

Tools: Discussion Board

Building a sense of community among students is crucial for a successful online experience. The Discussion Board is an important tool for interpersonal interaction and can replicate the robust discussions that take place in the traditional classroom. Discussions can serve a range of purposes, such as:

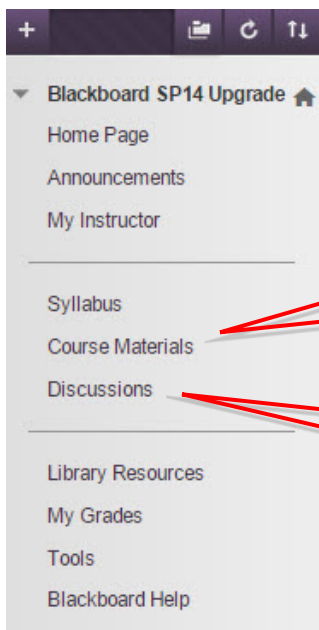
- An online meeting place for social interaction among peers.
- An additional medium for collaboration and the exchange of ideas.
- A medium to pose questions about homework assignments, readings, and course content.
- A way to demonstrate the understanding or application of course material.
- A record of discussion which can be reviewed at a later point.
- A graded activity that demonstrates understanding or application of course material.

The Discussion Board tool allows for asynchronous (time between the initial message or entry and the answer or feedback) interactions occurring over extended periods of time. This allows for more flexibility, as well as reflective communication.

Asynchronous communication offers convenience and flexibility to all participants. Some benefits include:

- Participants do not need to be in the same location or time zone.
- Participants can carefully consider and reflect on the initial message before responding and, hopefully, more thoughtful conversations can occur.
- Different learning styles are accommodated. For example, students who are shy about speaking in class may feel more comfortable responding to discussion threads.

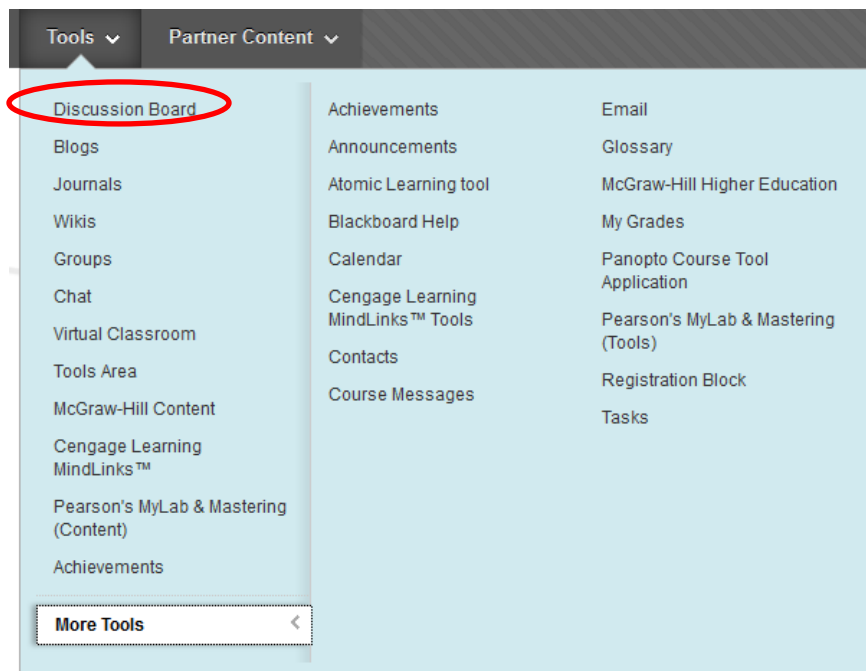
Step 1: Go to the **CONTENT AREA** of your course by clicking on the navigation button of your choice where you want your students to access the file.



It is best practice to create your Discussion Boards in the individual Week that you assign them in your class. Therefore you would go to Course Materials and click on the Week.

This is a Tool link that will list *all* of the Discussions for the Course. Since Discussions are typically a big part of a class, it's convenient to have them in both places.

Step 2: Click on the **TOOLS** button in the Content Area. Then click>> **DISCUSSION BOARD**.



Step 3: Click on **CREATE NEW FORUM**.

CREATE LINK: DISCUSSION BOARD

Link to the Discussion Board page, link to a specific Discussion Board forum, or create a new Discussion Board forum. Creating a link to a forum here and making it hidden will make the forum hidden as well.

- ☒ Link to Discussion Board Page
☐ Select a Discussion Board Forum

Select a Discussion Board Forum

-----Select forum below-----
Forum 1

Create New Forum

Create New Forum

Step 4: Fill in **NAME** and **DESCRIPTION** on the **FORUM INFORMATION** page.

FORUM INFORMATION

* Name

Description

Rich text editor toolbar with options for bold, italic, underline, font face (Arial), font size (3 (12pt)), text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, and other formatting tools. Below the toolbar is a large text area for the description. At the bottom left, it says 'Path: p' and at the bottom right, it says 'Words: 0'.

Step 5: Choose the **FORUM AVAILABILITY** here.

FORUM AVAILABILITY

Be sure to set Availability to Yes.

Available

☒ Yes ☐ No

Enter Date and Time Restrictions

☐ Display After  
☐ Display Until  

Step 6: Choose **FORUM SETTINGS**.

FORUM SETTINGS

Viewing Threads/Replies

- ☒ Standard View
- ☐ Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.

Grade

- ☒ No Grading in Forum
- ☐ Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible:
- ☐ Grade Threads

Discussion Forums may be graded. Choose **GRADE DISCUSSION FORUM** and add Points possible here. This will automatically create a column in the Grade Center.

Subscribe

- ☐ 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

The **SUBSCRIBE** setting allows members to subscribe to a forum which automatically sends the member an email when a new post is added to the forum.

Create and Edit

- ☐ Allow Anonymous Posts
- ☐ Allow Author to Delete Own Posts
- ☐ Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts
- ☒ Allow Members to Create New Threads
- ☒ Allow File Attachments
- ☒ Allow Users to Reply with Quote
- ☐ Force Moderation of Posts

Additional settings are listed here. The default settings are the most commonly used settings.

Additional Options

- ☐ Allow Post Tagging
- ☐ Allow Members to Rate Posts

Step 7: Click **SUBMIT**.

Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.

Cancel

Submit

Step 7: Highlight your Discussion Board and click **NEXT**.

CREATE LINK: DISCUSSION BOARD

Link to the Discussion Board page, link to a specific Discussion Board forum, or create a new Discussion Board forum. Creating a link to a forum here and making it hidden will make the forum hidden as well.

☐ Link to Discussion Board Page

☒ Select a Discussion Board Forum

Select a Discussion Board Forum

-----Select forum below-----


DBoard

Forum 1

Create New Forum

Create New Forum

Click **Next** to continue. Click **Cancel** to quit.



Step 8: Type the **LINK NAME** of the Discussion Board which will be the title of the link in your course. Choose the **COLOR OF NAME** and add **TEXT** in the text box (optional).

LINK INFORMATION

✱ Link Name

DBoard

Color of Name

Black

Link

Discussion Board: DBoard

Text

T

T

T

Arial

3 (12pt)

T

ABC

Path: p

Words: 0

Step 9: Choose your **OPTIONS** here. It is recommended to choose **TRACK NUMBER OF VIEWS** if you want to track the usage of this item by students.



Step 10: Click SUBMIT.

OPTIONS



Available ☒ Yes ☐ No

Track Number of Views ☐ Yes ☒ No

Date Restrictions

☐ Display After  

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

☐ Display Until  

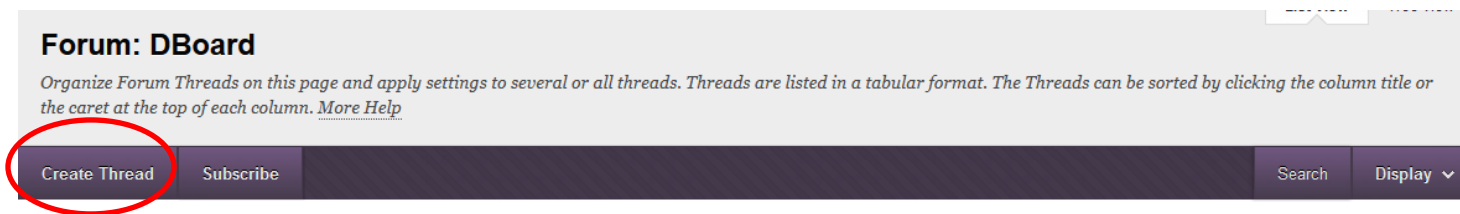
Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy. Time may be entered in any increment.

Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.

Cancel Submit

Create a Thread

Step 1: Open a Discussion Board Forum. Click **CREATE THREAD**. The Create Thread page appears.



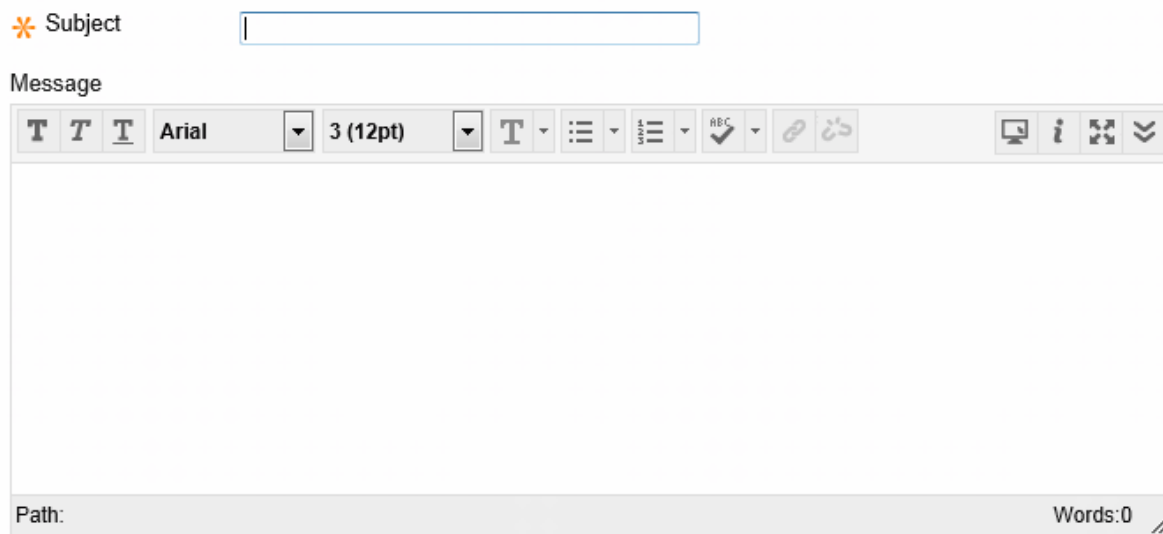
Forum: DBoard
Organize Forum Threads on this page and apply settings to several or all threads. Threads are listed in a tabular format. The Threads can be sorted by clicking the column title or the caret at the top of each column. [More Help](#)

Create Thread Subscribe Search Display ▾

Step 2: Type a **SUBJECT** and a **MESSAGE**. It is also possible to attach files to the post.

Step 3: Click **SUBMIT** to create the thread or click **SAVE DRAFT** to store a draft of the post.

MESSAGE



* Subject

Message

T T T Arial 3 (12pt) **T** **≡** **≡** **ABC** **↶** **↷** **↶** **↷** **↶** **↷**

Path: Words:0

ATTACHMENTS

Attach File

Browse My Computer

Browse Course

*Click **Save Draft** to save a draft of this message. Click **Submit** to submit the post. Click **Cancel** to quit.*

Cancel

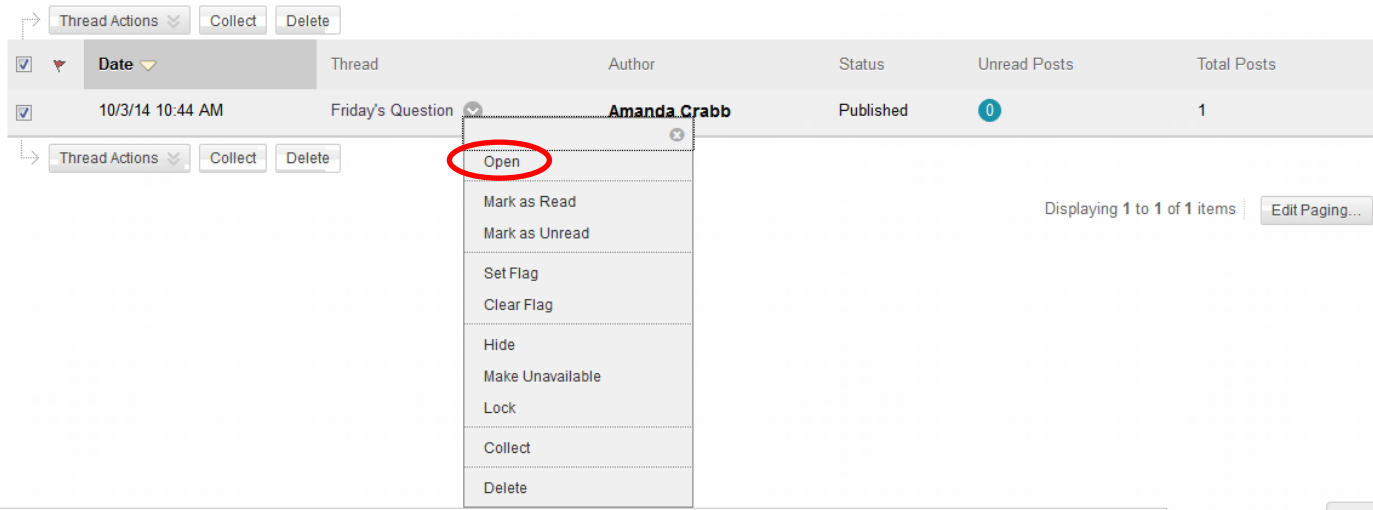
Save Draft

Submit

Reply to a Post

Replies build on one another to construct a conversation. Follow these steps to reply to a post.

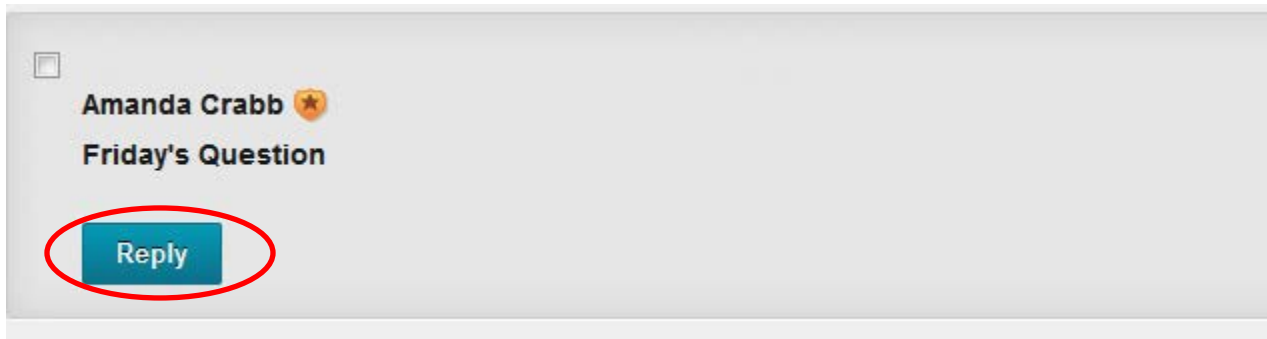
Step 1: Open a thread in a Forum (or you can also click on the Forum Thread.)



A screenshot of a forum interface. At the top, there are buttons for 'Thread Actions', 'Collect', and 'Delete'. Below this is a table with columns: 'Date', 'Thread', 'Author', 'Status', 'Unread Posts', and 'Total Posts'. The first row shows a post from '10/3/14 10:44 AM' titled 'Friday's Question' by 'Amanda Crabb', with a status of 'Published', 0 unread posts, and 1 total post. A context menu is open over the 'Amanda Crabb' author name, with the 'Open' option highlighted by a red circle. Other options in the menu include 'Mark as Read', 'Mark as Unread', 'Set Flag', 'Clear Flag', 'Hide', 'Make Unavailable', 'Lock', 'Collect', and 'Delete'. To the right of the table, it says 'Displaying 1 to 1 of 1 items' and there is an 'Edit Paging...' button.

Step 2: Find a post.

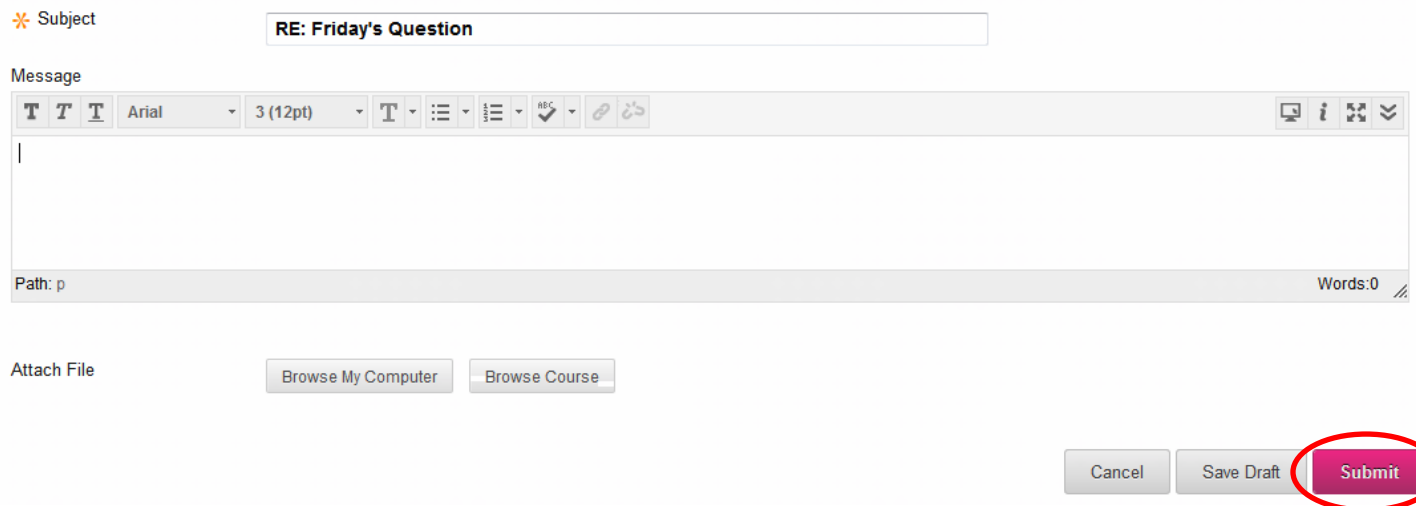
Step 3: Click **REPLY** for that post.



A screenshot of a post by 'Amanda Crabb' titled 'Friday's Question'. The post has a blue 'Reply' button, which is circled in red. The post content is mostly blank.

Step 4: Type a **SUBJECT** and a **MESSAGE**. It is also possible to attach files to the post. Only one file is added using the Attachment function below the text box. When using the Text Editor, multiple files may be added.

Step 5: Click **SUBMIT** to create the thread or click **SAVE DRAFT** to store a draft of the post.



A screenshot of the forum reply form. At the top, there is a 'Subject' field with the text 'RE: Friday's Question'. Below this is a 'Message' text area with a rich text editor toolbar. The toolbar includes buttons for bold, italic, underline, font color, background color, text color, text size, text style, list, link, unlink, and a 'REPLY' button. Below the text area, there is a 'Path' field with the text 'p' and a 'Words:0' counter. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Attach File', 'Browse My Computer', and 'Browse Course'. At the very bottom, there are three buttons: 'Cancel', 'Save Draft', and 'Submit'. The 'Submit' button is circled in red.

Field	Description
Forum Settings	
Allow Anonymous Posts	Posts are submitted anonymously. If selected, the posts cannot be graded.
Allow Author to Delete Own Posts	Authors are permitted to delete their own posts. This is limited to deleting posts that have no replies so as not to break a thread, or is unlimited so all posts are deleted.
Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts	Authors are permitted to edit their own published posts. If these posts will be graded, consider locking the Forum so that posts cannot be changed after they are graded.
Allow Post Tagging	Tags are bits of meta data added to posts so that they are grouped together during collection based on a word or phrase. Allowing tagging can slow down page loading for large active Forums. For faster Discussion Board page loading, do not allow message tagging.
Allow Users to Reply with Quote	Users can include the text of the original message in any replies to that message. This is enabled by default.
Allow File Attachments	Messages within the Forum are allowed to contain file attachments.
Allow Members to Create New Threads	Members are permitted to create new threads in the Forum. This setting cannot be used when threads are graded.
Allow Members to Rate Posts	Posts are rated using a five star system to encourage quality posts.
Force Moderation of Posts	Require that all messages are reviewed and approved or rejected by a moderator. Messages that are approved are posted and messages that are rejected are returned to the author.
Subscribe	
Do not allow subscriptions	No subscriptions for this Forum.
Allow members to subscribe to threads	Allow subscription to threads only. When a new message in a thread is posted, members who are subscribed receive an email notice that a new message is posted.
Allow members to subscribe to Forum	Allow subscription to the entire Forum. When a new message or thread is posted, members who are subscribed receive an email notice that new material is posted.
Grade	
No Grading in Forum	Members will not be graded for individual contributions to the Forum.
Grade Forum	Enable grading at the Forum level. A column in the Grade Center is created for the Forum
Grade Threads	Enable grading at the thread level. A column in the Grade Center is created for the thread.

For more information on this topic go to the following Atomic Learning hyperlink:

- Overview of the redesigned thread detail page
- Creating a new forum
- Linking to the discussion forum page
- Adding a link to a discussion forum
- Moderating a forum
- Assigning forum roles
- Starting a thread
- Subscribing to a thread
- Controlling discussion board content
- Rating discussion board posts
- Collecting and adding tags
- Editing and deleting a discussion forum
- Searching within discussion boards
- Managing forum settings
- Organizing and printing threads
- Replying to threads