

How to Build a Discussion Board

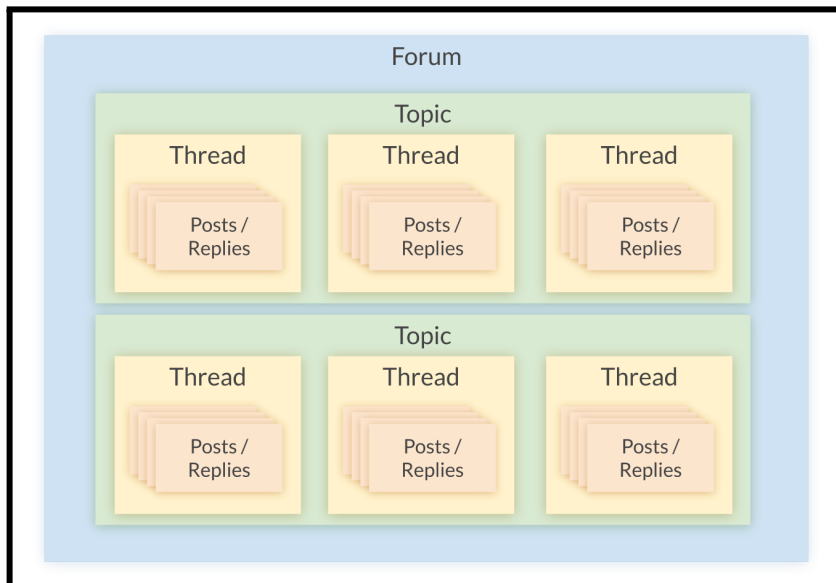
Updated June 2025

This tutorial goes over how to create Discussion Forums and Topics as well as how to grade Discussions in Brightspace. All images in this tutorial are screenshots of the preceding step(s).

Overview of Discussions

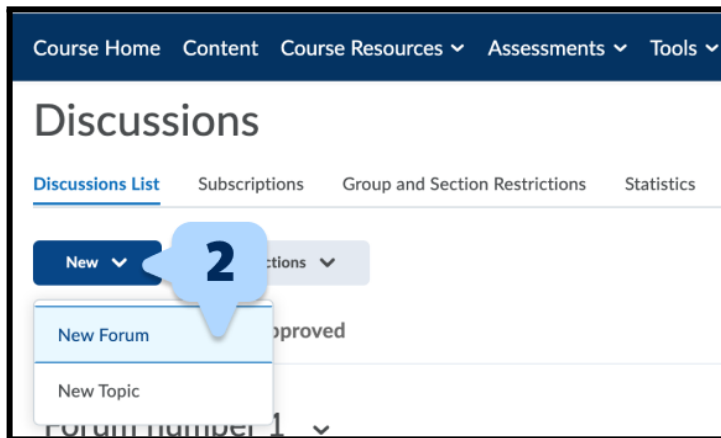
Use Discussions to encourage students to share their thoughts on course materials with their peers. Discussions are organized into Forums, which can contain multiple Topics. You and your students post Threads inside topics and other students Reply to the threads. In most cases, courses only need a single forum to house all of a course's topics, however if you rely heavily on discussions in your course, it may make sense to have multiple forums.

Note: Forums are just “containers” for Topics. They cannot have grades attached to them. You will assign your grade items to topics.

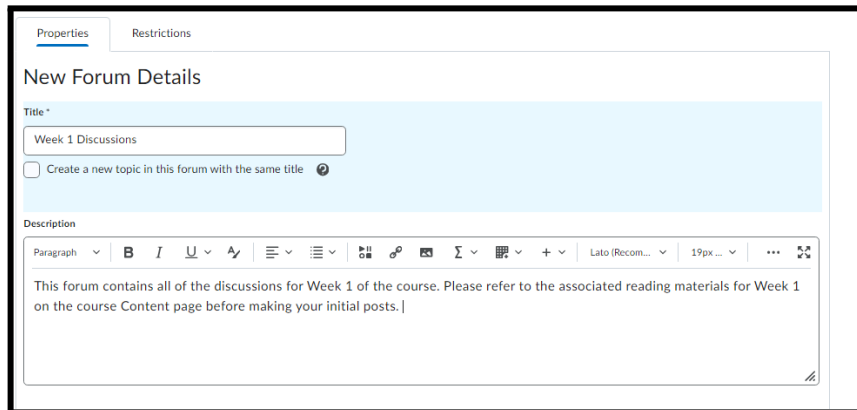


Creating Discussion Forums and Topics

1. From your course **Navbar**, navigate to the **Discussions** page.
2. Click **New > New Forum**.

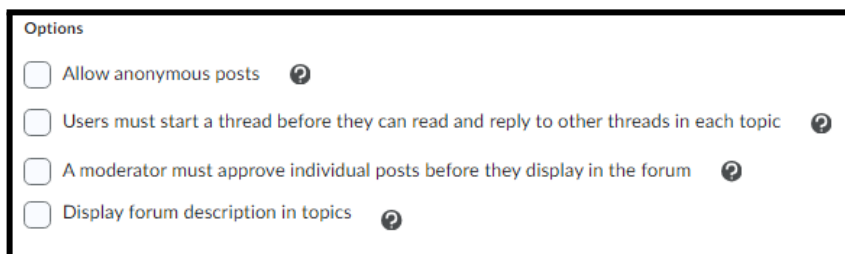


3. Enter a title and description for your discussion forum.



4. In the **Options** section, select any of the checkboxes that suit your needs. All topics created under this forum will have these same options.

- a. **NOTE:** If you click on the question mark icon , it will provide you with more information about each setting.



5. Click **Save and Close**.

6. Click **New > New Topic**.

7. Enter a title and description for your discussion topic.

Topic Title *

Article Analysis: "Fire Erupts on Steamboat", 6/15/1904

Forum: Creating a forum for this topic [Change Forum](#)

Outcomes

Grade Out Of

Ungraded

Description

Paragraph **B** *I* U ~~A~~      + ... 

For this discussion topic, please post a brief (150-200 word) analysis of the article "Fire Erupts on Steamboat", using the analysis techniques discussed in this week's lecture.

8. Set the **Availability Dates & Conditions** as needed.

Availability Dates & Conditions ▼

Start Date

9/2/2024 12:01 AM

Before start: [Visible with access restricted](#)

End Date

9/8/2024 11:59 PM

After end: [Visible with access restricted](#)

Release Conditions

Users are not able to access or view the discussion topic unless they meet the release conditions.

[Add Release Condition](#) ▼

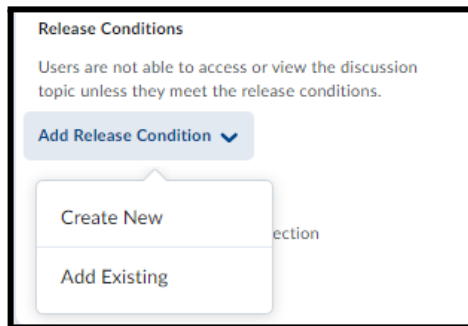
Group and Section Restrictions

Restrict this topic by group or section

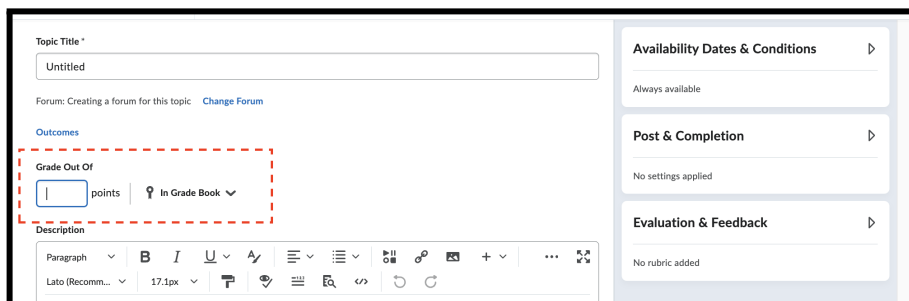
[Manage Restrictions](#)

9. Set the **Release Conditions** as needed.

- a. **NOTE: Release Conditions** can be used to grant students access to course content (a Discussion Topic, Quiz, Assignment, etc.) contingent on their completion of predefined conditions. Further information can be found here: [Release Conditions](#).

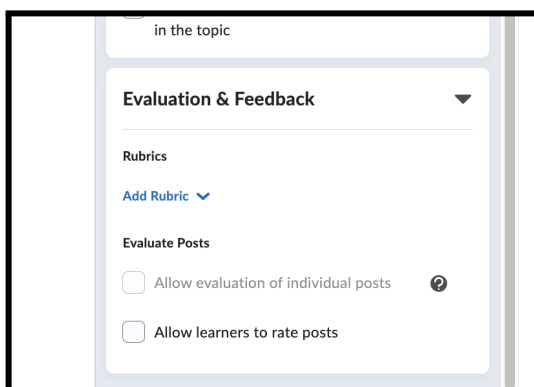


10. Enter a value in the **Grade Out Of** field. This value defines the granularity of scoring for your Topic, and can be set as you prefer.



11. If desired, attach a Rubric under the **Evaluation & Feedback** section.

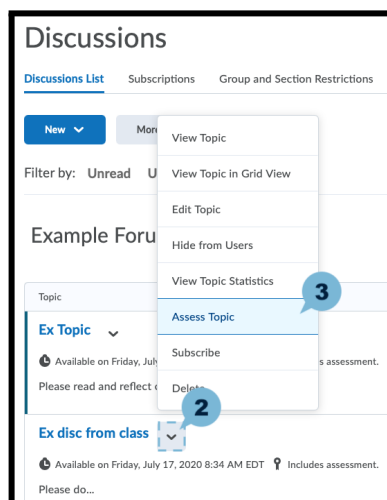
- a. **NOTE:** Further information on Rubrics can be found here: [Brightspace Rubrics](#).



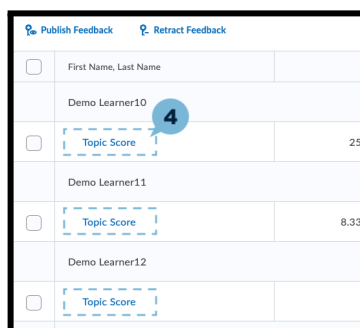
12. Click **Save and Close** once you have reviewed and set all the options for this discussion topic.

Grading Discussions

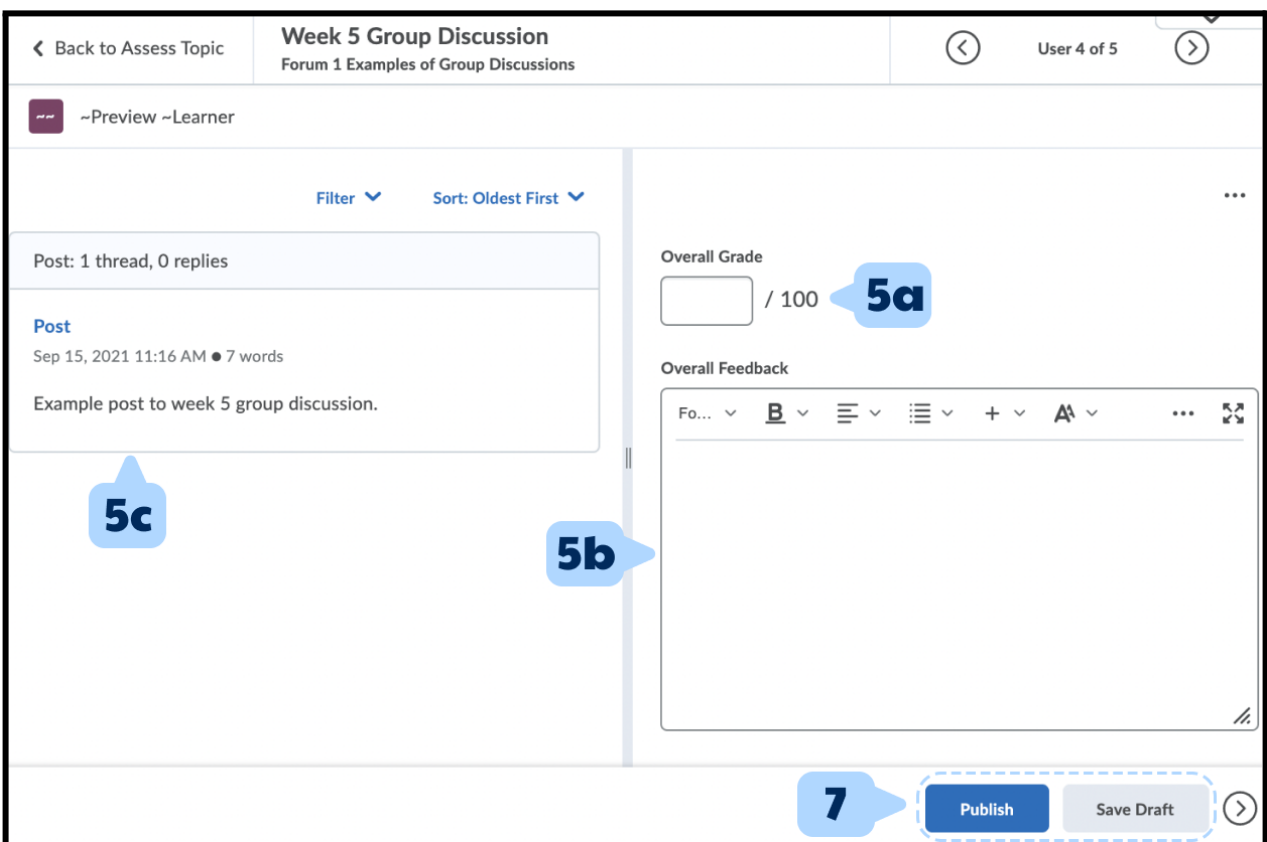
1. Click the **"Assessments"** link in the Navbar and select **"Discussions."**
2. When the **Discussions** page appears, click the **"Action Button"** next to the Discussion Topic you wish to grade.
3. Select **"Assess Topic"** from the menu that appears.
 - a. If you do not see the **Assess Topic** option, it means you did not connect a Grade Item to this topic. Once you have a Grade Item in the Grades tool for this discussion topic, select **"Edit Topic"** from the **"Action Button,"** and click the **"Assessment"** tab to set the **Grade Item** and **Score Out Of** fields.



4. When the **Assess Topic** page appears, you will see a list of your students. Click the **"Topic Score"** link underneath a student's name.



5. A pop-up window will appear with the student's name and profile photo at the top.
 - a. The **Score** field is located on the upper-right corner of the pop-up.
 - i. If you set this topic to be graded by individual post, the top **Score** field will show a total grade instead of an editable field.
 - b. A **Feedback** text area is in the middle of the pop-up for you to provide direct feedback to the student. Only the student can see what you enter here.
 - c. At the bottom of the pop-up is a listing of all the student's **posts** in the topic.
 - i. If you set this topic to be graded by individual post, there will be individual score fields next to each post for you to distribute points.
6. Score the student's performance in the topic and provide them with feedback.
7. Click either the "**Publish**" or "**Save Draft**" buttons.



Back to Assess Topic

Week 5 Group Discussion
Forum 1 Examples of Group Discussions

User 4 of 5

Preview -Learner

Filter Sort: Oldest First

Post: 1 thread, 0 replies

Post

Sep 15, 2021 11:16 AM • 7 words

Example post to week 5 group discussion.

Overall Grade

/ 100

Overall Feedback

5a

5b

5c

7

Publish Save Draft