

How to Create a Student Journal Activity

The **Student Journal** is a built-in Activity Type that provides a private discussion area, visible only to the student who owns the journal and his/her teacher. As a reflective-style assignment, the Student Journal provides a space for student mentoring.

When assigning the Student Journal activity, each student is given his or her own journal, which may only be accessed by student and his/her teacher. Student Journal activities require students to express their thoughts concerning lessons, events, readings and other course related themes. In language courses, Student Journal activities are often used to support the development of extended speech.

Typically, a Student Journal will use one or two Blank Slides to present the journal topic and instructions, using audio recordings, text, images and/or video clips. Links to external websites and embedded documents can also be included to provide students with additional resources.

The following Help Guide provides detailed instructions on creating Student Journal activities in XpressLab. This Help Guide is comprised of four (4) parts:

- [Part 1: Creating a Student Journal Activity Type](#)
- [Part 2: Authoring a Student Journal](#)
- [Part 3: Using Design Mode to Enhance Student Journal Question Slides](#)
- [Part 4: Previewing the Student Journal & Assigning the Activity to Students](#)

Part 1: Creating a Student Journal Activity Type

1. Activities are created within the context of a course. Access the **My Course List** by clicking on the **Courses** link found within the main navigation bar at the top of your screen.

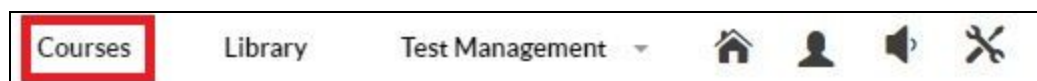


Image: Accessing the My Course List

- To create a **Student Journal** within an existing course, click on the name of the course from within the **Course Name** column of the My Course List. Clicking on the name of a course within the My Course List will direct you to the **Course Dashboard**.
- To create a new course, click on the red **New Course +** button located in the top left corner of the My Course List. Complete the Add Course page and click the red **Save** button. Clicking Save will direct you to the **Course Dashboard**.

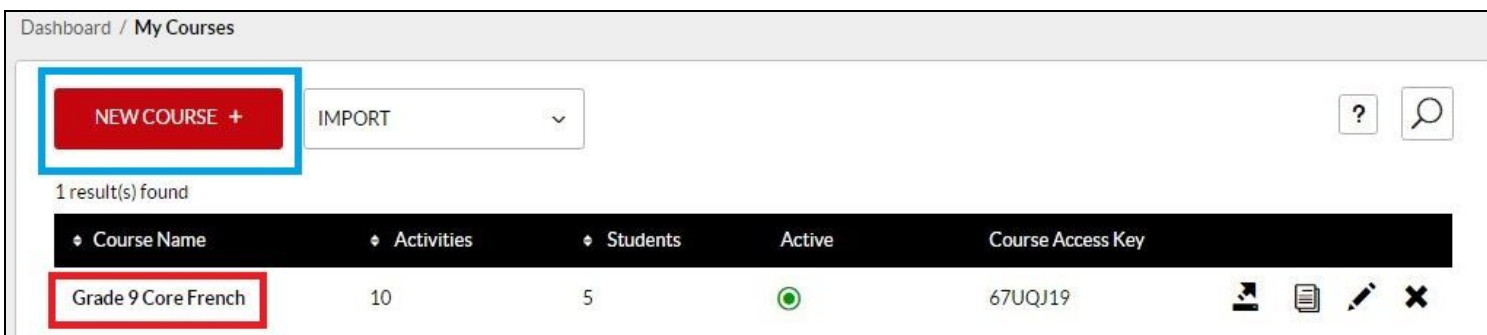


Image: Accessing the Course Dashboard (Creating a New Course + or clicking on an existing Course Name)

- The Course tab, found on the left side of the Course Dashboard, includes a detailed **Activity List**. To create a new activity, click the red **New Activity +** button, found in the top left corner of the Course tab.
- Clicking the red **New Activity +** button will direct you to the Activity Information page. Complete the Activity Information form by configuring the following settings:

Activity Information - Step 1: Activity Settings:

- Select an Activity Type:** To create a Student Journal, be sure to select the **Student Journal** activity type from within the **Select an Activity Type** drop down list of options. The remaining configurable Settings will be updated to reflect the Student Journal activity type.
- Activity Name:** Enter the name of your Student Journal activity.
- Description:** Enter a brief description of the Student Journal.
- Activity Code:** Assign an Activity Code to the Student Journal activity if you wish to integrate activity results within your Student Information System. Adding an Activity Code is *optional* you may leave this field blank. **Note:** XpressLab can automatically send student Result Codes and the Activity Codes entered here, to the Student Information System (if any) associated with your XpressLab account. If your Student Information System is *not* linked to your XpressLab account, this functionality may not exist.
- Mark Out Of:** Specify the overall value of the Student Journal activity by entering a numerical value here. The numerical value entered here represents *the total possible marks* a student can earn by achieving a perfect score on the Student Journal you are about to create. **Note:** Entering a Mark Out Of value is *mandatory*.
- Activity Language:** Identify the target language of your Student Journal by selecting either French or English from the options listed here.

7. **Allow Retake After (in days):** The **Allow Retake After** functionality allows students to retake the activity after a set number of days following the initial submission of the activity. If you wish to allow students to re-do the Student Journal activity after a designated number of days following the initial submission of the activity, select the number of days *after initial* activity submission, using the drop down list of options provided here.
8. **Test Requires Payment:** Select the **Yes** option if students are required to pay for the Student Journal activity you are about to create. Selecting **Yes** will open the Payment URL field. Enter the URL to the web page students will use to complete their activity payment transaction. If completing the activity does *not* require payment, select the **No** option. **Note:** By default, the No option is selected.

Activity Information - Step 2: Test Taker & Permission Settings

1. **Auto Assign:** Select the **Yes** option to automatically assign the Student Journal activity to *all* of the students currently enrolled in the activity's course. Select the **No** option if you do *not* wish to automatically assign the Student Journal activity to all of the students enrolled in the activity's course. If the **No** option is selected, a list of the students enrolled in the course will be displayed. Use this list of student names to manually select which students will gain access to the Student Journal activity.
2. **Is Restricted:** Restricted activities require teachers to manually approve each student's access to the activity. If the activity is Restricted, select the **Yes** option. If the activity is Restricted, each student attempting to access the activity will require manual approval from the teacher(s) associated with the course. If the activity is *not* restricted, select the **No** option. **Note:** By default, the **No** option is selected.
3. **Test Takers Can See Evaluated Test:** Select the **Yes** option to allow students to review their completed and evaluated Student Journal activity. Select the **No** option to prevent students from reviewing their completed and evaluated Student Journal activity. **Note:** By default, the **Yes** option is selected.
4. **Test Takers Can View Comments in Evaluated Test:** Select the **Yes** option to allow students to review any of the comments you may have added when evaluating their Student Journal activity. Select the **No** option to prevent students from reviewing any comments added during the evaluation of their Student Journal activity.

Activity Information - Step 3: Evaluation Settings

1. **Tests are Invigilated:** If the activity is invigilated (i.e. proctored) select the **Yes** option. Invigilated activities require teachers to grant manual student access to the activity. This means that you must manually accept each student who has been assigned the activity, before the student can begin completing the activity. If the activity is *not* proctored, select **No**. Selecting No allows students to gain access to the activity, once the activity status is set to Activity.

2. **Results Report Template:** The Results Report Template is used to provide students with their final Student Journal evaluation results. Assign a Result Report Template to the Student Journal activity by selecting the appropriate template from the options provided here. **Note:** A generic template is selected by default.
3. **Scorer's Guide:** You may provide a Scorer's Guide to help facilitate the scoring of manually marked items within this activity. To upload a Scorer Guide file, click the **Browse** button. Clicking Browse will open your local file manager. Locate the Scorer Guide file from your computer and then click open. **Note:** Acceptable Scorer Guide file formats include: PDF, doc, docx, rtf, txt, etc.
4. **API Call:** This is an advanced setting that applies to XpressLab accounts that have been connected to third party applications. If your XpressLab account has been connected to third party applications actively in use by your school and/or school board, a list of the connected and applicable applications will be listed here. Selecting an item from the the API Call list allows for data and information from within XpressLab, such as final grades, to be exported to third party applications that are integrated within your XpressLab account. **Note:** API Call list options will *not* be provided if your XpressLab account isn't connected to any third party applications.

Activity Information - Step 4: Introduction & End Message

1. **Introduction Message:** The introductory message entered here will be displayed to students prior to beginning the Student Journal activity. You may wish to use the **Introduction Message** to provide instructions or important notes about completing the activity. To format your introductory message, use the Formatting Toolbar found along the top of the **Introduction Message** text field. **Note:** The **Introduction Message** is *optional*. You may leave this field blank.
2. **End Message:** The closing message entered here will be displayed to students after they have completed the Student Journal activity. You may wish to use the **End Message** to provide any closing remarks or next steps. To format your closing message, use the Formatting Toolbar found along the top of the **End Message** text field. **Note:** Adding an **End Message** is *optional*. You may leave this field blank.

Activity Information - Step 5: Create Activity

1. Click the red **Save** button when you have completed the Activity Information form. Clicking the **Save** button directs you to the **Activity Dashboard**.

Part 2: Authoring a Student Journal Activity

Student Journal activities typically use one or two **Blank Question Slides** to present the journal topic and instructions, using audio recordings, text, images and/or video clips. Links to external websites and embedded documents can also be included to provide students with additional resources to facilitate in the completion of the Student Journal activity.

One Student Journal is often created for *each topic* presented in a course. However, multiple topics can also be delivered within a single Student Journal activity. To include multiple topics in one Student Journal activity, consider adding multiple Blank Question Slides to introduce and present each new topic.

Students respond to Student Journal question prompts by recording an audio post using the built-in Discussion Forum. Each discussion post is automatically associated with a specific slide within the Student Journal activity. This approach provides a convenient way to create a course-long record of a student's spoken reflections within a single Student Journal activity.

Activity authoring occurs within the **Test Planner**. Since the Student Journal activity type presents a topic, or a series of topics, to which students must respond using the Discussion Forum, only **Blank Question Slides** can be used to create this activity. Student Journal topics are added to Sections and Testlets within the Test Planner.

Author a Student Journal activity using the steps detailed below.

1. Once the Student Journal activity is [created within the context of a course](#), you may begin authoring the Student Journal in the Test Planner. From the Activity Dashboard, select the **Test Planner** button, located directly above the Student Activity Graph.
2. The Test Planner uses **Sections** and **Testlets** to structure language tests and activities. **Sections** are used to define the common content groups or learning objectives within the Student Journal. Sections are also used to contain Testlets, group together similar question types or learning objectives. Questions are then added within a Testlet.
3. By default, a Section and Testlet are already created for you within the Test Planner. To create a new Section, select the red **New Section +** button found in the top left corner of each Section. Similarly, to create a new Testlet, click the red **Add Testlet +** button found in the top right corner of each Section.

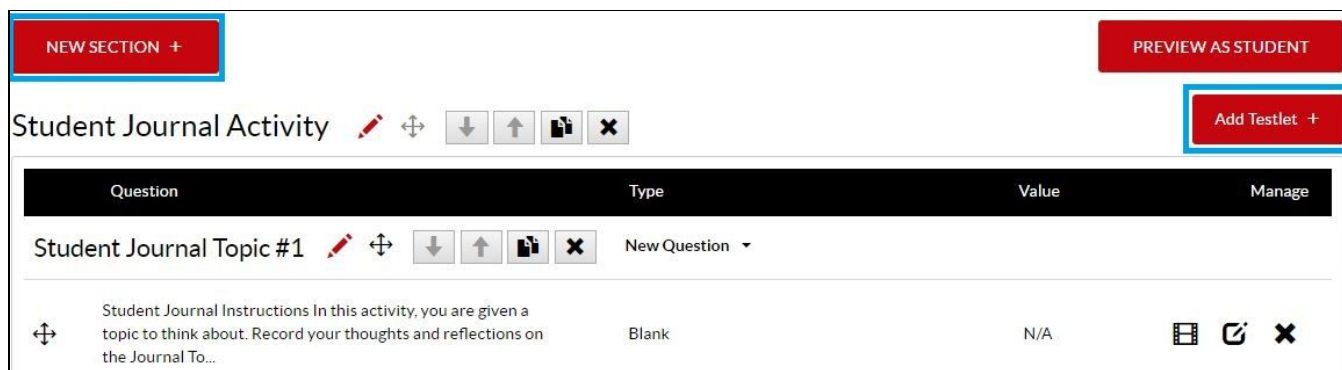


Image: Creating a new Section and adding a new Testlet

4. Click the red **Edit** button located to the right of a **Section Name** to modify Section details, such as Name and Description.

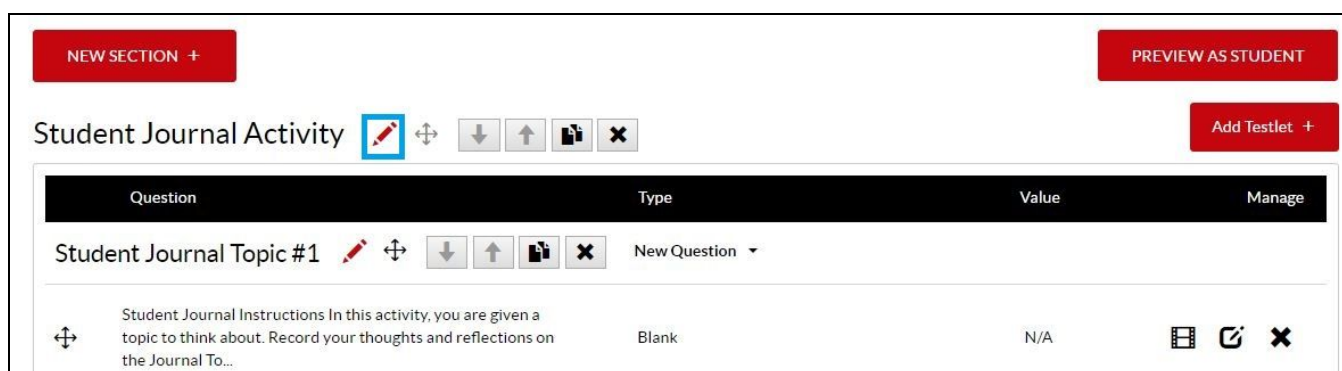


Image: Editing a Test Section

5. Click the red **Edit** button located to the right of a **Testlet Name** to modify Testlet details, such as Name and Description.

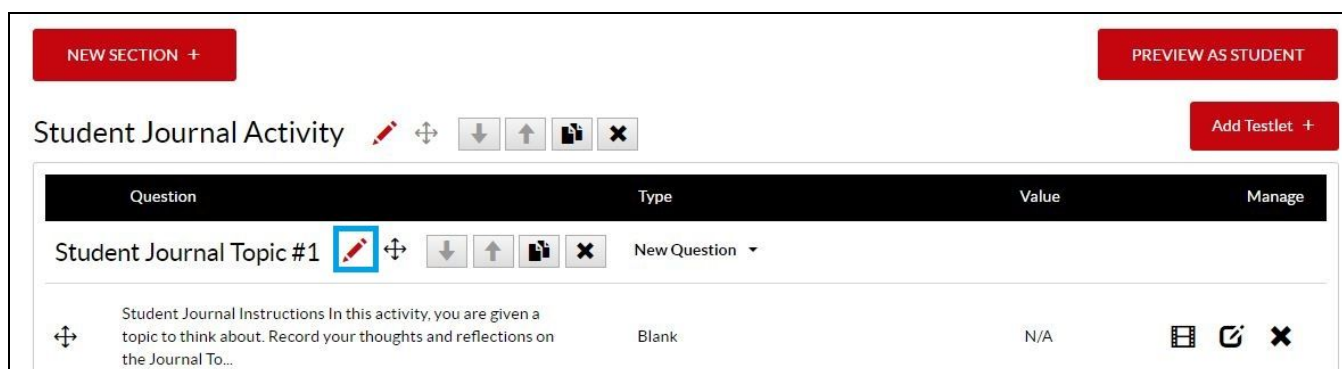








Image: Editing a Testlet

6. To add Student Journal discussion topics, click the **New Question** button, located below the **Type** column within a Section and Testlet. Then, use the New Question drop down list of options to select the **Blank** Question Slide. Selecting the **Blank** Question Slide from within the Test Planner will direct you to the **Question Properties** page.

Student Journal Activity      

Add Testlet +









































Question	Type	Value	Manage
Student Journal Topic #1      	New Question ▾ Blank		
 Student Journal Instructions In this activity, you are given a topic to think about. Record your thoughts and reflections on the Journal To...	Blank	N/A	  

Image: Adding a (Blank) Question


- To communicate the Student Journal topic in written text, select the **Text Question** option at the top of the Question Properties page. Type the journal topic in the text field labelled **Text to Display**. To modify or format your question content, use the Formatting Toolbar found along the top of the Text to Display field.

☒ **Text Question**
☐ Audio Question

Text to Display: *


CANCEL SAVE

- To communicate the Student Journal topic as an audio prompt, select the **Audio Question** option found at the top of the Question Properties page.
 - Click the red **Record** button within the audio recording widget to record an audio Journal prompt.
 - To upload an existing audio file from your local computer, click the **Upload Audio** icon  located in the right corner of the audio recording widget. Use the **Upload File** window to locate the audio file from your local computer.
 - To limit the number of times students can replay the audio Journal prompt, enter a numerical value in the **Limit question replays to** field.

- Select the **Autoplay checkbox** to automatically play the journal prompt when a student arrives to the question slide.
9. When you have completed the Question Properties page, click the red **Save** button to return to the Test Planner.
 10. Continue to build the Student Journal activity, using as many **Blank Questions Slides** as required to communicate the activity instructions and journal prompts.

Part 3: Using Design Mode to Enhance Student Journal Question Slides

Format and/or enhance your Student Journal question slides by adding additional multimedia elements such as more audio recordings, video clips, images, text, and shapes. Question slides can be formatted and enhanced using **Design Mode**.

1. To open a question in **Design Mode**, click the **Design Mode** icon , located to the right of a question within the **Manage** column of the Test Planner.

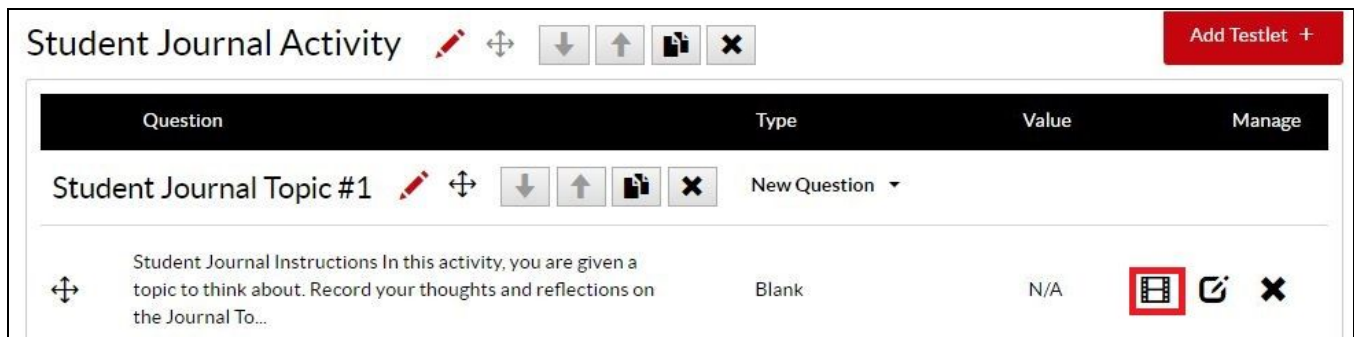


Image: Accessing Design Mode from within the Test Planner

2. Selecting the **Design Mode** icon directs you to the slide-based authoring environment. Use the **Formatting Toolbar** along the top of the slide to format and adjust your question content.
3. Click and drag any of the elements within your slide to reposition each item.
4. Double-click your cursor inside a text field and use the Formatting Toolbar to format your content.

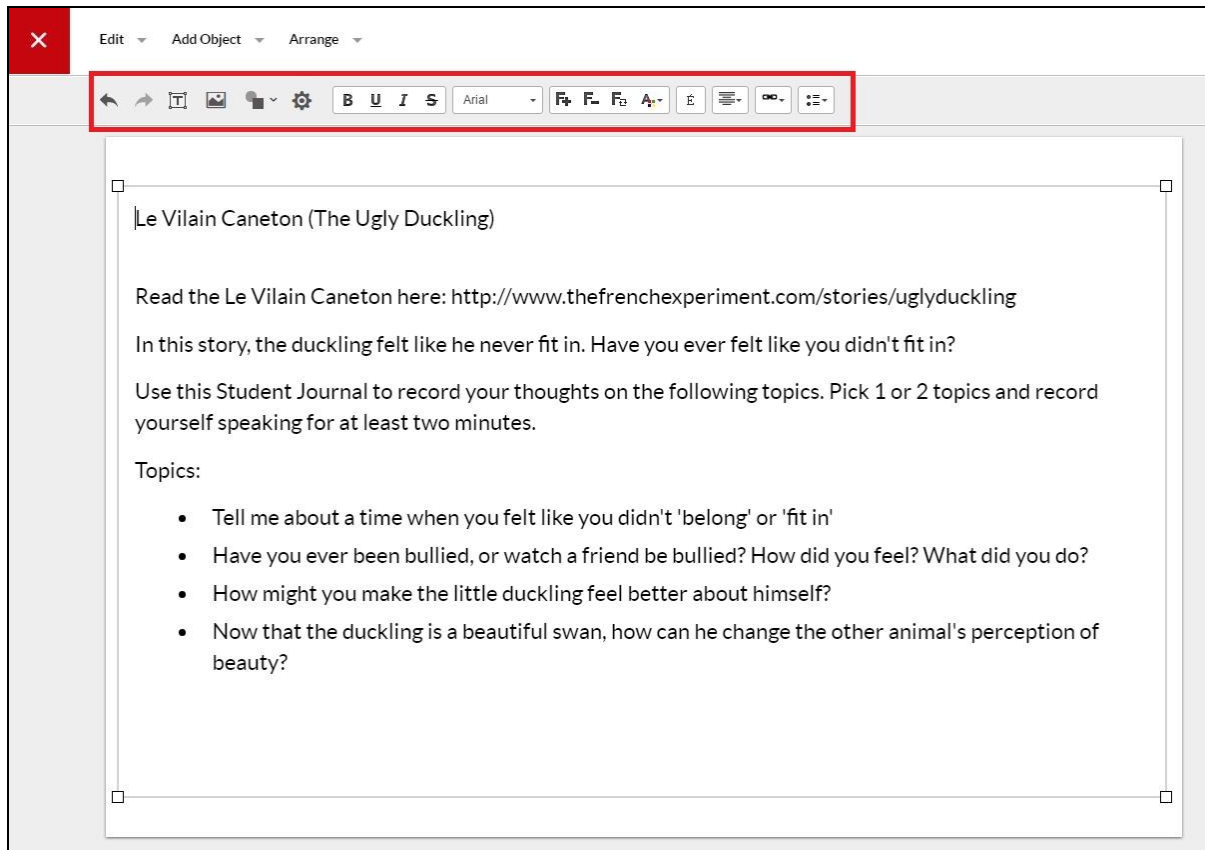


Image: Formatting Content in Design Mode.

5. To add additional multimedia elements to a question slide, click the **Add Object** link from within the main navigation found in the top left corner of your screen. Then, select one of the multiple media items from the drop down list of options (i.e. Text, Image, Audio, Video Clip, Shape, or Drawing Canvas).
 - Click and drag an item into the correct position within your question slide.

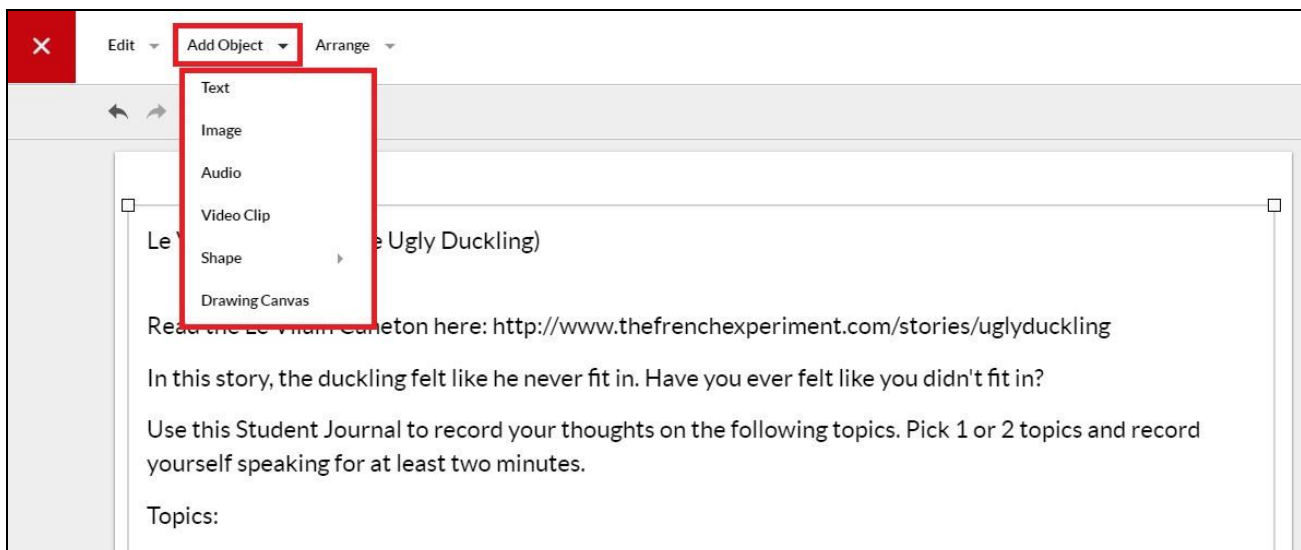


Image: Adding Multimedia Elements to a Question Slide in Design Mode

Part 4: Previewing the Student Journal & Assigning the Activity to Students

1. When you have finished authoring your Student Journal activity, it is a good idea to review your activity as your students will see it. Click the red **Preview as Student** button, found in the top right corner of the Test Planner interface to launch the activity in fullscreen Student View Mode.

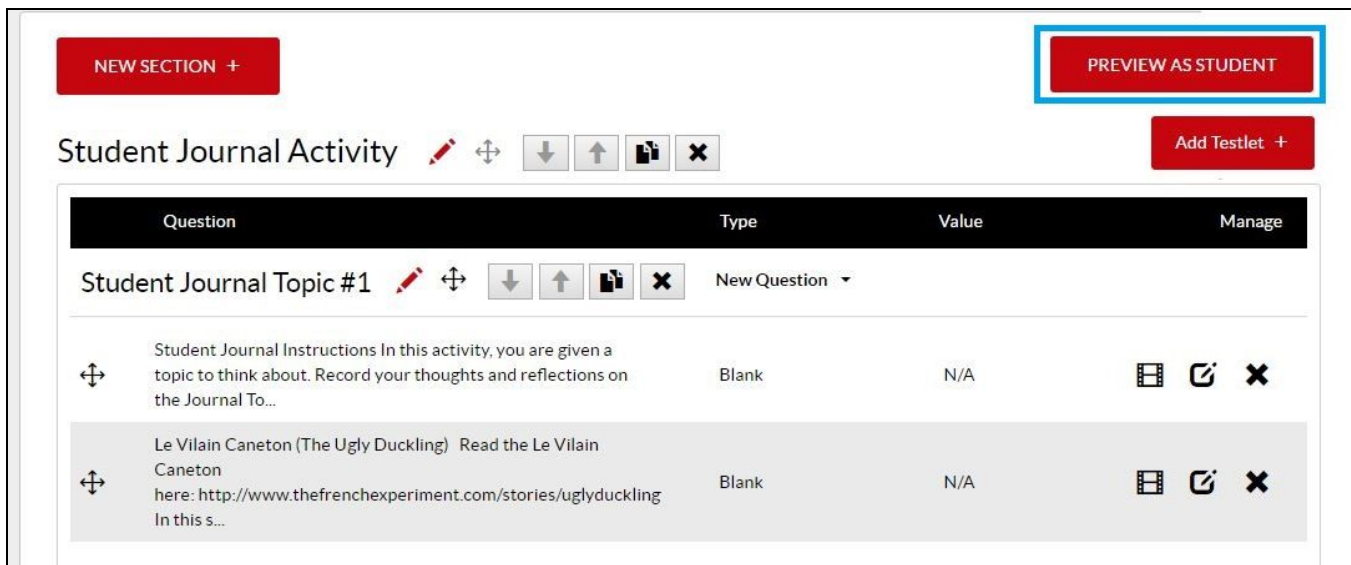








Image: Previewing the Activity in Student View Mode

2. Use the red **Next** and **Previous** buttons, located in the bottom left corner of the Student View Mode screen to review each question slide.
3. When you have finished previewing the activity, click the red **Exit** button found in the top left corner of the Student View Mode screen to return to the Test Planner.
4. Your activity **must** be activated before students can begin accessing and completing the **Student Journal**. The **Activity Status** can be reviewed and reset within the **Activity Dashboard**.
 - Return to the Activity Dashboard by clicking on the **Activity Dashboard** breadcrumb link found in the navigation area in the upper left corner of the Test Planner.

Dashboard / My Courses / Grade 8 French / **Student Journal - Lesson Reflections - Activity Dashboard** / Student Journal - Lesson Reflections - Test Planner

NEW SECTION + **PREVIEW AS STUDENT**

Student Journal Activity       **Add Testlet +**












Question	Type	Value	Manage
Student Journal Topic #1       New Question ▼			
 Student Journal Instructions In this activity, you are given a topic to think about. Record your thoughts and reflections on the Journal To...	Blank	N/A	  

Image: Returning to the Activity Dashboard

- Review the **Activity Status** button located on the left side of the Activity Dashboard above the Recent Activity table. If your Student Journal is currently **Inactive**, click the Activity Status button to activate the activity and assign it to your students.

Dashboard / My Courses / Grade 8 French / **Student Journal - Lesson Reflections Chapter 2 (Student Journal)**

Student Journal - Lesson Reflections Chapter 2 ▼ **MARK A SUBMISSION** ▼ **ACTIVE** ☒

 **RECENT ACTIVITY**

Activity Saved, ... (Total: 7) ▼ Any Student ▼


 Cristina Matteis 4 days ago Discussion Posted

Image: Review Activity Status in the Activity Dashboard