

MADCAP CENTRAL

Authoring Guide

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MadCap Software
1660 17th Street, Suite 201
Denver, Colorado 80202
858-320-0387
www.madcapsoftware.com

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction	5
Permission Required?	6

CHAPTER 2

Adding Files	8
How to Add a New File	8

CHAPTER 3

Uploading Files	14
How to Upload a File	14

CHAPTER 4

Editing Files	15
How to Edit an Existing File	16
Content Editor Toolbar	19
Code Toolbar	23
Info Bar	24
Copying and Pasting Content	29
Breaks	31
Markers	33

APPENDIX

PDFs36

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

MadCap Central's cloud environment empowers you to author Madcap Flare project files directly without having to use Flare's desktop application. You can add new files, edit existing content, upload files, and even use integrated ChatGPT). The Central interface includes an easy-to-use editor for content viewing and editing, and if permission is granted, you can also edit in a code editor.

- "Adding Files" on page 8
- "Uploading Files" on page 14
- "Editing Files" on page 15

☆ **EXAMPLE** Your documentation team has created an online Help system using MadCap Flare. Your larger organization uses MadCap Central as its platform to manage the content. A director, who is not trained in using Flare, views some content from the project in Central and sees an ideal place to insert a relevant new topic. Without having to go through a review process or track down a writer to do the work, the director uses Central to quickly create and add a topic to the project. The change is committed to the project. Anyone who works in the project in Central will see the change, and Flare users will see updates once the remote and local repositories are synchronized.

I Permission Required?

Editing content and project files is an activity available to users with the Author status. By default, users with Author status have the following permissions set:

- Create/Edit Files

If this is deselected, then viewing files in a read-only mode is allowed. On the left side of the page, the Files vertical three-dot menu is not available.

- Edit Code

If this is deselected, the XHTML in the Code view is read-only.

Editing code is regarded as a capability for an advanced user. If not done properly, the code can become malformed quickly. Administrators can prevent users from editing the code by deselected the Edit Code permission.

In addition, AI Assist involves the following permissions:

- Server Management

This is required to integrate a ChatGPT account with a Central license in the license settings.

- Edit Files With AI Assist

This is required to use AI Assist (and therefore ChatGPT) when modifying topics and snippets.

 **NOTE** Even if this permission is enabled, ChatGPT does not scan anything on your computer. The only information ChatGPT can acquire from you is what you enter manually into the prompt when using AI Assist. If your company has strict policies against AI or ChatGPT, simply do not use it.

For more information about permissions, see the Central online Help.

 **NOTE** For the authoring feature to work properly, your project must be single-bound to Central as the primary source control provider. The authoring feature does not support dual-bound projects.

 **NOTE** Since Central is a remote repository, those who use Flare after changes are made in Central, need to synchronize their remote and local repositories.

- **Central side** Content is authored and committed to the project in Central.
- **Flare side** To interact with updated content in the Flare application, use source control to pull changes from the remote repository and sync it to the local repository.

During the synchronization process, keep the following in mind.

- If two authors are editing the same file, at the same time, but one is working in Flare and the other is working in Central, then there may be conflicts when trying to synchronize the repositories. These conflicts can be resolved using the source control features in Flare.
- If two authors are both working in Central and are simultaneously editing the same file, then the first person to commit the file has precedence. When the second person commits their file, they will be alerted to the issue and prompted to refresh to get the latest files.

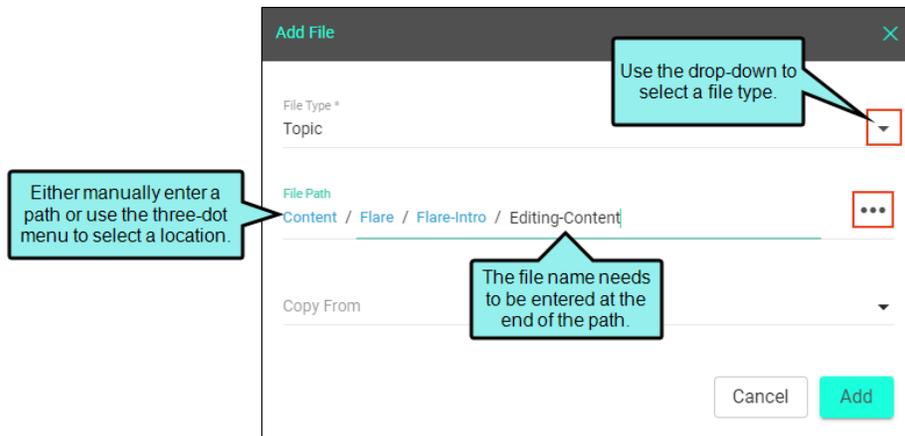
Adding Files

From the Files page, you can add a new file to a project.

I How to Add a New File

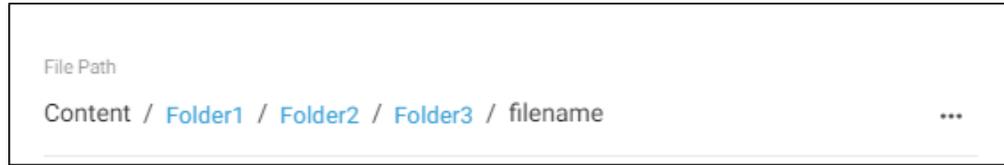
1. On the left side of the Central interface, click **Projects**.
2. Click **Files** at the top of the screen.
3. From the left side of the page, click , and select **New File**.
4. In the Add File dialog, from the **File Type** drop-down, select a required file type.
 - **Topic** Creates a topic with the file extension HTM, and it must be placed in a content folder.
 - **Snippet** Creates a snippet with the file extension FLSNP, and it must be placed in a content folder.
 - **Target** Creates a target with the file extension FLTAR, and it must be placed in a target folder.
 - **Variable Set** Creates a variable set with the file extension FLVAR, and it must be placed in a variable set folder.
 - **Condition Tag Set** Creates a condition tag set with the file extension FLCTS, and it must be placed in a condition tag set folder.

- **Branding Stylesheet** Creates a branding stylesheet with the file extension CSS, and it must be placed in a content folder. The recommended path for branding stylesheets is Content / Resources / Branding /.
 - **Other** Creates a text-based file (e.g., TXT file). With this file an extension is not necessary, and it can be placed anywhere in the project.
5. In the **File Path** field, enter a path and a name for the new file.
- Alternatively, click  to select a location for the file in the project, and **Accept** the file path. Then in the **File Path** field, enter a name for the file.



 **NOTE** You might notice the File Path displays black or blue lettering. The blue items are folders, and you can click the item to jump to that folder.

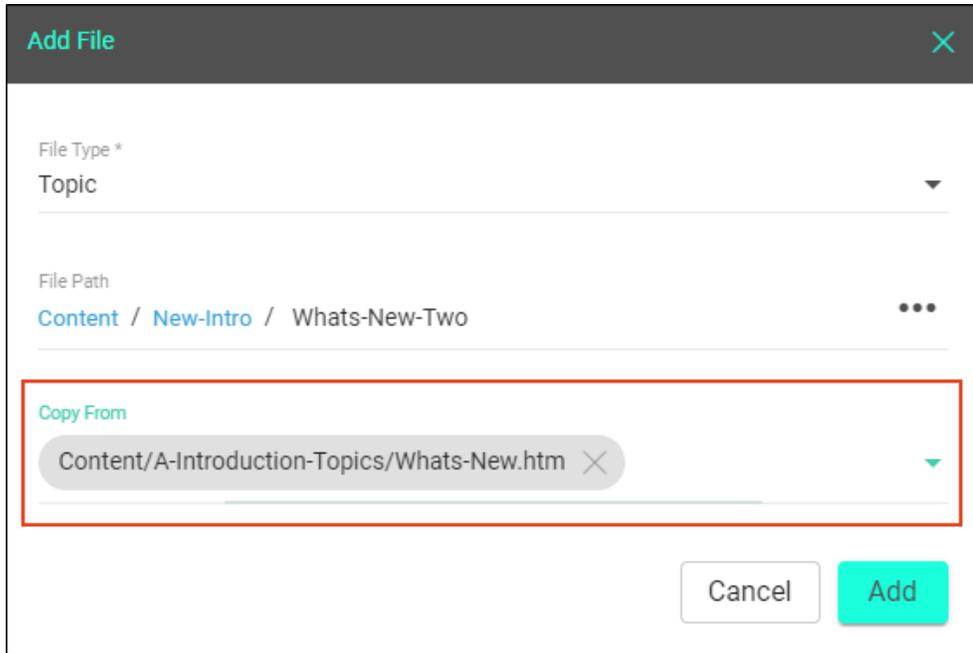
For example, in the Add File dialog, a file path contains several folders (indicated by blue lettering) before the filename.



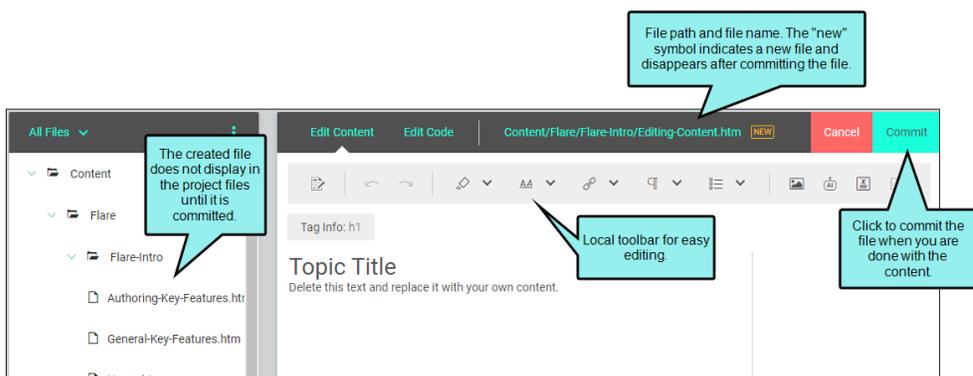
If the "Folder1" item is clicked, you will no longer see the subfolders.



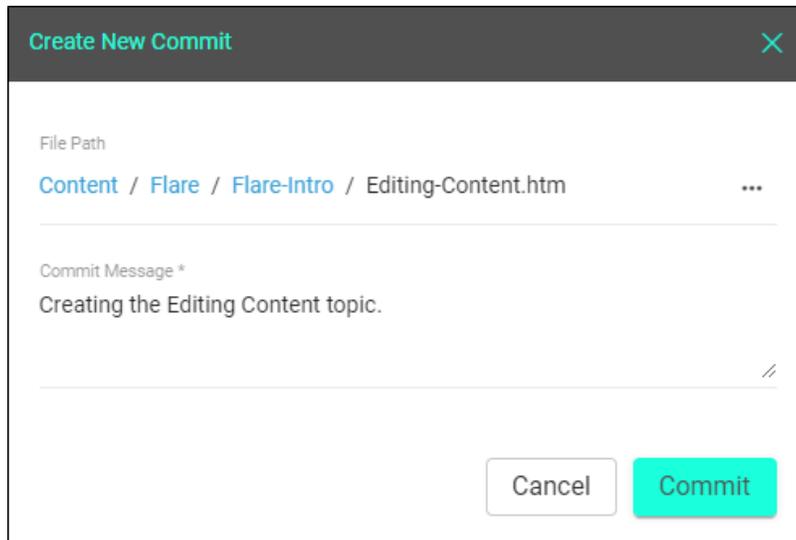
- (Optional) In the Add File dialog, from the **Copy From** drop-down, you can select an existing file to use. This copies all the content or settings from the existing file to the new file, providing a base of information to start with for your file. If you choose not to select a file here, the new file will be based on factory content and settings.



- Click **Add**. The new file opens in the editor to the right of the project files. (It does not display in the list of files until you commit the file.)
- Make changes in the editor, and depending on the type of file, you can also use the toolbar to manage the content.
- In the upper-right corner of the editor, click **Commit**.



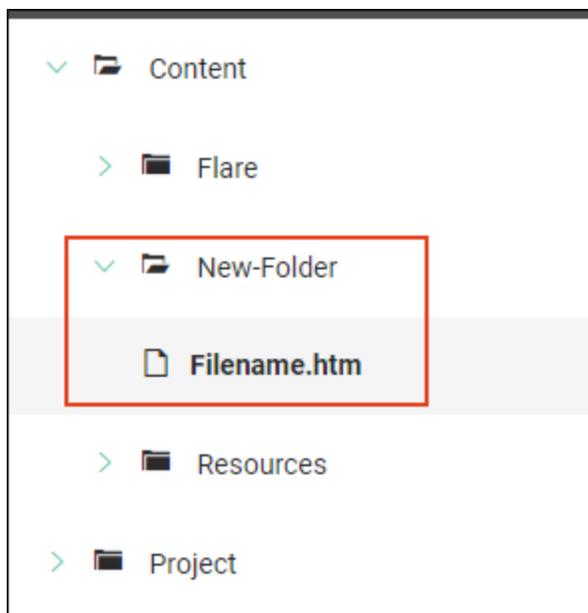
10. In the Create New Commit dialog:
 - a. Confirm the **File Path** (or enter a different path).
 - b. Type a **Commit Message**.
 - c. Select **Commit**. The new file displays in the project files.



- ✔ **TIP** What about creating a folder? Since Central is Git-based, you can only create a new folder by creating a file. Git does not allow empty folders. One way to get around this is to create a folder in the file path when adding a new file type. Just type the name of the new folder, followed by a slash.



Once the new folder and file are added and committed, they display with the other folders and files for the project.



Uploading Files

Different types of files can be uploaded to the project's repository and placed in the file tree. Some types (e.g., topics, snippets) can be viewed and edited in the editor, while others (e.g., images) can only be viewed.

I How to Upload a File

1. On the left side of the Central interface, click **Projects**.
2. Click **Files** at the top of the screen.
3. From the left side of the page, click , and select **Upload File(s)**. The Upload File dialog opens.
4. Do one of the following:
 - In the **Folder Path** field, type a path to upload files from.
 - From your local computer, drag and drop files to the Upload File dialog.
 - Click **Browse for files** and interact with the Open dialog to navigate to the files you want to upload.
5. In the **Commit Message** field, enter a (required) comment for committing the file(s).
6. Click **Commit**.

Editing Files

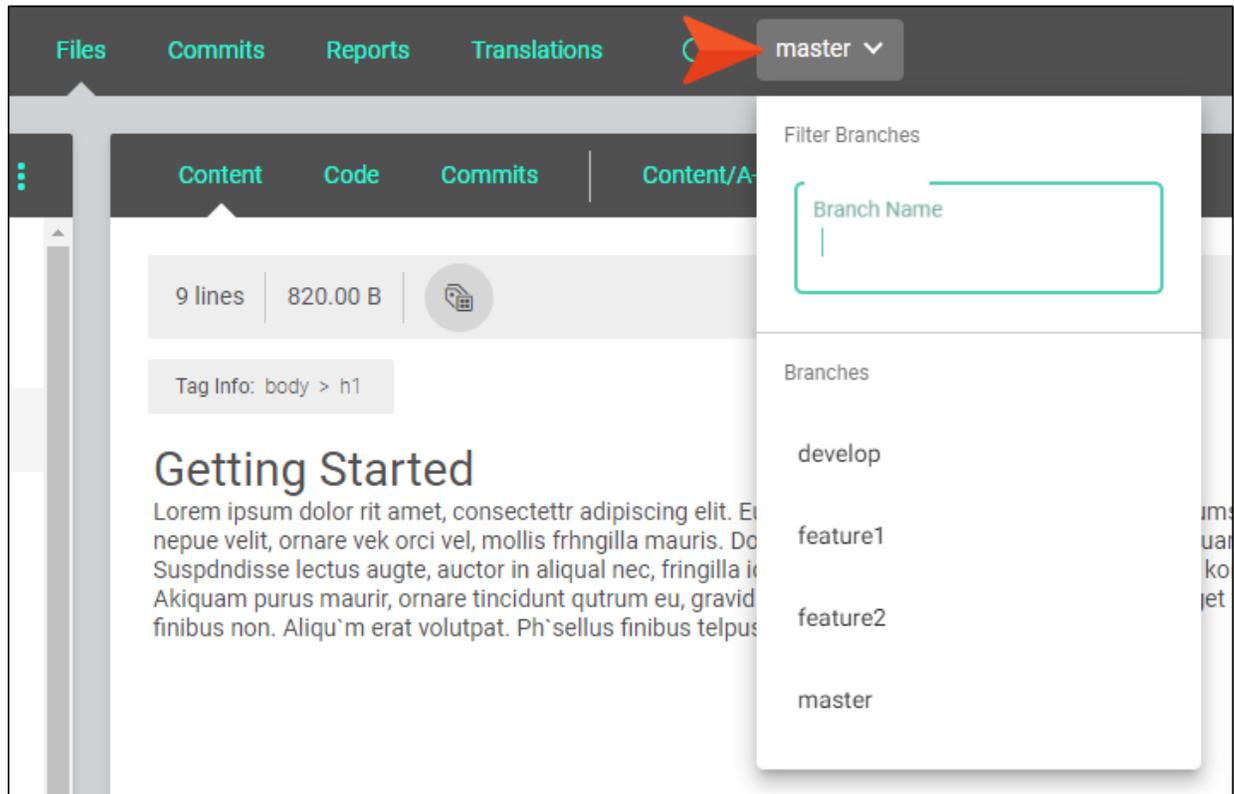
Two different file editing modes (Content and Code) are offered in Central for content files (e.g., topic, snippet) and some project files (e.g., target, condition tag set, variable set). By default, files such as these open in an easy-to-use light-weight editor. The Edit Code tab is for advanced users who prefer to edit in XML code directly. Both modes of the editor are equipped with basic editing tools. Some files (e.g., page layouts, template pages) can be opened in the Edit Code tab only.

This chapter discusses the following:

How to Edit an Existing File	16
Content Editor Toolbar	19
Code Toolbar	23
Info Bar	24
Copying and Pasting Content	29
Breaks	31
Markers	33

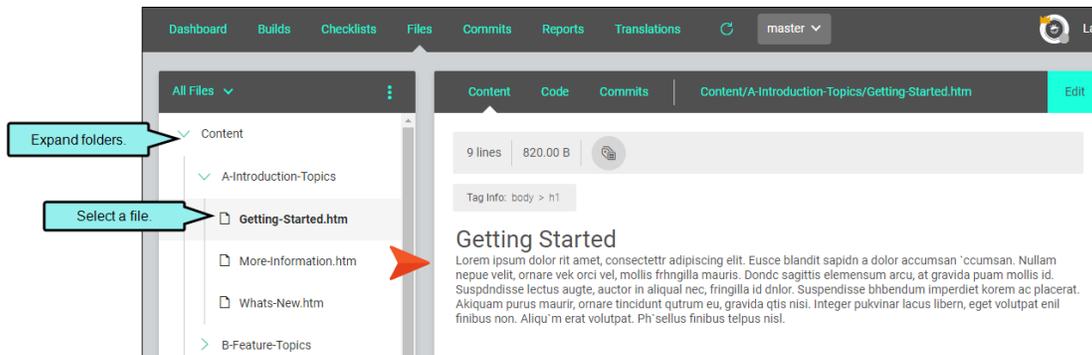
I How to Edit an Existing File

1. On the left side of the Central interface, click **Projects**.
2. Select a project to open it.
3. Click the **Files** tab at the top of the screen.
4. (Optional) From the drop-down at the top of the interface, you can select a branch for the edits.

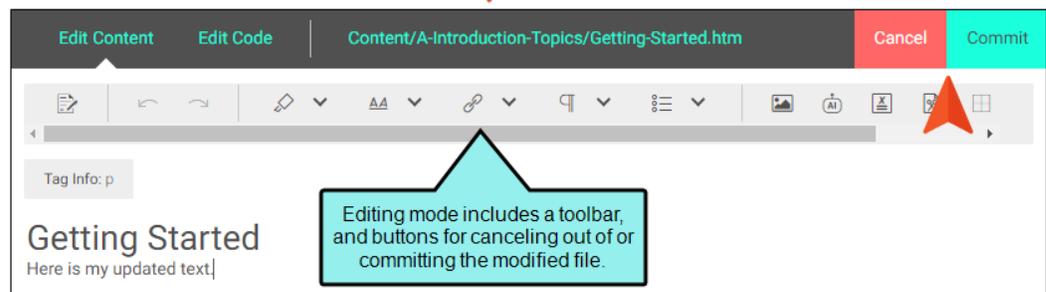
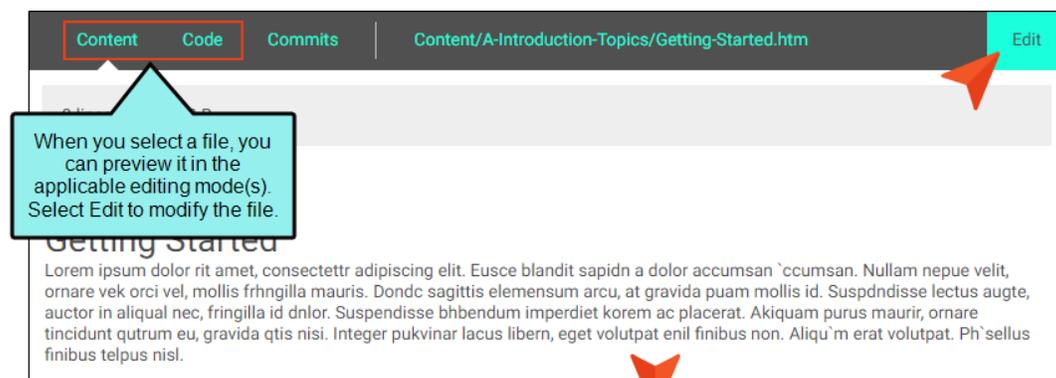


5. From the left side of the page, expand the existing folders to navigate to a file.

6. Select a file. It displays on the right side of the page.



7. Click the **Edit** button. The preview area turns into an editor, and the options at the top of the editor change to Edit Content and Edit Code so that you can edit the content or markup. Use the toolbar to manage the content.



NOTE Alternatively, you can right-click the file, and from the context menu, select **Edit**. This also puts the Files page in editing mode.

 **NOTE** You can toggle between the editing modes at any time. If you switch and then close or commit a file, then the next time you open the editor, it opens to the last mode you left off.

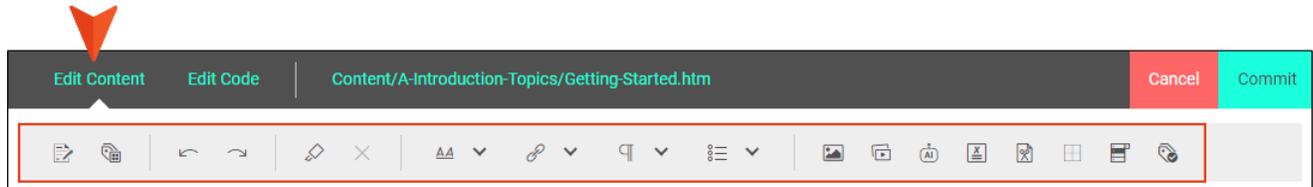
8. Click **Commit**. (Or click **Cancel**, to back out of the process.)
9. In the Create New Commit dialog, verify the new file path, and enter a **Commit Message**.
10. Click **Commit**.

 **NOTE** Keep the following in mind when loading files:

- The file size limit is 5 MB. This limitation helps prevent issues.
- If changes approach the limit, a message warns you.
- If edits exceed the size limit (or if the file starts out already over the limit), an error displays. If you are on the Content tab, the error is triggered when you attempt to commit the changes or switch to the Code tab.
- If you are on the Content tab and see the error message, you can make edits to reduce the file size and then commit the changes.
- If you are on the Code tab and see the error message, you can still edit the file and commit the changes, but you cannot switch to the Content tab.

Content Editor Toolbar

You can use the options in the toolbar at the top of the Content Editor to accomplish different tasks.



Option	Description
	Tracks changes in the Content Editor. When toggled on, changes made to content are highlighted in a colored font, and a track changes rectangle is added to a sidebar to the right. For example the rectangle indicates if content is added or deleted.
	Shows or hides colored shading (and in some cases a colored square) where conditions have been applied. <div data-bbox="440 1056 1442 1394" style="border: 1px solid purple; padding: 10px;"><p> EXAMPLE Your condition has blue associated with it and you have applied this tag to a block of content. When you click this button to show the indicator, the block of content becomes shaded with a lighter version of blue. If more than one condition is applied to the block of content, the shading appears in a pattern that shows all of the applied condition colors.</p></div>
	Reverses the most recent action.
	Repeats the most recent action that you reversed.

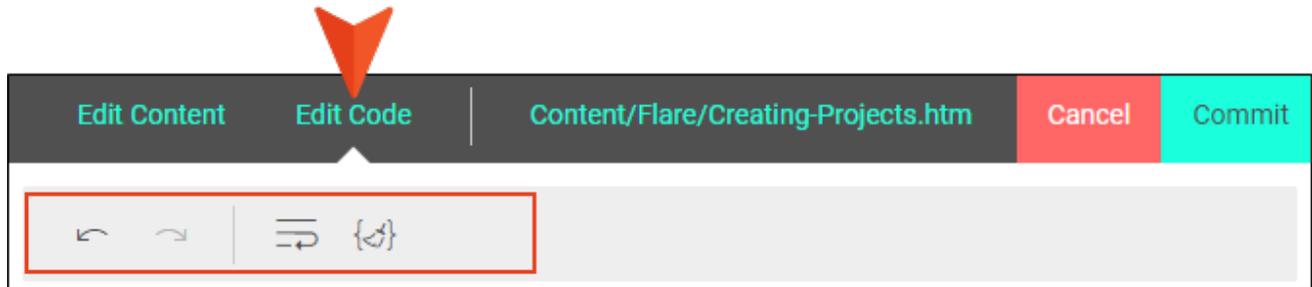
Option	Description
	Adds an annotation rectangle, extended to a sidebar to the right, with a line pointing to the selected content. This rectangle will hold annotation text after you type it. Also, the selected content is shaded, indicating that the annotation refers to that text. However, the shading will not be displayed in the output; it is for internal use only.
	Removes the selected annotation from the document.
	<p>Lets you apply formatting to selected content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bold Applies bold typeface to the content selected in the topic. ▪ Italic Applies italic typeface to the content selected in the topic. ▪ Underline Underlines the content selected in the topic.
	Lets you insert or edit a text hyperlink in a content file.
	Removes a hyperlink, leaving the text in place.
	Lets you insert or edit a cross-reference in a content file (e.g., topic, snippet).
	Removes a cross-reference link, leaving the text in place.
	<p>Lets you apply basic styles to block-level content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paragraph Applies a paragraph tag to the content. ▪ Heading 1 - Heading 6 Applies a heading tag (H1 through H6) to the content.

Option	Description
	<p>Lets you create and set list styles on content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bullet List Applies a bulleted list tag to the content. ▪ Ordered List Applies a numbered list tag to the content. ▪ Definition List Applies definition list tags to the content. ▪ Decrease Indent Outdents the list item(s). This option pertains only to lists, not other kinds of content. ▪ Increase Indent Indents the list item(s). This option pertains only to lists, not other kinds of content.
	<p>Opens the Insert Image dialog. You can locate an image in the project and then insert it into the Content Editor.</p>
	<p>Opens the Insert Multimedia dialog. You can locate a multimedia element (such as a video) in the project and then insert it into the Content Editor. Alternatively, you can enter the URL for a web video, such as YouTube.</p>
	<p>Opens AI Assist, which lets you converse with ChatGPT. You can then insert or replace content with ChatGPT's response. This is available when authoring and editing files, not for topic reviews.</p>
	<p>Opens a dialog that lets you select a variable set on the left and then choose a specific variable on the right to insert into the file. This is available when authoring and editing files, not for topic reviews.</p>
	<p>Opens a dialog that lets you navigate to and select a snippet on the left. This is available when authoring and editing files, not for topic reviews.</p> <p>There are two types of snippets: text and block. This is determined by the way you insert the snippet.</p>

Option	Description
	Opens a drop-down that lets you select the number of columns and rows that you want to add as you insert a new table.
	Converts the selected content to a drop-down, with the first line serving as the hotspot and the content below as the body. In the output, users can click the hotspot to expand and collapse the body content. This is available when authoring and editing files, not for topic reviews.
	Opens a dialog that lets you apply conditions to content.

Code Toolbar

You can use the options in the toolbar at the top of the Code Editor to accomplish different tasks.



Option	Description
	Reverses the most recent action.
	Repeats the most recent action that you reversed.
	Toggle to break a section of text so that it fits into the display area of the Code Editor. Toggle again for no wrap to display.
	Formatting the code cleans up the white space in the code. This can be performed on HTML, CSS, and JS file types.

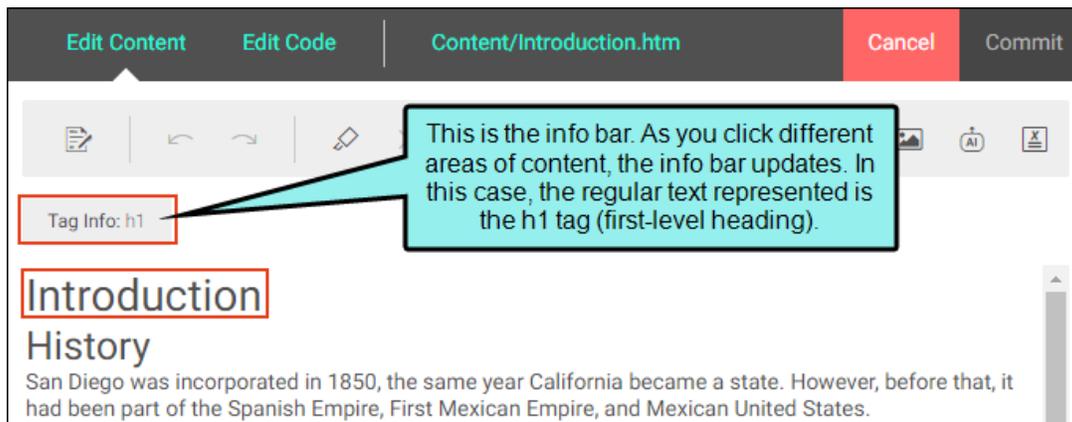
I Info Bar

Many different kinds of elements (e.g., tags, annotations, markers) can display in the editor as it is being authored or edited. The Content Editor provides an info bar just under the toolbar. This bar displays details and is clickable in some cases.

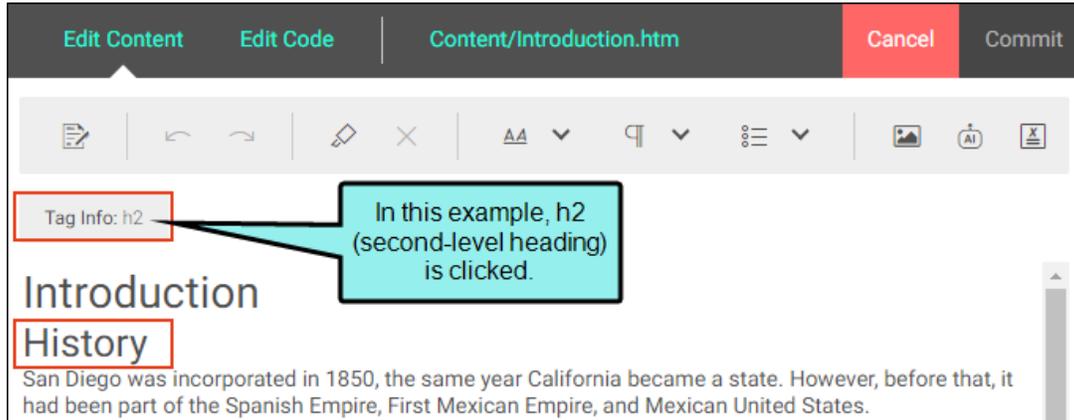
Display Details

When you click in the editor, this info bar lets you know what that area contains. It also displays information such as the tag structure, the destination of a link, or annotation details.

☆ **EXAMPLE** If you open a topic for editing, notice the info bar near the top of the top of the Content Editor.



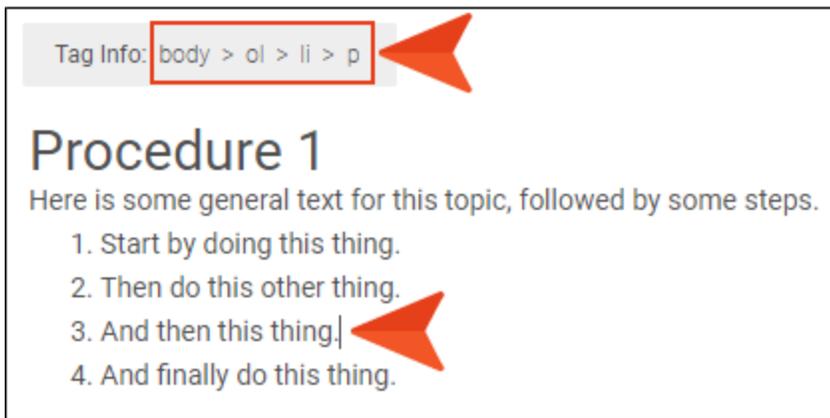
☆ If you click on a different area, the info bar updates.



Clickable Tags

You can click any tag in the info bar, and the corresponding area in the content file will be selected as well.

☆ **EXAMPLE** You have a topic with a numbered list, and the cursor is currently located within it, at the end of step 3. Notice that the info bar describes the tag structure. The broadest tag is `<body>`, which essentially holds all of the content in the file. This is followed by `` (which is an ordered, or numbered, list), since the cursor is located within that list. Within that tag is ``, which represents the list item (in this case, the third list item). And finally, within that list item is a paragraph (or `<p>` tag).



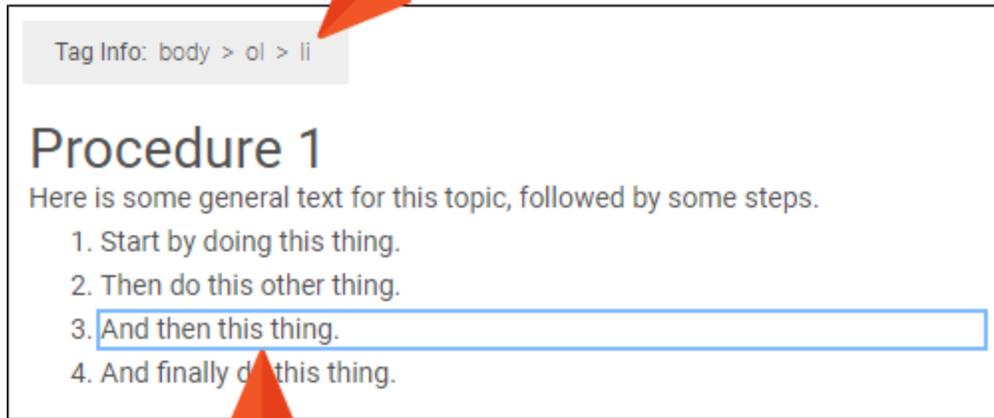
Tag Info: `body > ol > li > p`

Procedure 1

Here is some general text for this topic, followed by some steps.

1. Start by doing this thing.
2. Then do this other thing.
3. And then this thing.
4. And finally do this thing.

☆ If you were to click **li** in the info bar, the list item would be selected. (Clicking the **p** tag would look much the same in the editor.)



Tag Info: body > ol > li

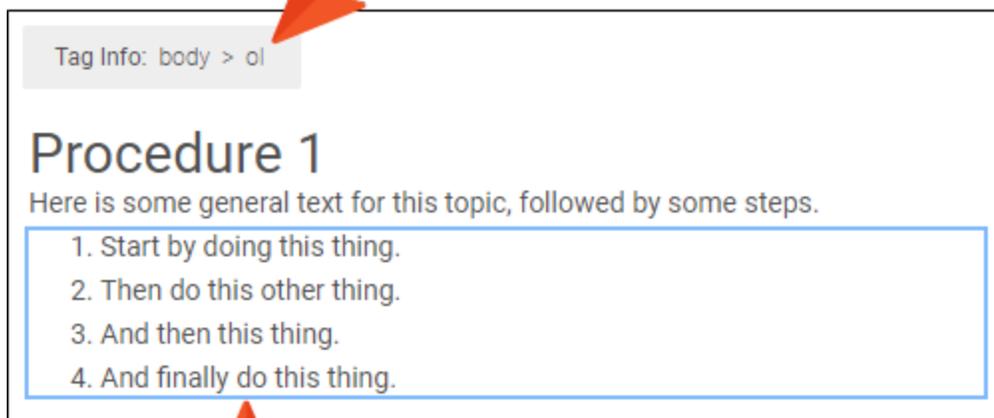
Procedure 1

Here is some general text for this topic, followed by some steps.

1. Start by doing this thing.
2. Then do this other thing.
3. And then this thing.
4. And finally do this thing.

This screenshot shows a text editor interface. At the top, a grey box contains the text "Tag Info: body > ol > li". Below this is a section titled "Procedure 1" with a subtitle "Here is some general text for this topic, followed by some steps." followed by a four-item numbered list. The third list item, "3. And then this thing.", is highlighted with a blue selection box. Two red arrows point to the "li" in the tag info and the selected list item.

If you click **ol** in the info bar, the entire list area would be selected.



Tag Info: body > ol

Procedure 1

Here is some general text for this topic, followed by some steps.

1. Start by doing this thing.
2. Then do this other thing.
3. And then this thing.
4. And finally do this thing.

This screenshot shows the same text editor interface as above. The tag info now reads "Tag Info: body > ol". The entire list area, including all four list items, is highlighted with a blue selection box. Two red arrows point to the "ol" in the tag info and the bottom of the selected list area.

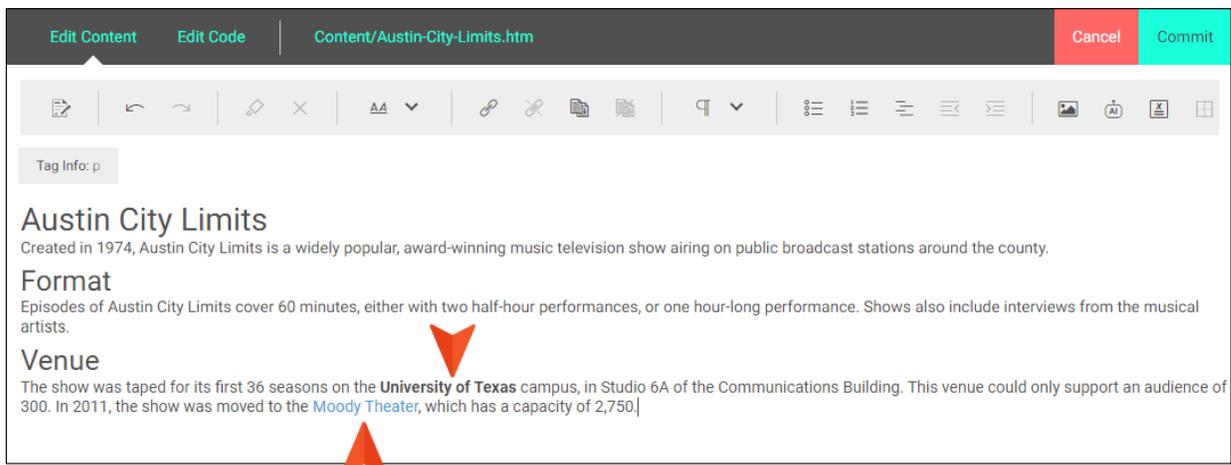
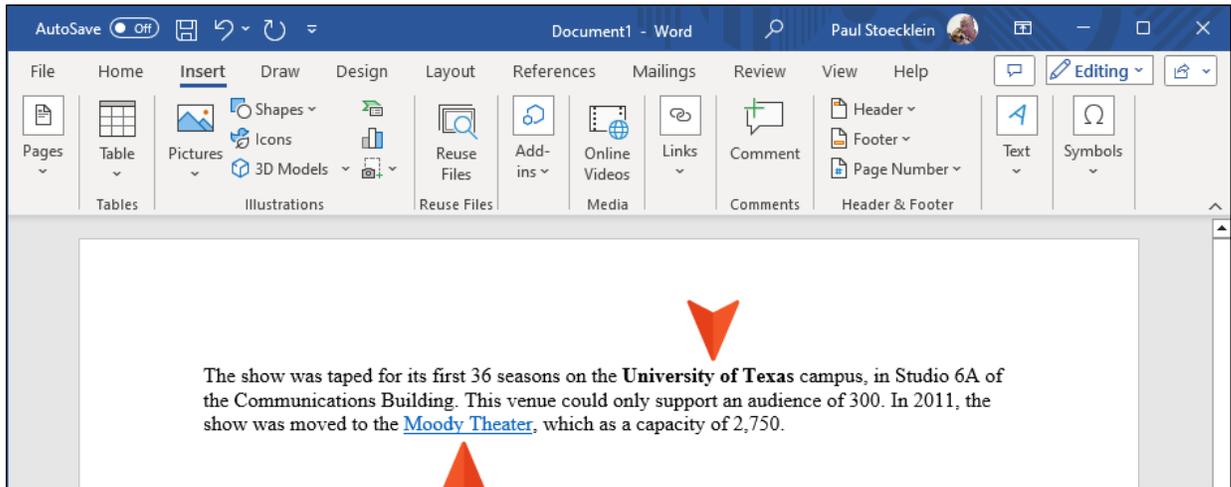
☆ And finally, if you click **body**, everything in the file would be selected.

The diagram illustrates a document structure. It features a large outer rectangle with a black border. Inside this rectangle, at the top left, is a smaller grey rectangle labeled "Tag Info: body". Below this, there is a blue-bordered rectangle containing the text "Procedure 1" in a large font, followed by a paragraph "Here is some general text for this topic, followed by some steps." and a numbered list of four items: "1. Start by doing this thing.", "2. Then do this other thing.", "3. And then this thing.", and "4. And finally do this thing." Two red arrows point towards the diagram: one points to the top edge of the blue-bordered rectangle, and the other points to the bottom edge of the blue-bordered rectangle.

Copying and Pasting Content

Keep the following in mind when copying and pasting content:

- **Text** When copying and pasting text, formatting is retained. This includes lists, hyperlinks, and other styles (e.g., bold, italics, underline), even when the text is copied from applications outside Central.

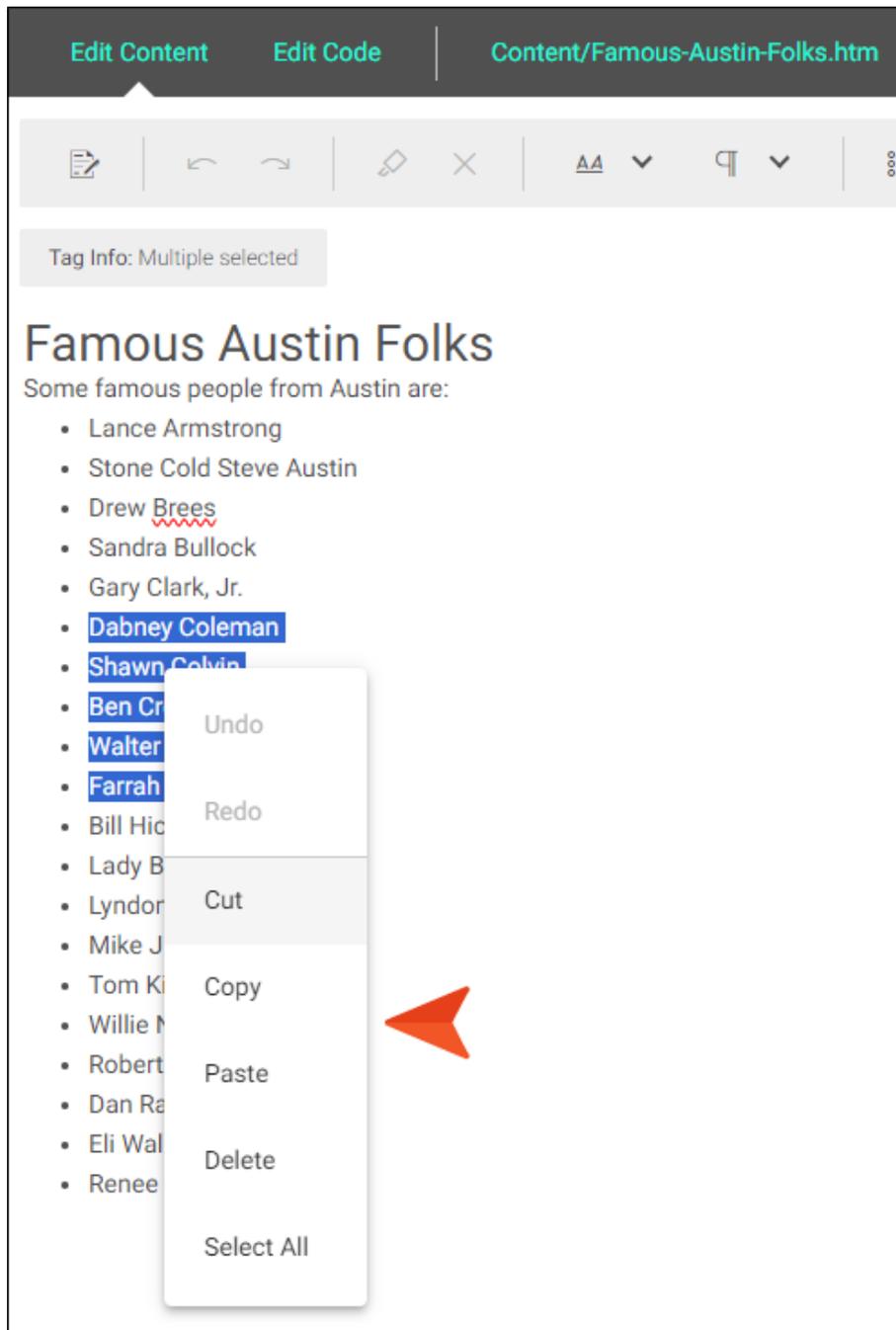


- **Tables** Formatting for tables is retained when copying and pasting within and between files in Central. Pasting tables from other software (e.g., Word, Outlook) will be inserted as simple tables.

- **Images** You can also copy and paste images, but only when you are doing so within the same topic or snippet. It does not work from outside sources.

When copying and pasting (and performing other actions, such as cut, select all, and undo), you can use standard shortcuts (e.g., CTRL+C, CTRL+V) on your keyboard.

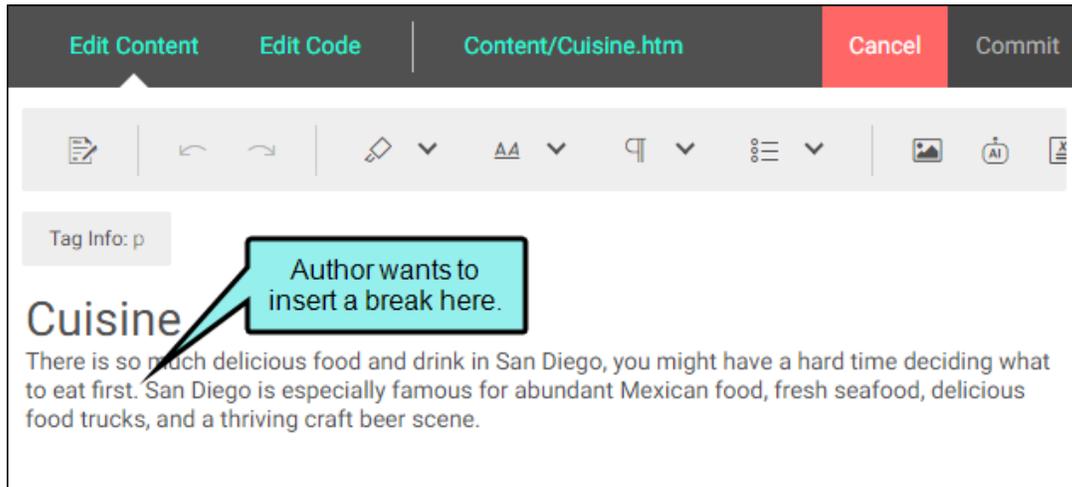
You can also right-click and select from a menu.



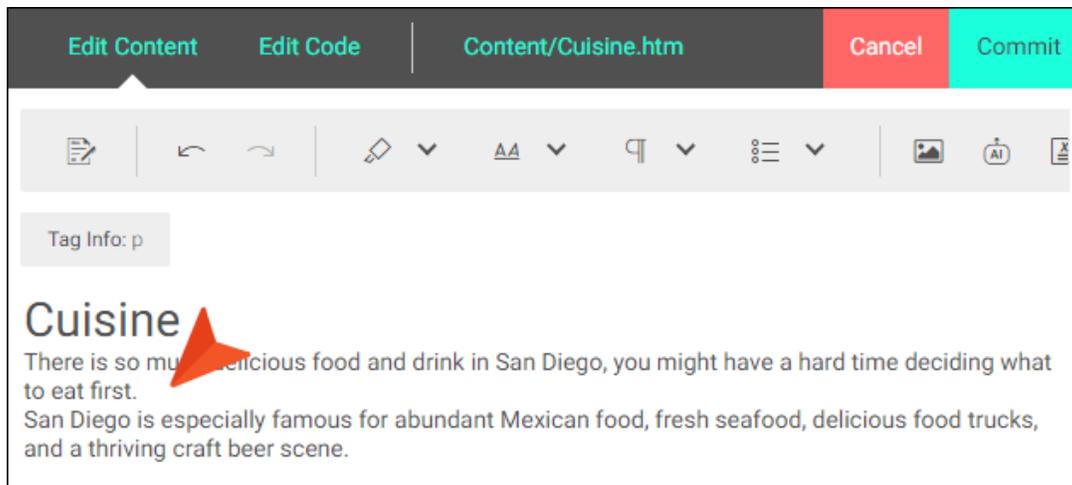
I Breaks

You can insert break tags by pressing **SHIFT + ENTER** on your keyboard.

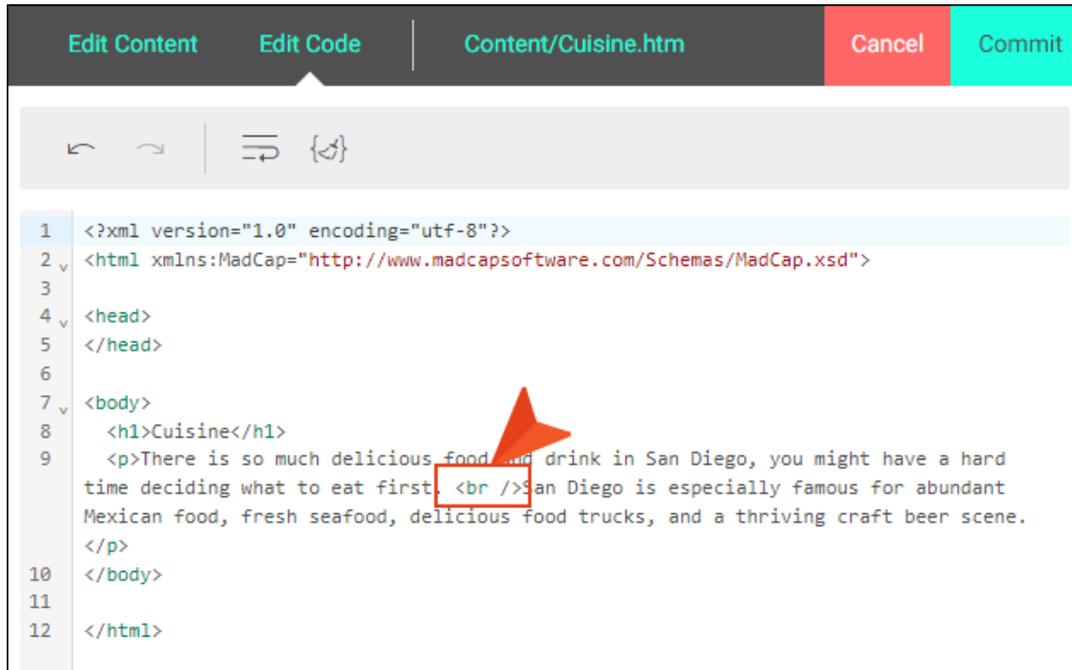
☆ **EXAMPLE** You have a topic open in Central's editor. The text looks like this, but the author wants to insert a break mid-paragraph.



After pressing **SHIFT + ENTER**, the Content Editor shows it as a break in the line of text.



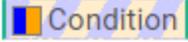
☆ You can use the Code Editor to view breaks. In the Code Editor it displays with the `
` tag.



The screenshot shows a code editor interface with a dark header bar containing tabs for 'Edit Content', 'Edit Code', and 'Content/Cuisine.htm', along with 'Cancel' and 'Commit' buttons. Below the header is a toolbar with navigation icons. The main area displays HTML code with line numbers 1 through 12. A red arrow points to the `
` tag on line 9, which is highlighted with a red box. The text in the code is: `<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>`, `<html xmlns:MadCap="http://www.madcapsoftware.com/Schemas/MadCap.xsd">`, `<head>`, `</head>`, `<body>`, `<h1>Cuisine</h1>`, `<p>There is so much delicious food and drink in San Diego, you might have a hard time deciding what to eat first.
 San Diego is especially famous for abundant Mexican food, fresh seafood, delicious food trucks, and a thriving craft beer scene.`, `</p>`, `</body>`, and `</html>`.

I Markers

The tags and markup that are necessary for Flare topics and snippets are represented by various markers in the editor. These provide a visual cue that more than simple text is present. In many cases, the author probably won't need to—or even be allowed to—make changes to the element. But it is important to know that one of these elements is present so that it does not get deleted accidentally.

Marker	Elements
Blue Brackets 	Footnotes Variables
(Used for read-only content)	
Blue Hotspot, Arrow, Vertical Bar 	Drop-Downs
Blue Text 	Cross-References Text Hyperlinks Topic Popups
Colored Square and Background 	Conditions Applied and Shown

Marker	Elements
--------	----------

Dashed Border

Condition

CORRECT FEEDBACK
Correct!

INCORRECT FEEDBACK
Nope. They cost more than that.

Conditions

eLearning Feedback

Gray Box



3D Models

Page Breaks (light gray)

Concept Links

Page Footers

Equations

Page Headers

Forms/Fields

Proxies

Keyword Links

Related Topic Links

Multimedia

Shortcuts

QR Codes

Slideshows

Marker	Elements
--------	----------

Green Brackets



(Used for editable content)

Code Snippets

Responsive Content

Divs

Spans

Glossary Term Links

Subscript

Inline Conditions

Superscript

Micro Content

Text Popups

Redacted Text

Togglers

Solid Border

Here is a snippet.

Submit

Snippets

eLearning Submit Button

Star



Bookmarks

Index Keywords

Concepts

Scripts



NOTE Some elements, such as eLearning items, cannot be created using the Content Editor or Code Editor. However, they may be viewed, and in some cases supported, for editing within the elements established by Flare.

APPENDIX

PDFs

The following PDFs are available for download from the online Help.

AI Assist Guide

Analytics Guide

Authoring Guide

Branding Guide

Building Output Guide

Checklists Guide

Conditions Guide

Getting Started Guide

*Images and Multimedia
Guide*

*License Management and
Purchasing Guide*

Links Guide

Projects Guide

Reports Guide

Reviews Guide

Security Whitepaper

Sites Guide

Snippets Guide

Source Control Guide

Targets Guide

Tasks Guide

Topics Guide

Translation Guide

Users and Teams Guide

Variables Guide

What's New Guide

Widgets Guide