your Account avatar.

Pages

A page is a blank space where teachers can create different information for students. It is very like a webpage. The page can have lots of features like titles, text, tables, images, videos, presentations or activities that students can play. Students can see a list of these pages on their own or sorted in order in a Module.

Quizzes

A quiz is an online activity where students answer questions. The questions can be multiple choice or ones where students have to write longer answers. Teachers can control how quizzes are used e.g. letting students have more than one attempt. Students can see the score they got on the quiz and get feedback online.

Recent Feedback

The "Recent Feedback" list appears in the Dashboard in Canvas. When a teacher gives feedback for an assignment or a quiz then students will see feedback. They can click on the link to see it in more detail.

Rubric

A rubric is a marking grid that some teachers use as part of an assignment. Teachers select which parts of the grid best match the students score. Students get the rubric as part of their homework and can easily see what they need to do to get the highest marks.

To Do

The "To Do" list appears in the Dashboard in Canvas. It shows students what Assignments or Quizzes they have been asked to do in Canvas. They can click on the link to see these in more detail.