Discussion Forums

The Discussion Board is an interactive tool in Blackboard. Its purpose is to mirror face-to-face conversations among students. Rather than being a place where students simply answer questions, a discussion forum can encourage higher order thinking and analysis. These steps will help you set up a forum in your course.

How to Create a Forum

1. Begin with the edit mode ON.

2. Under the Control Panel, open Course Tools and click on Discussion Board as shown below.

3. Click on your course number if you see this screen.

4. Click on Create Forum. A properties screen will appear so that you can set up the forum. Notice that you have a full tool bar to help you compose. Use the chevron on the far right to show more or fewer formatting tools.
5. Type in a name for the forum and instructions for students. The forum below is named “Audience.” You must include instructions here for students to read when they use the forum. You can type in your instructions or create them in Word and then paste them into the Instructions section.

See the Discussion Board Tips handout for more about instructions and managing the forum.

6. Click “Yes” or “No” to make the Forum available to students. *Note: If you choose No, you will see (This forum is currently unavailable) under the name of the Forum in the list.* Optional: You may also set a time period for the forum to be available.
7. **Select Settings**
   
   a. **Standard View** is the default setting.

   ![Forum Availability settings](image)

   - **Select Settings**
     - **Standard View** is the default setting.
     - **Grade Discussion Forum** and **No grading in Forum**
     - **Grade Discussion Forum**
     - **No grading in Forum**

   ![Forum Settings](image)

   - **Forum Settings**
     - **Add Rubric**
     - **Exclude Rubric**
     - **Add Rubric**

   b. **Click either No grading in Forum or Grade Discussion Forum.** If you are giving a grade, you must enter the number of points. *Note: If you choose Grade, that Forum will be automatically added to the Grade Center.* Optional: You can reset the “needs grading” number and add a rubric.

   ![Grade settings](image)

   - **Grade**
     - **No Grading in Forum**
     - **Grade Discussion Forum**
     - **Grade Threads**

   - **Due Date**
     - **Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.**

   ![Associated Rubrics](image)

   - **Associated Rubrics**
     - **Add Rubric**
     - **Exclude Rubric**

   c. **Subscribe** allows students to receive emails notifying them of new posts and replies.
d. You will see a long list of options under Create and Edit, including allowing students to edit or delete their own posts. Select those that fit your assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscribe</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date Last Edited</th>
<th>Show Rubric to Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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- Do not allow subscriptions
- Allow members to subscribe to threads
- Allow members to subscribe to forum
  - Include body of post in the email
  - Include link to post

8. Click on the **Submit** button to create the Forum. You should see a green success message telling you the Forum was created.

9. Move your cursor to the right of a forum title and a pull-down menu will appear. From this menu, you can open the forum; edit its properties; or grade, copy, or delete it.
Create a Link for Students

1. In a content folder, lesson plan, or learning module, create a direct link to the forum for students.
2. From the action bar, click Tools and then Discussion Board.
3. Click Link to Discussion Board Page. In the link information give students direction on which Discussion Board to choose. (Do not Select A Discussion Board Forum as that will bypass the directions and send students directly to creating a forum).
4. Click **Next**.
5. Type or paste in your instructions (so students can see them).
6. Click **Submit**.
7. Students will recognize a Discussion Board by this icon

**View a Discussion Thread**

1. Use the tree view (the default setting) to see posts and replies. Simply click on the name of the post to read it.
2. Check the box for all posts and replies and click **Collect** to view and/or print them.
3. Plus and minus signs help you expand and collapse threads. Replies are indented below a thread and begin with RE.

4. When you click on a post, you will see a **Reply** button under each post.
5. Move your cursor to the right of the Reply button and three other options (Edit, Delete, and Email Author) appear.
Additional Resources: Blackboard Help [https://help.blackboard.com](https://help.blackboard.com)