



## Blackboard for Faculty: Discussion Board

Teaching, Learning + Technology  
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### In this document, you will learn:

1. Discussion Board vocabulary
  2. How to create a new forum
  3. How to modify a forum
  4. How to rearrange forums
  5. How to read your students' posts
  6. How to respond to your students' posts
  7. How to grade student participation
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### About Discussion Boards

Blackboard's **Discussion Board** feature can be used to interact with your students, and for students to interact with each other. Use the Discussion Board to have students:

- Post answers to written assignments, so other students may review them and offer feedback.
  - Post reactions to assigned readings, and discuss with the rest of the class.
  - "Ask the Professor". Students post questions to you instead of e-mailing you privately. This way, the answers benefit the whole class!
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### Discussion Board vocabulary

1. **Forums:** A discussion board is comprised of one or more forums. Each forum pertains to a specific topic or assignment. If your class will have to complete three discussion board assignments this semester, you will need to create three separate forums.
  2. **Threads:** Forums are comprised of one or more discussions, or threads. When a student wants to start a new discussion in a forum, they create a new thread. Other students can reply to the first to strike up a conversation, or post a new thread to start their own. Responses are grouped together (or "threaded") to help keep track of the conversations.
  3. **Posts:** Threads are comprised of one or more posts. Each response in a forum is considered a post, whether it starts a new thread or continues an existing one.
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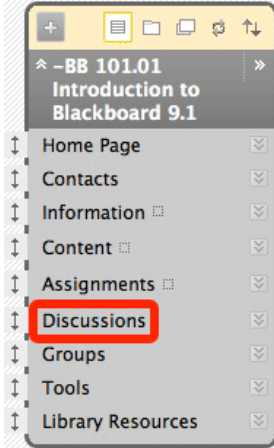
## Create a new forum

1. Enter your course by clicking its name in the **My Courses** module.



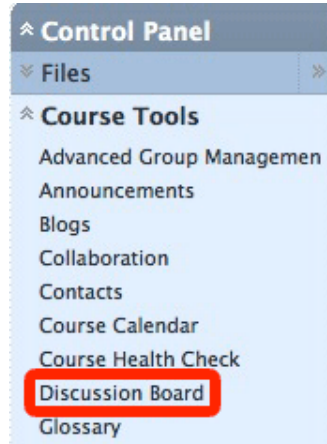
**I don't see my course!**  
 E-mail your course number and NetID to [blackboard@stonybrook.edu](mailto:blackboard@stonybrook.edu).

2. In the course menu, select **Discussions**.

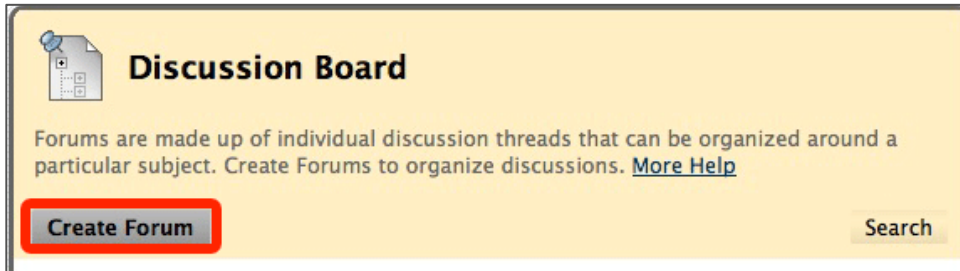


OR

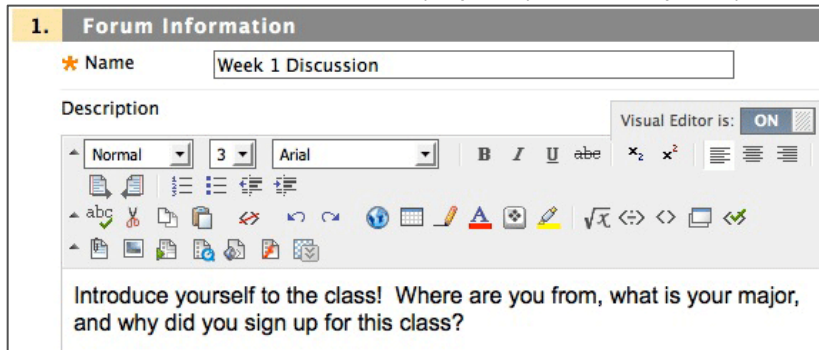
- Go to **Control Panel > Course Tools > Discussion Board**.



3. Click the **Create Forum** button.



4. **Forum Information:** Enter a name (required) and description (or instructions, optional) for the forum.



## 5. Forum Availability:

- Leave **Available** at **Yes**.
- Check the **Display After** box if you want to create this forum now, but make it available to students at a later date. Click the calendar and clock icons to select the date and time you want the forum to open, or type them manually into the boxes provided.
- Check the **Display Until** box if students have to respond to this forum by a certain date or time. When that date and time has passed, the forum will automatically become unavailable to students.

**2. Forum Availability**

Available  Yes  No

Enter Date and Time Restrictions  Display After

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Display Until

Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

## 6. Forum Settings: Check the boxes to enable any of the following options:

- **Allow Anonymous Posts:** Students may post without their name attached. There is no way to track anonymous posts.
- **Allow Author to Delete Own Posts:**
  - **All posts:** A student can delete any post they've already made to the forum.
  - **Only posts with no replies:** A student can only delete their own posts if no one else has replied yet.
- **Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts:** A student can make changes to their posts after they've been published.
- **Allow Post Tagging:** Instructors can label, or tag posts based on topic. Students and instructors can then use these tags to read all posts on a specific topic.
- **Allow Users to Reply with Quote** (enabled by default): Students can quote the person they are responding to in their post.
- **Allow File Attachments** (enabled by default): Students can upload documents along with their posts.
- **Allow Members to Create New Threads** (enabled by default): This box must always be checked so students can post to the forum!
- **Subscribe:** Students may opt in to receive e-mail notifications of new forum activity. We recommend **Allow members to subscribe to forum > Include body of post in the email**.
- **Allow Members to Rate Posts:** Students can rate each other's posts on scale of 1 to 5.
- **Force Moderation of Posts:** All student posts are placed in a moderation queue, where instructors may publish or reject based on content.
- **Grade:** Instructors may grade student participation. We recommend using **Grade Forum**.

7. Click **Submit** at the bottom of the page.

8. The forum will be listed on the Discussion Board. If it's not supposed to be available to students yet, it will say so beneath the Forum title.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
↑	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Week 1 Discussion</b> <i>Forum is not available. Available after: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 8:00:00 AM EDT.</i>	Introduce yourself to the class! Where are you from, what is your major, and why did you sign up for this class?	0	0	0

- See forum activity at a glance in the three columns on the right.
  - **Total Posts:** How many posts are in this forum.
  - **Unread Posts:** How many posts you haven't read yet.
  - **Total Participants:** How many students have posted so far.

9. Repeat these steps until all forums have been created.

## Need to make changes to your forum?

Click the down-pointing arrow button to the right of your forum's title.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
↑ <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Week 1 Discussion</a> ▼ <i>Forum is not available.</i> <i>Available after: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 8:00:00 AM EDT.</i>	Introduce yourself to the class! Where are you from, what is your major, and why did you sign up for this class?	0	0	0

- **Edit:** Modify the forum's name, instructions, availability and other settings.
- **Grade:** If enabled, grade your students' participation.
- **Manage:** Control who can post to the forum and who cannot.
- **Copy:** Send a copy of the forum to another course. Perfect for courses with multiple sections who have the same assignments.
- **Delete:** Removes the forum and all posts. Deleted forums cannot be recovered.
  - You may also delete by checking the box to the left of the forum's title, then clicking **Delete** at the top or bottom of the page.

## Don't like the way your forums are arranged?

Click and drag the double arrow button to the left of each forum to move it up or down the list.

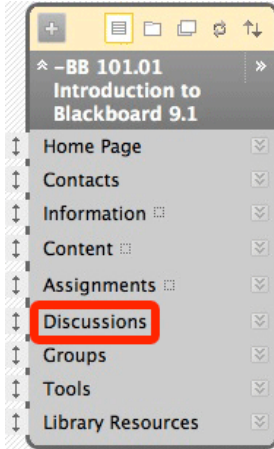
<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum	Description
↑ <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Week 1 Discussion</a> ▼ <i>Forum is not available.</i> <i>Available after: Tuesday, October 12, 2010 8:00:00 AM EDT.</i>	Introduce yourself to the class! Where are you from, what is your major, and why did you sign up for this class?
↑ <input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Week 2 Discussion</a> ▼	Read this week's assigned articles (in Assignments) then post your reactions here.

Click the two-arrow button near the upper right corner of the Discussion Board module.

The screenshot shows the 'Discussion Board' interface. At the top right, there is a search bar and a double arrow button (highlighted with a red box). Below this is a 'Create Forum' button. The main area displays a list of forums with columns for 'Forum', 'Description', and 'Total Posts'. A 'Reorder: Forums' dialog box is open, showing a list of items: 'Week 1 Discussion' and 'Week 2 Discussion'. The dialog box has 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons at the bottom. A red box also highlights the double arrow button in the top right corner of the dialog box.

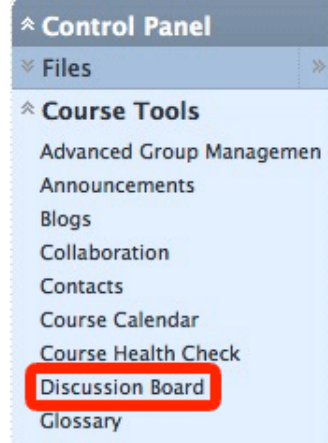
## How to read your students' posts

1. In the course menu, select **Discussions**.



OR

Go to **Control Panel > Course Tools > Discussion Board**.



2. Select the **name** of a forum to view all posts, or select the number under **Unread Posts** to skip right to those you haven't seen yet.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Week 1 Discussion</b>	Introduce yourself to the class! Where are you from, what is your major, and why did you sign up for this class?	7	<b>2</b>	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Week 2 Discussion	Read this week's assigned articles (in Assignments) then post your reactions here.	0	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test		0	0	0

3. There are two ways to view a discussion forum:

### List View (default)

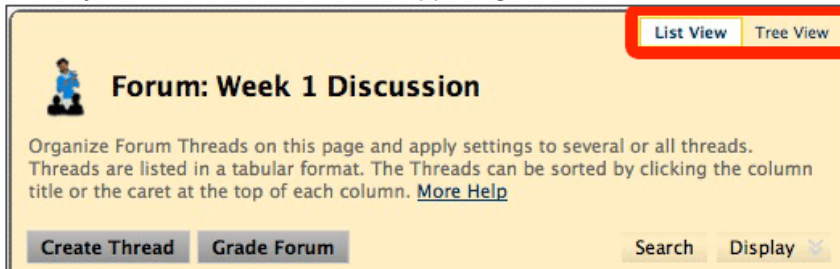
- All threads are divided into separate links.

OR

### Tree View

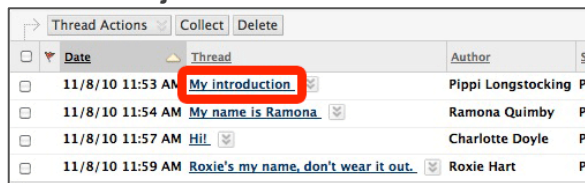
- All threads can be expanded and collapsed on the same page.

Select your desired view from the upper right corner of the screen.



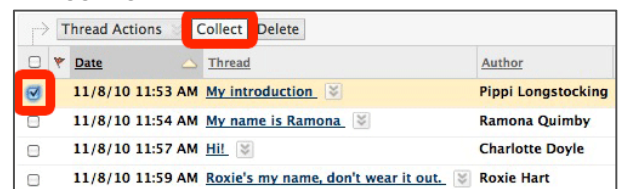
4. To view posts in a thread:

Click the **subject** of the thread.



OR

Check the box to the left of the thread, then click **Collect**. Expand thread and check all boxes when in Tree View.



5. While viewing contents of a thread on the **Thread Details** page, you may advance to the next post in the thread by clicking the arrow button above or below the post at the bottom of the page.

The screenshot shows a single post titled "My introduction" by Pippi Longstocking. The post content is "Hi! My name is Pippi. I am a business major, and I signed up for this course to learn more about Blackboard 9.1." At the top and bottom of the post area, there are navigation buttons: "My introduction" followed by a right-pointing arrow button, and "Reply", "Quote", "Edit", "Set Flag", and "Delete" buttons.

- Instructors can **Edit** or **Delete** student posts at any time.

6. To skip to the next thread, click the arrow button near the top of the page.

The screenshot shows a thread list with the following posts:

Post Title	Author	Date
My introduction	Pippi Longstocking	11/8/10 11:53 AM
RE: My introduction	Charlotte Doyle	11/8/10 11:58 AM
RE: My introduction	Roxie Hart	11/8/10 11:58 AM
This is a test	Katherine Mitra	12/10/10 2:23 PM

At the top of the thread list, there is a navigation bar with "My introduction" and a right-pointing arrow button, and a "Reply" button. Below the list, there are "Message Actions" and "Collect" buttons, and "Select: All None" options.

## Respond to student posts

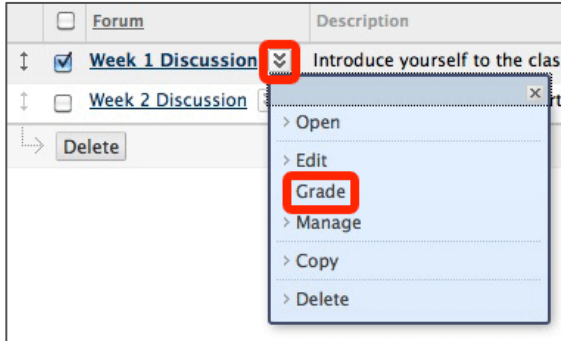
1. Follow the above steps to view a student's post.
2. Click **Reply** or **Quote** above or below the student's post to respond.
  - **Quote** copies and pastes the text of the post you're responding to into your post.

The screenshot shows the same post as in the previous screenshot. The "Reply" and "Quote" buttons are highlighted with red boxes. The "Quote" button is highlighted with a larger red box.

3. Compose your response, then click **Submit**.
  - Or, click **Save Draft** to come back and finish it later!

## Grade student participation

1. Click the arrow button to the right of your forum, then select **Grade**. If you do not see Grade listed, select **Edit** and enable grading for that forum.



2. The **Posts** column will list the number of posts made by each student. Click **Grade** for any student.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dallas	Leeloo	andreastu5	0	0.00	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Doyle	Charlotte	andreastu3	2	0.00	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hart	Roxie	andreastu4	2	--	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Longstocking	Pippi	andreastu	1	--	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Skywalker	Luke	andreastu6	0	--	Grade

3. There are three major components of the Grade Forum page:

The screenshot shows the 'Grade Forum: Roxie Hart' page. It includes a 'Print Preview' button (labeled 'a'), a 'Filter' button (labeled 'c'), and a 'Mark' dropdown menu (labeled 'b'). The main content area displays two forum posts with their details (Thread, Post, Author, Posted Date, Status) and a 'Reply' button. The right sidebar contains 'Forum Statistics' (Total Posts: 2, Date of Last Post: Oct 18, 2010 9:51:07 AM, Average Post Length: 134, Minimum Post Length: 122, Maximum Post Length: 146, Average Post Position: 3), 'Forum Grade' (Grade for: Roxie Hart, Grade: -- out of 100.0, Grade Date: --, Feedback: --, Grading Notes: --, Edit Grade button), and 'Contributors' (Show All, Charlotte Doyle (2), Pippi Longstocking (1), Ramona Quimby (1), Roxie Hart (2)).

- a. Print out the student's posts by clicking **Print Preview** (make sure your popup blocker is off!).
- b. Read the student's posts in this forum.
- c. View this student's participation details, including:
  - **Forum Statistics:** Date of last post, average, minimum and maximum post length (in characters).
  - **Forum Grade:** Their grade and any feedback. Click **Edit Grade** to enter or change their grade.
  - **Contributors:** Names of all students who participated in the forum

4. Click **Edit Grade** under **Forum Grade** on the right side of the screen.
5. Enter the student's **grade**, feedback and notes in the form provided. **Feedback** is visible to both you and your student. **Grading Notes** are only viewable to instructors. Click **Save Grade** when finished.
6. Click the arrow buttons in the upper right corner of or one of the names listed under **Contributors** to advance to the next student. Exclamation points [ ! ] indicate that that student hasn't been graded yet.

**Contributors** < >

Show All

[Charlotte Doyle](#) (2) !

[Pippi Longstocking](#) (1) !

[Ramona Quimby](#) (1) !

[Roxie Hart](#) (2) !

**Forum Grade**

Current Grade Value  
95 out of 100.0

Feedback:  
You're off to a great start! Good participation this week.

abc ✓

Grading Notes:

abc ✓

Cancel Save Grade