

Link to a Specific Page of PDF In Desire2Learn Brightspace

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The Problem

You have a lengthy PDF document, perhaps a textbook, and students will read different parts throughout the semester. You could write, “Read Chapter 1” in an assignment but it will be easier for the students if you write, “Read [Chapter 1](#)” and the link takes them to the specific place in the document where they should start reading. Remember, the easier something is, the more likely that students will actually do it.

There are two required steps, tagging the PDF and adjusting the file links. An optional third step will prevent your links from opening one tab per link, which might be helpful if you post several reading assignments together.

Tagging the PDF

Each starting point for reading needs a destination point in the PDF document. This will be easiest for you if you collect all the starting points for reading and create the destination points all at once. For example, suppose your reading assignments are Chapter 1, Section 3.5 to 3.6, and Section 6.2. Your starting points will be Chapter 1, Section 3.5, and Section 6.2. You could include Section 3.6 or just assume students will keep reading. You need to give them names. I’ve used names like chapter1, section3-5, and section6-2.

Once you have the names, open your PDF document. You’ll need full Acrobat, not just the reader. Click View > Show/Hide > Navigation Panes > Destinations. The destinations panel open on the left. There are likely many predefined destinations. Ignore those.

Continuing with the example above, navigate to the beginning of Chapter 1, *set the zoom* to the value you want; I like 125%. Adding a destination creates a page view, not just a page number. At the top of the destinations panel there’s a target symbol with a yellow circle. Click it to define a new destination. At the bottom of the pane, type the name you assigned, *e.g.* chapter1. *Verify the page number* that appears next to the name; it is possible to create links to wrong pages. Add the rest of the destination tags in the same way. Use File > Save, then close or exit.

Creating and Adjusting Links in D2L

If you are editing with the D2L HTML editor, highlight the text you want to be a link and add a link to the textbook in the normal way. That will open the textbook file in a new tab and positioned at the top. The magic comes from a tiny change in the HTML. Click the HTML tool, it looks like </>, find the textbook link and after `isCourseFile=true` add a pound sign and your tag name, like: `#chapter1` or whatever destination name you chose. Be sure it’s inside the double quote and with no space after `true`. Click “Save,” then “Save and close.” Done!

```
<li><span style="font-size: 19px;">Read <a href="/content/enforced2/1567101-IT3123HardwareSoftware/Objectives/./textbook/my_textbook.pdf?isCourseFile=true#chapter1" target="_blank" rel="noopener">Chapter 1</a> of the textbook.</li>
```

What if there's no `isCourseFile`? D2L will eventually add it. In the meantime, just add the pound sign and destination name right after the file extension, like this:

```
<li><span style="font-size: 19px;">Read <a href="/content/ enforced2/1567101-IT3123HardwareSoftware/Objectives/./textbook/my_textbook.pdf?#chapter1" target="_blank" rel="noopener">Chapter 1</a> of the textbook.</li>
```

D2L will move it when it rewrites the link, and it'll work even before the link is rewritten.

Open Subsequent Links in the Same Tab

If you just do the two steps above, everything will work, but if you have an assignment with, say, three links to the textbook, each one will open a new tab. You and your students might not want three or four tabs open to different places in the same book. If that seems like a problem, make two more changes in the HTML. In the link you changed to add the destination tag, find `target="_blank"` and change the characters between the quotes to a name for the new tab. I used `textbk`. Be sure to remove the underscore as well as `blank`.

Then find `rel="noopener"` and remove the entire string, from the space before the R up to, but not including the `>` symbol.

```
<li><span style="font-size: 19px;">Read <a href="/content/ enforced2/1567101-IT3123HardwareSoftware/Objectives/./textbook/my_textbook.pdf?isCourseFile=true#chapter1" target="textbk" rel="noopener">Chapter 1</a> of the textbook.</li>
```

So far, this one has worked, but D2L rewrites links. That `rel="noopener"` is there for security. It prevents a malicious new page from having access to the page with the link. It's OK to remove it in this case because you're pretty sure your textbook isn't malicious, right? However, the folks at D2L might someday "improve" their product to check for that `rel="noopener"` and put it back if it's found missing. If that happens, you and your students will just have to put up with multiple tabs getting opened.