

Discussion Boards in Blackboard Learn

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Discussion Boards in Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn includes a Discussion Board tool that allows you to facilitate interaction between students and instructors. There are lots of ways to utilize a discussion board, whether it is for general course questions, specific discussion assignments, group work, etc. Discussion may consist of student-student interaction, student-instructor interaction, or both.

This guide will assist you in setting up a course discussion board, which is public to the entire class. This type of discussion board is very effective for general questions about the course or for specific discussion topics in courses with smaller class numbers. For larger classes, group discussion boards may be used.

Before getting started, it is important to understand the concept of a threaded discussion board. Discussion Boards are broken up into **forums**, which must be created by the instructor. Each forum may be a different topic or assignment, and participation in forums can be graded. Within each forum, participants post **threads**. Each thread is a separate post. These threads can then be replied to or commented on (called a **reply**). What you end up with is a nested discussion, in which each thread is the parent post and replies are nested or indented below the parent post.

A best practice for creating Discussion Boards in Blackboard Learn is to post the discussion prompt (what you want participants to discuss) as the forum description, then ask students to create a new thread for their original post. The advantage of this setup is that participants can view the prompt on the same page where they type their response.

Create a Discussion Forum

1. Access your course

1.1 Log into Blackboard

Log into Blackboard Learn at <https://learn.kent.edu> or through Flashline.

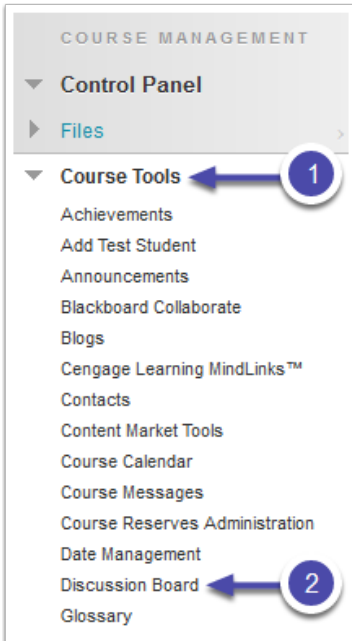
1.2 Enter your course

Click on the name of your course to access it.

2. Create a forum

2.1 Access the Discussion Board tool

In the Control Panel, click to expand the **Course Tools** section. Then click the **Discussion Board** link.



2.2 Select the course discussion board

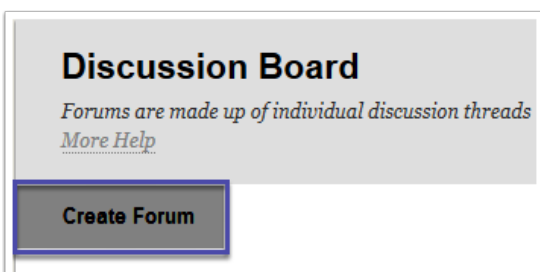
On the Discussion Board page, you will see a list of all Discussion Boards in your course. There is one Course Discussion Board (named by your Course ID). If you have Group Discussion Boards, these will also be listed on this page. **Click on the name of the Course Discussion Board** (Course ID) to view the forums page.

The screenshot shows the 'Discussion Board' page header with the text: 'This page lists every discussion board, including those that are specific to groups. Click a Discussion Board to access the forums.' Below this is a table with the following data:

Discussion Board	Forums	Participants	Posts
11928.201560	4	24	383

2.3 Create a forum

On the Discussion Board page, click the **Create Forum** button to add a new discussion forum.



2.4 Input forum information

In **Section 1: Forum Information**, type in the **name of your forum** and a **description**. It is recommended that you type the prompt into the Description box, so that students can refer to it on the same page.

1. Forum Information

Name

Description
For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).

This is where you type in the discussion prompt and any additional instructions.

Path: p Words: 13

2.5 Select forum availability

In **Section 2: Forum Availability**, choose whether to make the **forum available to students** (Yes = available to students, No = hidden from students). Then set any applicable **date/time restrictions**.

The forum will only be available for students to post between the dates/times you set here. If you want the forum available the whole semester, leave the dates/times blank.

2. Forum Availability

1 Available Yes No

2 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.

Note: If you do set date/time restrictions, make sure to set the Available setting to Yes — if it is set to No, it will override your dates/times and the forum will not become available until you manually change the Available setting to Yes.

2.6 Set forum grading options

In **Section 3: Forum Settings**, select your desired **grading options** for this forum.

Viewing Threads/Replies: The **Standard View** allows students to view all existing posts in the forum before posting their own thread. If you want to require students to post their own original thread before they can view other students' posts, change the option to "**Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.**"

Grade: If you will be grading participation in this forum, select the **Grade Discussion Forum** option, then input the **points possible** for the discussion assignment. This will create a corresponding Grade Center column. You can also choose how frequently participants show up on the Needs Grading page in the Grade Center.

Due Date: Input a **due date** if desired. Late posts will be accepted as long as the forum is available to students, but will be marked as "late."

Associated Rubrics: Attach a **grading rubric** if desired.

3. Forum Settings

If a Due Date is set, submissions are accepted after this date, but are marked late.

1 Viewing Threads/Replies

Standard View
 Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum.
If participants are required to create threads in order to view other threads in the forum, they cannot delete or edit their own posts, and cannot post anonymously. Those options will be set for you automatically.

2 Grade

No Grading in Forum
 Grade Discussion Forum: Points possible:
 Grade Threads
 Show participants in "needs grading" status  after every Posts

3 Due Date

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

4 Associated Rubrics

2.7 Set additional forum options

Set any additional options as desired. Generally, the default options are recommended.

1 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

2 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

3 Additional Options

Allow Post Tagging
 Allow Members to Rate Posts

2.8 Submit

Click the **Submit** button to finish creating the forum.

Your Discussion Forum has now been created. Students can access it through their Tools menu > Discussion Board or you can create a shortcut in the course menu or in a content area/folder (recommended). Make sure the Tools menu or a shortcut is available to students or they won't be able to access the discussion board.

Create a Link to a Discussion Forum

Recommendation: If your course is organized by modules or units of material, create a discussion forum link in the corresponding folder so that students can access the discussion assignment directly from within that folder.

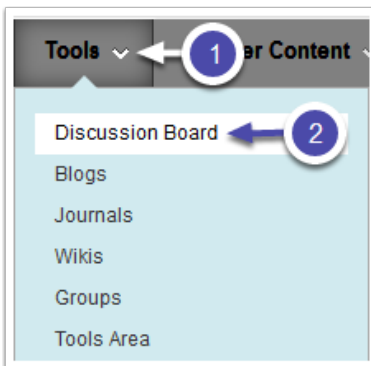
1. Navigate to a content area or folder

Navigate to the content area or folder in which you want to create the discussion forum link.

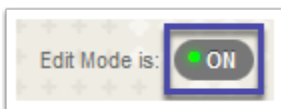
2. Create a discussion board link

2.1 Create discussion link

In the Action Bar across the top of the page, select **Tools**. Then click **Discussion Board** from the drop-down menu.



Note: If the Action Bar does not appear at the top of the page, make sure that **Edit Mode** is turned **ON** (toggle button in the upper right corner).



2.2 Select the discussion forum

On the Create Link page, click the “**Select a Discussion Board Forum**” option. Then, in the box below, **click on the name of the forum** to which you want to link. Click the **Next** button.

1. Create Link: Discussion Board

Link to the Discussion Board page, link to a specific Discussion Board forum, making it hidden will make the forum hidden as well.

Link to Discussion Board Page

Select a Discussion Board Forum ← 1

Select a Discussion Board Forum

----Select forum below----

Chapter 1 Discussion Forum

Discussion 1

Discussion Forum

Module 1 Discussion

Workshop Discussion

2 →

Create New Forum Create New Forum

2.3 Input link information

In **Section 1: Link Information**, type in the **name of your forum** and a **description**. It is recommended that you type the any instructions for the assignment into this field. You may also include the discussion prompt here so that students can view the prompt before creating their thread.

1. Link Information

* Link Name ← 1

Color of Name Black

Link

Text

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for bold, italic, underline, text color, background color, link, unlink, list, indent, outdent, undo, redo, and other formatting options.

Type (or copy/paste) the discussion prompt and any additional instructions. ← 2

Path: p Words: 10

2.4 Select link availability

In **Section 2: Link Availability**, choose whether to make the **link available to students** (Yes = available to students, No = hidden from students). Then set any applicable **date/time restrictions**.

2. 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.

Note: Remember that you are setting the options on the link to the forum, not on the forum itself. Make sure that any date/time restrictions on the link correspond to date/time restrictions on the forum.

2.5 Submit

Click the **Submit** button to finish creating the link.

You have now created a link to the discussion forum in a content folder. Clicking on this link takes students directly into that specific forum.



Module 1 Discussion

Type (or copy/paste) the discussion prompt and any additional instructions.

View Discussion Forum Threads

Once your students have posted in the discussion board forum, you are ready to read and, if desired, grade their posts.

1. Access the forum

1.1 Access the Discussion Board tool

In the Control Panel, click to expand the **Course Tools** section. Then click the **Discussion Board** link.

1.2 Select the course discussion board

Click on the name of the Course Discussion Board (Course ID) to view the forums page.

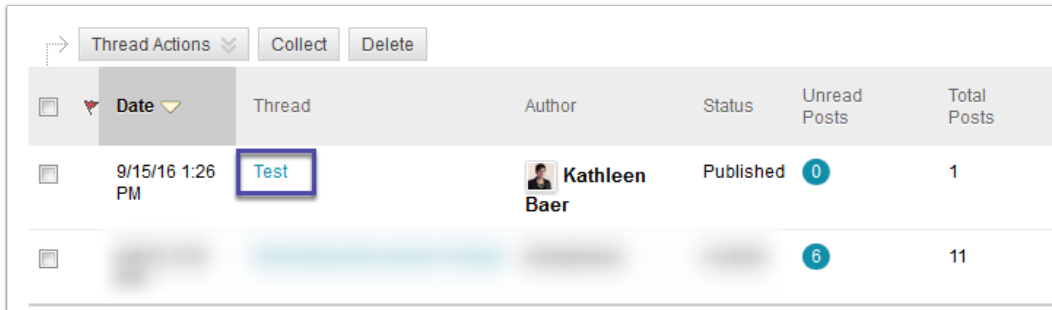
1.3 Select the forum

Click on the name of the forum you want to view.

2. View discussion posts

2.1 Select thread

Threads (posts) in this forum will be displayed on this page. Click on the **name of the thread** to view it and any replies.



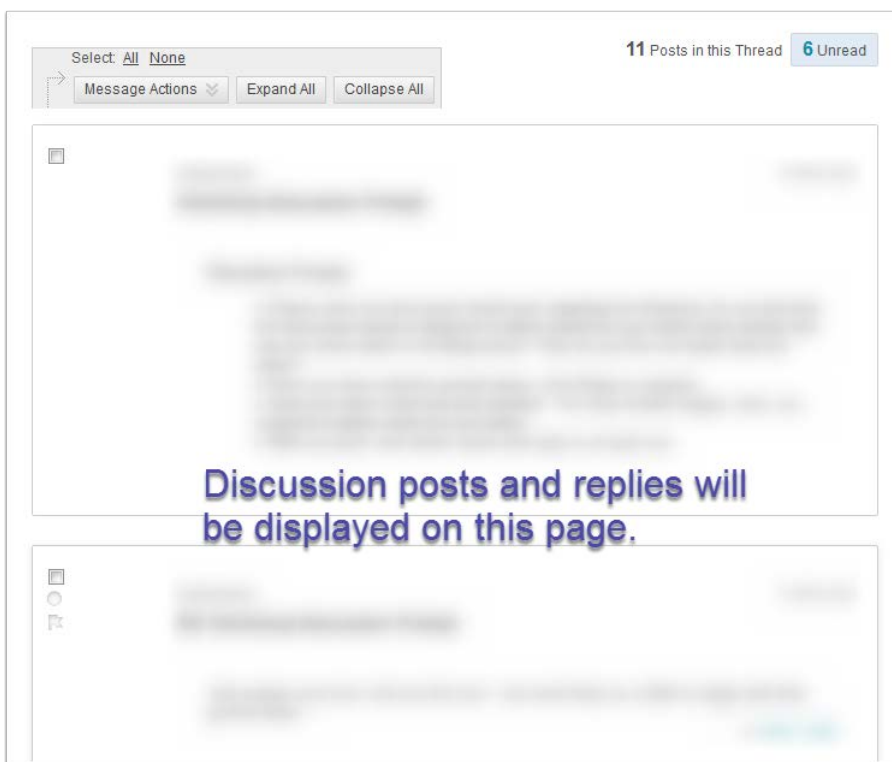
The screenshot shows a table with columns for Thread Actions, Date, Thread, Author, Status, Unread Posts, and Total Posts. The first row is highlighted, showing a thread titled 'Test' by Kathleen Baer, published, with 0 unread posts and 1 total post. The 'Test' text is highlighted with a blue box.

Thread Actions	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	9/15/16 1:26 PM	Test	Kathleen Baer	Published	0	1
<input type="checkbox"/>					6	11

Note: If you have set up a graded forum, you can also view posts from the **Needs Grading** page in your Grade Center.

2.2 Read and reply to the thread

All posts within the thread will appear on this page. Replies to posts will be indented under the original post. You can click the **Reply** button for any post to write replies as desired.



The screenshot shows a forum thread view. At the top, there are controls for 'Select: All None', '11 Posts in this Thread', and '6 Unread'. Below this are 'Message Actions', 'Expand All', and 'Collapse All' buttons. The main content area shows a blurred post with a blue text overlay that reads: 'Discussion posts and replies will be displayed on this page.'

Grade Discussion Forum Threads

1. Access the forum

Navigate to and enter the discussion forum you want to grade.

2. Grade the forum

2.1 Access the grade forum users page

Click the **Grade Discussion Forum** button.

2.2 Select user to grade

All of your students will be listed on this page. Note: If you have a large class, you may have multiple pages to navigate.

You can see how many times each student posted in the forum by looking at the Posts column. To view a student's posts and assign a grade, click the **Grade** button for that student.

Grade Discussion Forum Users

*Grades entered or changed here are automatically entered or changed in the Grade Center. **Points possible: 10 More***

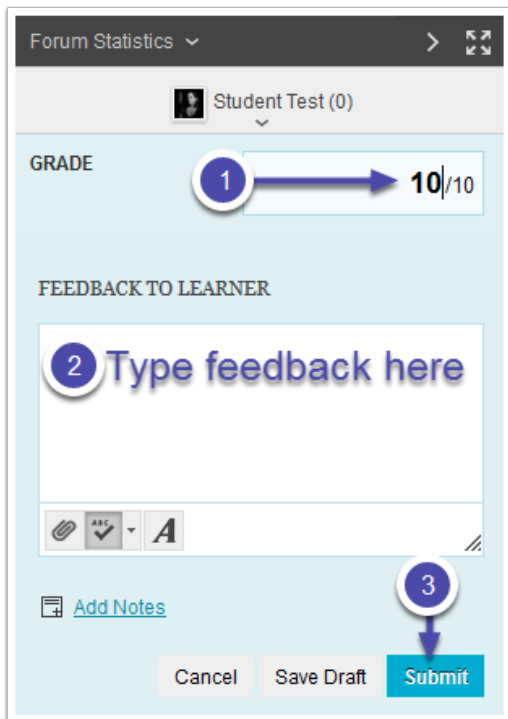
[Help](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name ▲	First Name	Username	Posts	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Test	[blurred]	[blurred]	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Demo	[blurred]	[blurred]	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Demo	[blurred]	[blurred]	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Demo	[blurred]	[blurred]	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	User	Demo	[blurred]	[blurred]	<input type="button" value="Grade"/>

2.3 View and grade user

You will be able to view all of that student's posts on this page. This includes original posts and replies to others.

In the sidebar on the right, you can enter the **student's grade and feedback**. When you are ready, click the **Submit button** to save.



2.4 Repeat

Repeat this process until all students are graded.

Note: You can quickly navigate between students using the arrows at the top of the sidebar.

