How to Create a Discussion Forum

Terminology:
Forum: Forums are used to organize discussions on related topics.
Thread: A thread is a response to a specific forum topic.
Posts: Posts include threads and replies to threads.

1. Go to your course site, and click “Discussion Board”.

2. Click “+Forum” button on the Discussion Board page.
3. Fill in **Forum Information**. Forum information includes the name of the forum, and optionally a description or instructions for the forum. It is a good practice to write clear instructions for your forum so that your students understand the tasks they need to accomplish.

4. **Forum Availability**. Select the current availability for the forum with the radio buttons. Optionally, select dates and times for which you want the forum to be available.

   a. Click “Yes” to make the forum available immediately.

   b. If you want the forum to be accessed in a certain period, check “Display After” and “Display Until”, and choose dates and times. You can also choose “Display After” only, which means that it will be displayed after that date and time. You can also choose “Display Until” only, in this case the forum will be displayed immediately and available until the selected date and time under “Display until”.

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5. Forum Settings. Set the following settings according to your preference. They can be changed by clicking on the Modify button if you later decide that your original choices were not adequate.

- **Allow anonymous posts.** Checking this box allows your students to choose to post anonymously. The posts are only anonymous to other students but not to the instructor. It is a good practice to not check this box.

- **Allow author to remove own posts.** Checking this box allows students to delete their posts. If you choose to allow this, it is better to select the “Only posts with no replies” option because it does not allow students to remove a post that another member of the class has previously replied to.

- **Allow author to modify own published posts.** Checking this box allows your students to edit their own posts.

- **Allow post tagging.** Checking this box allows posts to be “tagged” with keywords when viewed through the collect view.

- **Allow users to reply with quote.** Checking this box allows students to include a quote of the post to which they are replying.

- **Allow file attachments.** Checking this box will allow students to upload attachments to their posts. Should you choose to allow this, remind your students to compress or restrict the size of the files they attach. In general, it is recommended that attached files be no larger than 10 MB.

- **Allow members to create new threads.** Checking this box allows students to start new threads for topics of discussion within this forum. If this option is not checked, students will only be able to reply to threads that you create.

- **Subscribe.** This multiple choice setting makes it possible for you to allow students to choose to “subscribe” to a forum or thread so that notifications are sent to them when a new post has been added. Notifications are sent in the form of email messages which can contain either the complete text of the new post or only a link to it.

- **Allow members to rate posts.** Checking this box allows students to rate posts using a 5-star system.

- **Force moderation of posts.** Checking this box allows a moderator to review all the posts before they are visible to the class. If this option is enabled, students or staff with a discussion board role of Manager or Moderator can click on Moderate Forum to view a
queue of posts that are awaiting approval. After reviewing, managers or moderators can Publish a post or Return it to the writer with comments.

Grade. If you decide to grade students on their contributions to a discussion, select Grade Forum and enter the maximum number of points they can receive for this assignment. A column in the Grade Center will be automatically created with the name of the forum. A toolbar will also appear under the Grade column when you access the Discussion Board allowing you to easily see the posts that individual students have submitted.

6. Save the forum. Click on the “Submit” button.