



Getting Started with the Discussions Tool

This guide serves as an introduction to using the Discussion tool. Using discussions is a great way to provide asynchronous conversation between students and to assess their understanding of course material. However, this tool can be confusing with its verbiage and how it functions. This document will explain what each term means, and how to organize the discussion area. It also provides a step-by-step guide for how to get started using discussions.

Note: Content posted by students in a discussion thread is viewable by all other students enrolled in that course. When creating a topic you will have the option to let students hide their name from other learners.

- Understanding discussion Forums, Topics, Threads, and Responses
- Using discussions: Step-by-step
- Grading discussion responses

If you'd like to learn how to set up **Group Discussions**, visit our guide entitled “Creating Group Discussions.”

Updated Spring 2022

Discussion Forums, Topics, Threads, and Responses

The discussion tool is set up with **Forums**, **Topics**, and **Threads**.

- **Discussion Forum** - This is a heading or category that discussion topics will live inside. Students can't do anything in an empty forum. It must have topics inside of it for discussion to take place.
- **Discussion Topic** - The topic is where you state what is to be discussed. Students will then reply by starting a thread. You must designate what forum your topic is to reside in.
- **Discussion Thread** - When a student posts their **response** to a topic, it will start a thread. This allows the instructor and other students to react to what they have said.

Following are two examples of how Forums and Topics are displayed in Brightspace:



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Example One: this shows where a forum, topic, and description will show up

This is a forum ▾

This is a forum description

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
This is a topic ▾ This is the topic description	0	0	
This is a second topic ▾ this is the second topic's description	0	0	

Example 2: this shows a real case use of a discussion forum

Unit 1 Discussions ▾

All discussions from the first 4 weeks of class will be in this forum.

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Group Discussions - 9/25/17 ▾ Group/section restrictions. During class today we split into groups, and I gave each group a topic to discuss. Each student should start a thread with their opinion on today's topic, and respond at least two of their group members' thread for participation credit.	0	0	
Research Topic - Due 10/4/17! ▾ Please start a thread in which you state what your research topic will be. You must tell me the person, genre, or work that you have chosen. Research topics are due on October 4th!	0	0	



Using Discussions: Step by Step

1. Locate the **Discussions** tool under the **Activities and Assessments** tab in your Brightspace course
2. Create a Forum by clicking **New** and **Create Forum**
3. [Create Topics to reside within that forum](#) (*link to detailed guide on creating topics*)
4. As students respond to the topic, you can view their responses by clicking on the hyperlinked number in the "posts" column

Weekly Reflection and Response ▾

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Discussion: Prep for Week 2 ▾ Starts Jan 9 Includes assessment. Based on the readings, answer the following questions before class to prepare for the discussion we will have in class.	24	2 (24)	

5. If desired, you can grade responses and link it to the grade book. You would need to set this up ahead of time when you create your topic (Step 3).

Grade a Discussion Response

First you must set up your topic to be assessed. [Use this guide](#) to learn how to set up a topic and add assessment. Once you have added this option to the topic you are able to grade a response.

1. Navigate to your discussion topic under the **Activities and Assessments** tab and click on the hyperlinked number in the "posts" column to view responses (see graphic above in step 4)



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- Click directly on the response link to view the student's response

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Discussion: Prep for Week 2

Starts Jan 9
Includes assessment.
Subscribe

Based on the readings, answer the following questions before class to prepare for the discussion we will have in class.

Start a New Thread

Filter by: All Threads Sort by: Author Last Name A-Z

Week 1 SLA Myths and My Reflections

posted Jan 15, 2019 9:48 PM

Many of my teachers seem to hold the view that "Languages are learned through imitation". When asked about effective ways of improving languages (e.g. English and Chinese), they would recommend that students should read more books or watch more movies in the target language.

0 Unread 0 Replies 1 Views

- After viewing their response, click on the drop-down menu and select **Assess Topic**
- Enter the point value for this student.

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Discussion of Week 2

posted Jan 15, 2019 9:55 PM

Based on my experiences of learning English, I believe that teachers should still remember to let students practice what they do on their own. For example, I remember that when I was in high school, my English teacher would give us a sentence structure, and we would have to change the elements in the sentence to let students change the elements in the sentence. Then, the class will use the sentence structure to let students change the elements in the sentence. This is helpful for students to ensure students can memorize the sentence structure and convey their own ideas.

Edit Thread

Assess Topic

Mark All Posts as Read

Mark All Posts as Unread

Pin Thread

Tip: If you want to assess all students at once, you can do that by selecting Assess Topic on the topic page, and not on an individual student's response. This is helpful if you are only grading on participation and not content.



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Discussion: Prep for Week 2



[Starts Jan 2](#)

Includes assessment.

[Subscribe](#)

Based on the readings, answer the following questions before for the discussion we will have in class.

[Start a New Thread](#)

- View Topic in Grid View
- Mark All Threads as Read
- Mark All Threads as Unread
- Edit Topic
- Assess Topic
- View Topic Statistics
- Hide Description
- Delete Topic

Filter by: [All Threads](#)

Sort by:

[Author Last Name A-Z](#)

[Week 1 SLA Myths and My Reflec](#)

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