

What is the Discussions tool?

The **Discussions** tool allows instructors or site leaders to create an unlimited number of class discussions, and is integrated closely with other tools such as Resources and Gradebook.

A **Discussion** is a mandatory category or grouping for topics. **Topics**, which are created within discussions, are where participants can post conversations. A **Conversation** is the thread of messages in which participants post their contributions. A conversation can be created by instructors or students inside of a topic.


Some the features in the **Discussions** tool include the following:

- **Grading:** Interactions can be assigned a point value and sent to the Gradebook with comments.
- **Availability dates:** Discussions and topics can be released according to specified dates.
- **Moderation:** Instructors can choose to moderate messages posted to topics.
- **Counts of unread posts at a glance:** On your site's Home or Overview page, you can see how many unread messages or posts you have in both Messages and Discussions. From Home, you can see these totals for all sites in which you are enrolled.
- **Email notifications:** Site members can elect to receive no email notification, notification for all new postings in a site, or notification for responses to conversations they've posted in. The default is to receive notifications about new postings in conversations to which you have contributed.
- **Statistics:** Discussions statistics are available for site owners to determine the participation level of individual participants. You can also read all of a particular participant's posts using this feature.
- **Post before reading option:** The site owner (or another participant with the appropriate role) can enable participants to submit their posts to a topic before they have permission to read the responses of others.
- **Group awareness:** Site leaders can change discussions and topic settings in combination with predefined groups to allow or deny access to specific discussions per group.
- **Direct link to individual messages:** Site leaders can copy a direct link to individual messages to use elsewhere.
- **Composing messages:** A [Rich Text Editor](#) allows rich text, plain text, and HTML editing. You can add attachments to any message by linking to files or web links in Resources.
- **Quoted text:** Use the Insert Original Text option to insert the previous post into your response.

- **Email the author of a message:** Site leaders can directly email the author of a posting from within the Discussions tool.

Note: A discussion with the name of the site and a topic titled "General Discussion" are created by default.

To access this tool, select Discussions from the Tool Menu in your site.

 Resources

 Discussions

 Assignments