Discussions
Use the **Discussions** tool in your course to encourage users to share thoughts on course material with their peers. You can set up forums and topics for users to ask questions, discuss course content and assignments, and work together in assigned groups and sections.

Online discussions provide one of the best ways to promote engagement and collaboration in an online class. Forums are used to organize discussion topics into categories. At least one forum must be created before creating topics.

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Tutorial Videos

- Create a Discussion Forum (current view)
- Create a Discussion Topic (old view)
- Grade a Discussion Topic (current view)
- Add a Rubric to a Discussion Topic (old view)
- Subscription Options (current view)
- Lock a Discussion Forum (old view)
- Discussions - Grid View (current view)

Getting Started with Discussions

Create a Discussion Forum (category)

Use forums to organize your discussion topics into categories. Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but you must create a forum before you can create a topic.

1. On the navbar, click Discussions from the Assessments drop-down menu.

3. Enter a **Title** (required) and **Description** (optional) for your new forum.

![New Forum Details](image)

4. In the **Options** section, select any of the following check boxes:

![Options](image)

5. In the **Restrictions** section, you can apply start and end dates for your discussions. There are various Visibility options that will apply with the dates.

![Restrictions](image)
6. Click **Save and Close**.

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**Create a Discussion Topic**

Your course can have multiple forums and topics, but **you must create a forum before you can create a topic** since all topics belong to forums.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions** from the **Assessments** drop-down menu.

On the **Discussions List** page, from the **New** button, click **New Topic**.
2. From the forum drop-down list, select the forum you want to place your topic in. If you want to create a new forum for your topic, click New Forum.

3. Enter the topic **Title** (required) and **Description** (optional).
4. Select **Availability Dates & Conditions** allows you to apply Start and End dates, release conditions and group/section restrictions.

5. **Post & Completion** gives options for how the students will interact with the discussion board.
6. **Evaluation & Feedback** provides a place to add a rubric, learning objectives, and some additional evaluation options.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add Rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage Learning Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow evaluation of individual posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow learners to rate posts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

**Create a Discussion Thread (Post)**

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions** from the **Assessments** drop-down menu.

2. Click the topic where you want to create a thread.
3. Click **Start a New Thread**.

4. Enter a subject and then create your post.

5. Set any of the following preferences (optional):
   a. To keep the thread at the top of the list, select **Pin Thread**.
   b. To receive updates on the thread using your selected notification method, select **Subscribe to this thread**.
   c. To attach a file, in the **Attachments** area.
   d. To post your thread to more than one topic, click **Post to other topics**. Click **Add Topics**. Select the topics that you want your thread to appear in.

6. Click **Post**.
Reply to a Discussion Thread

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions** from the **Assessments** drop-down menu.

2. From the **Discussions List**, click on the discussion topic containing the thread you want to reply to.

3. Click on the thread title, click **Reply to Thread**.
4. Enter your reply in the HTML Editor. To include the original post’s text in your reply, click the **Add original post text** link. Click **Post**.

**Assessing Discussions**

**Configure a Topic for Assessment**

1. From the drop-down menu of the topic you want to configure for assessment, click **Edit Topic**.
2. In the editor, there is a section to set the amount of points for the discussion board. Enter the amount of points in the **Grade Out Of** section, then click the **In Grade Book** drop down to connect the discussion board to the grade book. Choose **Edit or Link to Existing**.

![Image of Grade Book options]

3. The first option will create a grade item for the discussion board if you have not already done so. Choose the grade category you want the new grade item to be in. If you have already created a grade item, choose the **Link to an existing grade item** option and a drop down will appear for you to choose the grade item.

![Image of Edit or Link to Existing options]

4. Click **Save and Close**. In the **Discussions List**, a topic with an assessment will state **Includes Assessment**.

![Image of Discussion with assessment]
Add a Rubric to a Discussion Topic

1. Navigate to the topic where you want to add a rubric and select **Edit Topic** from the topic’s drop down menu.

2. In the **Evaluation & Feedback** section, select **Add Rubric** to add an existing rubric to the topic or create one.
3. Select the rubric you want to use. Click **Add Selected**.

![Select Rubric](image1)

4. The rubric will display in the **Evaluation & Feedback** section. Click **Save and Close**.

![Evaluation & Feedback](image2)
Assign Scores to Users from the Assess Topic Page

You can assess users from inside a discussion topic. When assessing users from the Assess Topic page, you can see topic scores for all users and view all of a user’s posts together on one screen.

1. On the navbar, click Discussions from the Assessments drop-down menu.

2. From the drop-down menu of the topic you want to assess, click Assess Topic.

3. In the Users tab, click Topic Score for the name of the user you want to assess.
4. In the **Topic Score Details** window you can see all posts made by the student. Click on the **Topic Score** to enter a score for the topic. Select the **Publish score on save** check box. When this check box is selected, the Topic Score and General Feedback are sent to Grades.

5. In the **General Feedback** field, enter any comments that you have. Click **Save and Close**.
6. View all topic scores on the **Assess Topic** page. To publish scores for all users, click **Publish All Scores to Grades**.

![Assess Topic page](image)

**Managing Discussions**

**Edit an Existing Forum or Topic**

1. On the **Discussions List** page, click the drop down arrow beside the name of the forum or topic you want to edit, and select **Edit Forum** or **Edit Topic**.

![Edit Forum](image)

2. After making changes, click **Save and Close**.

![Save and Close](image)
Subscribe or Unsubscribe to a Discussion

Remain up to date on discussions by subscribing to forums, topics, or threads.

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions** from the **Assessments** drop-down menu.

![Image of Discussions dropdown menu]

2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the drop down menu of the forum or topic you want to receive notifications of new posts for, click **Subscribe**.

![Image of Subscribe button on Discussions List page]
3. In the **Customize Notifications** pop-up window, select your **Notification Method**. Click **Subscribe**.

4. To unsubscribe, from the drop-down menu of the **forum** or **topic** you want to receive notifications of new posts for, click **Unsubscribe**. Click **Yes** in the pop-up window.
Restore Deleted Discussions

1. On the navbar, click **Discussions** from the **Assessments** drop-down menu.

2. On the **Discussions List** page, from the **More Actions** button, click **Restore**.

3. Click **Restore** beside the forum or topic you want to restore.