

Desire2Learn: Discussions

Discussions allow students to talk among themselves, either as a class or in groups. Discussions can be graded, open/closed on certain dates, and locked so that they can be read but no more discussion takes place. There are two important distinctions with discussions in D2L, the availability of forums and topics:

- Forums are essentially categories, under which you can associate multiple discussion topics.
- Discussion topics must be organized into a forum (category). You can't create a topic unless you select a forum to associate it with.

This tutorial covers the following, you may click on the below links to jump to a specific section of this tutorial.

[Creating a Discussion Forum \(Category\)](#)

[Creating a Discussion Topic](#)

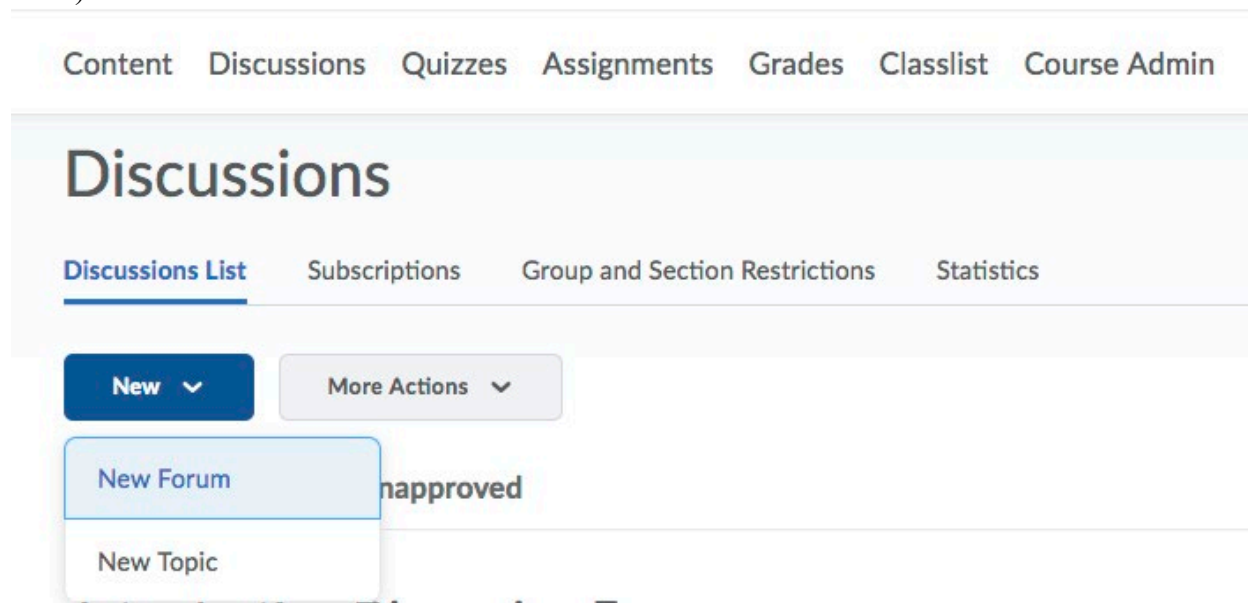
[Posting a Discussion Message](#)

[Creating a Graded Discussion](#)

[Assessing a Graded Discussion](#)

Creating a Discussion Forum (Category)

- 1) Click on the Discussion icon on the Navbar, along the top of the course.
- 2) Click on “New” and select “New Forum”.



3) Enter a title for the forum on the properties tab. Remember, this is a category name. For this example, I will name the forum “Orientation.” Adding a description is optional, but encouraged. The description box allows you to provide instructions or direction to students to inform them of the purpose of this particular forum, or discussion category. Other choices include creating a topic by the same name, allowing anonymous posts, approving messages before they can be displayed, creating a thread before students can read and reply to other threads, and display forum description in topics.

Content Discussions Quizzes Assignments Grades Classlist Course Admin

New Forum

Properties Restrictions

New Forum Details

Title *

Create a new topic in this forum with the same title ?

Description

Options

Allow anonymous posts ?
 A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the forum ?
 Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads in each topic ?
 Display forum description in topics ?

- 4) Other options include setting the availability and locking the forum. By default, a forum is always visible, but you can hide it or make it available for only a certain period of time by changing the availability settings, as shown below.
- Visibility means the forum (and all associated topics) will be hidden from the students. Students will not be able to view or interact with any forums or topics either before or after the start/end dates for this option. **Please Note:** If you hide a forum, students will **NOT** be able to see any topics under the forum, even if those are set as visible.
 - Locking a forum means that it is still visible and can be read but not interacted with. This can be useful if you've graded the discussion postings and still want students to be able to read them but not to make any more changes. **Please Note:** Locking a forum will also lock any subsequent topics under the forum.
- 5) Click either "Save and Close", "Save and Add Topic", or "Save" when you've finished making changes.

Availability

▼ Hide forum visibility options

Visibility

Forum is always visible
 Hide this forum
 Forum is visible for a specific date range

Has Start Date

United States - New York

Has End Date

United States - New York

Display in Calendar

Locking Options

▼ Hide locking options

Locking Options

Unlock forum
 Lock forum
 Unlock forum for a specific date range

Has Start Date

United States - New York

Has End Date

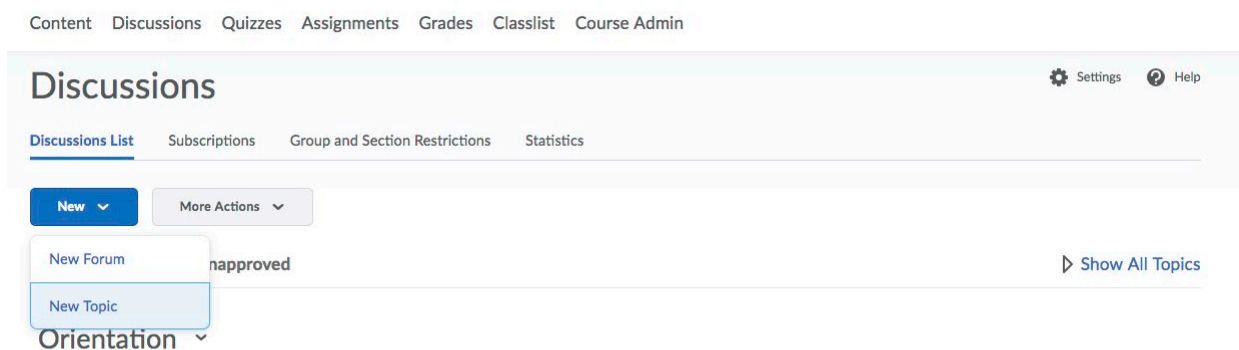
United States - New York

Display in Calendar

Creating a Discussion Topic

Once you have created Forums, you can add Topics. An example of Topics under the Orientation Forum might include “Introduce Yourself” or “Syllabus Questions.” We’ll use both of these in this example.

- 1) If you are not already working in the Discussions Tool, click on Discussions on the navbar, then click “New” and select “New Topic”.



- 2) Select the Forum for the new Topic (remember, Forums are like categories). If you do not select a Forum for this topic, you will receive an error message upon saving.
 - a. Descriptions are optional, but highly encouraged for discussion Topics. The inclusion of a description allows you to provide direction or instructions for students on how to complete this particular activity.
 - b. The other options, allow anonymous posts, approval of posts before they display, and creating a thread before students can read and reply are all optional settings. Feel free to experiment with these settings to see if they fit the nature of your course.

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Edit Topic - Introduce Yourself ▾

Properties Restrictions Assessment Objectives

Edit Topic Details

Forum *

Orientation ▾ [New Forum] ⓘ

Title *

Introduce Yourself

Description

Welcome students!

For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course.

Options

Allow anonymous posts ⓘ
 A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic ⓘ
 Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads ⓘ

3) Just as with a Forum, you may set availability options for your discussion Topic.

Availability

▼ Hide topic visibility options

Visibility

Topic is always visible
 Hide this topic
 Topic is visible for a specific date range

Has Start Date

United States - New York

Has End Date

United States - New York

Display in Calendar

Locking Options

▼ Hide locking options

Locking Options

Unlock topic
 Lock topic
 Unlock topic for a specific date range

Has Start Date

United States - New York

Has End Date

United States - New York

Display in Calendar

Please Note: Any availability settings you applied to the Forum, will supersede settings applied to the Topic. For instance, if you set your Forum to hide on February 1st, at 3:00pm, but your discussion Topic is set to always be visible, students will **NOT** be able to view or interact with the topic after February 1st at 3:00pm.

- 4) You'll notice there are three other tabs besides the Properties tab on the edit topic screen: Restrictions, Assessment, and Objectives.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Topic - Introduce Yourself' interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Content, Discussions, Quizzes, Assignments, Grades, Classlist, and Course Admin. Below these is the title 'Edit Topic - Introduce Yourself'. There are four tabs: Properties, Restrictions, Assessment, and Objectives. The last three tabs are highlighted with a red box. The main content area is titled 'Edit Topic Details' and includes a 'Forum' dropdown set to 'Orientation', a 'Title' field with 'Introduce Yourself', and a 'Description' field with a rich text editor. The description text is: 'Welcome students! For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course.' Below the description are 'Options' with three checkboxes: 'Allow anonymous posts', 'A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic', and 'Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads'.

- The Restrictions tab allows you to set “Release Conditions” for the topic. A release condition is when the student is required to meet one or more criteria to be able to view the topic or activity (release conditions can be applied to a number of things in D2L, other than discussion Topics). For more information on Release Conditions, please visit <http://www.clayton.edu/cid/Desire2Learn> and look for the “Release Condition” tutorial.
- The Assessment tab allows you to associate the discussion Topic with an item in the gradebook. This is useful if you wish to grade the discussions.
- The Objectives tab allows you to associate the discussion Topic with learning objectives that you’ve created for your course. For more information on creating Learning Objectives within D2L, please visit <http://www.clayton.edu/cid/Desire2Learn> and look for the “Learning Objectives in D2L” tutorial.

- 5) Once you've set your appropriate options for the topic, click "Save and Close" at the bottom of the screen.

Posting a Discussion Message

- 1) From the Discussions tab, select the title of the Topic you'd like to post a message to

Content Discussions Quizzes Assignments Grades Classlist Course Admin

Discussions

Settings Help

Discussions List Subscriptions Group and Section Restrictions Statistics

New More Actions

Filter by: Unread Unapproved Hide All Topics

Orientation

Available: Monday, May 7, 2018 2:07 PM EDT - Wednesday, May 9, 2018 2:07 PM EDT.

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
Introduce Yourself Welcome students! For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course.	0	0	

- 2) Then click “Start a New Thread”. You’ll then have the ability to enter a subject line and enter your message in the larger box underneath the subject. You’ll notice the description for the Topic is viewable, which could help remind students of what they need to include in their posting, particularly if this is a graded assignment.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface for creating a new discussion post. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Content, Discussions, Quizzes, Assignments, Grades, Classlist, and Course Admin. Below this, the current page is identified as 'Discussions List > View Topic'. A search bar contains the text 'Search Introduce'. The main heading is 'Introduce Yourself' with a dropdown arrow and a 'Subscribe' button. A welcome message reads: 'Welcome students! For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course.' Below the message is a text input field for the subject line, currently containing 'Enter a subject'. A rich text editor toolbar is visible, including options for Paragraph, Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Bulleted List, Numbered List, Font Family, Size, Background Color, and a grid icon. At the bottom of the editor are icons for Undo, Redo, Source, Find, and other functions. Below the editor, there are checkboxes for 'Pin thread' (unchecked) and 'Subscribe to this thread' (checked). A link for 'Add attachments' is present. The post is set to be posted to 'Orientation > Introduce Yourself', with a link to 'Post to other topics'. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Post' (highlighted in blue), 'Save as Draft', and 'Cancel'.

- You may add an attachment to the posting by clicking the “Add attachments” link.
- Selecting the “Pin thread” checkbox will keep your message as the top post in the Topic.
- Any topic in which you create a message (whether a new thread or replying to an existing comment) will by default select the “Subscribe to this thread” checkbox. If you leave this selected, you will receive notifications when someone has interacted with the thread.

- 6) Once you're satisfied with your message, click "Post" along the bottom of the screen. Your message will then look similar to the below:

The screenshot shows a Blackboard discussion interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Content, Discussions, Quizzes, Assignments, Grades, Classlist, and Course Admin. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Discussions List > View Topic. On the right side, there are links for Settings and Help, and a search box labeled 'Search Introduce'. The main heading is 'Introduce Yourself' with a dropdown arrow and a 'Subscribe' button. Below the heading, it says 'Welcome students!' and provides instructions: 'For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course.' There is a blue button labeled 'Start a New Thread'. Below this is a filter and sort section: 'Filter by: All Threads' and 'Sort by: Most Recent Activity'. It indicates '1 items shown.' The first item is from 'Your Instructor', posted on May 9, 2018 at 2:25 PM, and is subscribed to. The post content is 'Welcome! My name is Dr. Smith and...'. At the bottom of the post, there are three counters: 0 Unread, 0 Replies, and 0 Views.

7) To reply a message already posted, click the title of the post

The screenshot shows a course navigation menu at the top with links for Content, Discussions, Quizzes, Assignments, Grades, Classlist, and Course Admin. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Discussions List > View Topic. On the right, there are links for Settings and Help. The main heading is 'Introduce Yourself' with a dropdown arrow and a 'Subscribe' button. A welcome message follows: 'Welcome students! For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course.' A blue button labeled 'Start a New Thread' is visible. Below the message, there are filters: 'Filter by: All Threads' and 'Sort by: Most'. A single item is shown: 'Your Instructor' (highlighted with a red box), posted at 2:25 PM and subscribed to. The post content is 'Welcome! My name is Dr. Smith and...'. At the bottom, there are three columns of counts: 0 Unread, 0 Replies, and 0 Views.

And then click “Reply to Thread”. The process for replying to a message is the same as creating a new one.

Creating a Graded Discussion

- 1) Navigate to the Discussions tab, located in the navbar along the top of your course. If you've already created your discussion Topic, click the down arrow to the right of the topic and click "Edit Topic", then click the "Assessment" tab

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Topic - Introduce Yourself' page in Canvas LMS. The 'Assessment' tab is highlighted with a red box. The page includes a navigation bar with 'Content', 'Discussions', 'Quizzes', 'Assignments', 'Grades', 'Classlist', and 'Course Admin'. The 'Edit Topic Details' section contains the following fields:

- Forum ***: Orientation (dropdown), [New Forum] (link), and a help icon.
- Title ***: Introduce Yourself (text input).
- Description**: A rich text editor with a toolbar containing icons for video, image, link, paragraph, bold, italic, underline, list, font family, size, background color, and a help icon. The text reads: "Welcome students! For this discussion, please introduce yourself to the class. Include things like your major, why you're taking this course, and what you hope to learn during this course."
- Options**: Three checkboxes:
 - Allow anonymous posts
 - A moderator must approve individual posts before they display in the topic
 - Users must start a thread before they can read and reply to other threads

- 2) If you have already setup your gradebook, click the dropdown list under “Grade Item”. If you have not setup your gradebook, or simply don’t have a grade item for a discussion topic, select “New Grade Item”.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Topic - Introduce Yourself' page in Canvas LMS. The 'Assessment' tab is selected. The 'Grade Item' dropdown menu is highlighted with a red box, showing the option '[New Grade Item]'. Other options in the dropdown include '-- No grade items exist --'. Below the dropdown are fields for 'Score Out Of', 'Rubrics', 'Posts', and 'Calculation'.

- 3) Once you select “New Grade Item” you’ll be allowed to give the item a name, maximum number of points and other options like is this a bonus item, do you want the gradebook to exclude this grade from the final grade calculation. Complete the appropriate information for your course and then click “Save”. The only required items are “Name” and “Maximum Points”.

The screenshot shows a 'New Grade Item' form with the following fields and options:

- General**
 - Type: Numeric
 - Name *: Intro Discussion (highlighted with a red box)
 - Short Name: (empty field)
 - Category: None (dropdown menu)
 - Show Description: (toggle)
- Grading**
 - Maximum Points *: 10 (highlighted with a red box)
 - Can Exceed: (checkbox, unchecked)
 - Bonus: (checkbox, unchecked)
 - Exclude from Final Grade Calculation: (checkbox, unchecked)
 - Grade Scheme: -- Default Scheme -- (Percentage) (dropdown menu)
- Rubrics**
 - Add Rubric: (button)
- Buttons: Save (highlighted with a red box), Cancel

- 4) Then input a number for “Score Out Of”. You may wish for this to equal the maximum point number you previously set when creating the grade item or it could be a greater or lesser number. For instance, the point value for this item in the gradebook might be 10 points. However, you can set a “Score Out Of” as 100 if you wish. This is not a required item however, so you may leave it blank.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Topic - Introduce Yourself' page in Canvas LMS. The 'Assessment' tab is selected, and the 'Score Out Of' field is highlighted with a red box. The page includes navigation links for Content, Discussions, Quizzes, Assignments, Grades, Classlist, and Course Admin. The 'Assessment' section includes a 'Grade Item' dropdown set to 'Intro Discussion', a 'Score Out Of' input field, a 'Rubrics' section with an 'Add Rubric' button, and a 'Posts' section with a checkbox for 'Allow assessment of individual posts'.

Please Note: We do recommend leaving the “Allow assessment of individual posts” UNCHECKED. If that item is unchecked, you will be able to see all posts for a particular student at once and enter a score.

- 5) Once you are finished, click “Save and Close”

Assessing a Graded Discussion


You can assess students' postings from two places: inside the topic while reading messages or on the "Assess Topic" page. Assessing users from within the Topic lets you read students' messages in context and evaluate as you perform other reading-related tasks. Assessing students from the "Assess Topic" page enables you to see scores for all students and view all of a student's messages together on one screen.

Assess Students from Within a Topic

- 1) Click the title of the topic you'd like to assess and select Assess Topic.

Chapter Discussions ▾

Pick ONE topic to respond to as your initial forum post. You may however, respond to classmates in either topic to help earn your engagement credit (see the syllabus for more information on discussion forums).

Topic	Threads	Posts	Last Post
<p>Power Discussion ▾</p> <p>Includes assessment.</p> <p>Pick one of the following to use your own words - and cite where appropriate.</p> <p>Describe the elements of a nation's rise or decline in power. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that contribute more greatly than others?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Describe the strategies that you feel is more effective than the rest? Do you see a particular strategy that is more effective than either the U.S. or other countries around the world?</p>	27	104	 Jan 28, 2016 12:53 AM

View Topic

View Topic in Grid View

Edit Topic

View Topic Statistics

Assess Topic

Subscribe

Delete

- 2) Click on “Topic Score”, underneath the student you wish to grade.

- 3) Enter the number of points the student earned in the “Score” area on the right-hand side. Once you are finished, click “Save and Close” along the bottom of the window.

Please Note: Along the top of this window, located directly underneath the “Maximum Post Score”, there is a checkbox for “Publish score on save”. You may select that checkbox if you

wish for the grade to automatically publish to the student once you save their score. Otherwise, you may publish the grades by selecting the “Publish to Grades” checkbox, within the assess topic screen

Course Home News Content Discussions Assignments Quizzes Classlist Grades Class Progress Course Admin More ▾

Assess Topic - Power Discussion

Publish All Scores to Grades Retract All Scores Manage Columns

Users Assessments

View By: User ▾ Apply

Search For... 🔍 Show Search Options

First Name, Last Name	Score	Publish to Grades
[Redacted]		
Topic Score	14 / 16 (87.5%)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- 4) After you've finished grading all students within the course, click “Save and Close” or “Save” along the bottom of the window.