Discussion Board

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How to Create a Discussion Forum

1. Access the Discussion Board, by selecting **Discussions** from the item list.
2. Make sure **Edit Mode** is turned ON. (Upper right-hand corner of screen.)

3. If this is your first time on the Discussion Board, it will be blank. Select **Create Forum**. It is recommended to create an “Ask Your Instructor” forum first.

4. Enter “Ask Your Instructor” in the **Name field**. This is where students can ask questions and everyone can see everyone’s questions and answers.

   a. In the **Description field**, type “Please ask any questions you have for your Instructor here. If you have a personal issue, please email directly.”
b. Scroll down the forum page. These settings are where you can control availability by dates and time. Leave blank if you don’t want to limit availability.

![Forum Availability Settings](image)

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c. Scroll down to Forum Settings. Three key settings are: Grade Discussion Forum, Allow Attachments and Allow Author to Delete Own Posts. If you want the gradebook to automatically create a column for each discussion forum you create, select this setting and enter the number of points the discussion is worth. If you want to allow students to add attachments to their discussion posts (MS Word document, videos, PowerPoints, etc.), select this setting. If you want to allow students to delete their own posts, select this setting.

![Forum Settings](image)
d. Select **Submit**.

Note: It is recommended to have 2 forums to start every course. They are “Ask the Instructor” and “Introduce Yourself.”

Here are examples of each forum.

- **Ask the Instructor**: Please feel free to ask questions here. This is public to all students in the class so if you have a personal issue, please email me.

- **Introduce Yourself**: Hello Students! Please introduce yourself. Consider answering questions such as:
  - What's your name?
  - When the “stay-at-home” orders are lifted, what will be the first thing you do?
  - What has been your favorite class and why? (unless of course this is your first class!)
  - What interests you about this class?
  - Please use complete sentences and do not # your answers.

Select the "Introduce Yourself" link, then select "Create Thread."
You may also want to create a forum that provides your discussion expectations. It may cover information such as:

![Expectations for Course Discussions:]
- Number of posts and replies
- Word count
- Citations
- Take a stance? Argue against? Move forward?

**Netiquette:**
- Appropriate use of language and tone
- Your expectations for grammar, punctuation, text fonts and colors
- Respect and consideration for other students
- Use of sarcasm, humor, and/or the posting of jokes
- Issues of privacy and information sharing outside of class

Here is a link for more Netiquette ideas:

https://elearningindustry.com/10-netiquette-tips-online-discussions

**How to Edit a Discussion Forum**

1. Hover your mouse to the right of the Discussion Forum title (Ask your Instructor) and a “chevron” will appear. (Looks like this: [ ] ) **Select the chevron** and a drop-down menu appears. Select **Edit.**
You can now edit information and settings. Select **Submit** to save changes.

**How to Reply to a Discussion Post (Thread)**

When a student posts a discussion thread in a discussion forum, the instructor may want to reply to the post (or thread). When a post has been submitted, the Forum name bolds and the “Unread” column adds the post.

1. Select the forum name to open the forum. (Ex: **Ask Your Instructor**)

2. In the forum, posts will appear. Select the thread title to one each post. For example:
3. Select **Reply**.

4. Type your reply. You can upload a file if necessary.
5. Select **Submit** and your reply is posted.
How to Create Effective Discussion Prompts

Determine the objective. Before developing a discussion question, first determine what you want students to achieve.

1. Determine the type of question.
2. Engage the students.
3. Assess the question.
4. Be involved.

The following two resources help with understanding how to create effective discussion prompts.

https://blog.cengage.com/successful-strategies-for-creating-online-discussion-prompts

https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/teaching/student-teacher-communication/designing-effective-discussion-questions

How to Facilitate Discussions

The Discussion Board is a venue for interaction and critical thinking. They can also be repetitive, monotonous chores to complete. Understanding how to facilitate meaningful discussions that engage learners and promote a healthy online community is important.

How are discussions on-ground different than discussions online?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUAnp08ATTI&feature=youtu.be (Time: 4:31 min)

How to facilitate a meaningful discussion. (Note - In this video, Canvas is referenced. No worries, CLU uses Blackboard and provides similar features.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ1J07Ln0Hw&feature=youtu.be (Time: 17:31 min)

Remember, your “presence” online is very important. You might guide a discussion that is straying from the intended discussion. You might challenge a discussion that is moving forward. The more an instructor participates, the more students participate!
Inappropriate Posts

If a student posts something you deem inappropriate, take a screen capture or a picture with your phone. Save this picture to your hard drive. Hover your mouse over the Reply button and the delete button will appear. Select Delete.

Discussion Board FAQs

1. Can a student post an anonymous post?

Yes. When creating a discussion forum, enter the name and discussion information. Then scroll down to settings and select the box next to “Allow Anonymous Posts.” Then select Submit. This must be done for each forum you want students to be allowed to produce anonymous posts. Students will have the option to post with their name or as anonymous.

2. Do all the students see a question posted to the Ask Your Instructor Forum?

Yes. It is recommended you tell your students if they have a personal question or a question they only want the instructor to read, use email.
3. Can I copy from MS Word and paste into the discussion board?

   Yes. However, once you paste, you will need to remove the Word formatting after you paste the text in the editor, select all the text and select the Remove Formatting icon.

4. Is there a quick tutorial to learn the basics of Discussion Boards?

   Yes. Please select this link. It looks a little different due to the design of the course but the features are helpful.

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxjOU5sXmns

5. Why can't I see my discussion post?

   Check if you accidentally saved your contribution as a draft. Return to the forum page, access the Display menu, and select Drafts Only.

   Select Search at the top of the main discussion board, forum, or thread page and search for a term you used in your message.

   Perhaps you didn’t select Submit after creating your post.

6. What is a forum?

   A forum is an area of the discussion board where participants discuss a topic or a group of related topics. Within each forum, users can create multiple threads.