USING THE DISCUSSION BOARD

The discussion board is a communication tool that allows students and the instructor to discuss and exchange ideas centered on a specific topic. In this tutorial, you will learn how to create a discussion board tool link button and discussion forum.

CREATING A DISCUSSION BOARD BUTTON

These instructions assume that you have **EDIT MODE** turned on in your course.

1. In your course, roll your mouse over the button. From the pop-up menu, select **CREATE TOOL LINK**.

2. An **ADD TOOL LINK** box will appear. Give the tool link a logical name and select **DISCUSSION BOARD** from the drop-down menu. Be sure to check the **AVAILABLE TO USERS** checkbox to make this area available to students.

   When done, click **SUBMIT**.

3. A discussion board tool link button will now appear in your course menu. You and your students will use this button to access the discussion board.
CREATING A DISCUSSION BOARD FORUM
To have a conversation about a specific topic, you must first create a forum. A forum is a place for you and your students to publish, share, and reply to comments (ie. threads). Follow these instructions to create a new forum.

1. Click on your course menu’s DISCUSSION BOARD button to view the course’s discussion board. When you are on the discussion board page, click on the CREATE FORUM button.

2. On the CREATE FORUM page, complete the following fields:

   a. **FORUM INFORMATION**: Give the forum a meaningful NAME. Add your discussion question and instructions to the DESCRIPTION field.

   b. **FORUM AVAILABILITY**: Click the AVAILABLE radio button to make the forum available. If desired, you may use the scheduling tools to control the forum’s availability.

   c. **FORUM SETTINGS**: Choose the settings you would like to use in the forum. Through these settings, you can control what members can do in the forum, such as post new threads, rate posts, allow editing or deletion of posts. Here, you can also determine if you want to include this forum in your Grade Center and set its point value.

3. When you are done completing the form, click the SUBMIT button at the bottom of the page.
4. The new forum will be posted to the discussion board. Please note the following navigational features of the Discussion Board page

A. **Search and Re-ordering Tools** – To search for content within the discussion board, click the *Search* button and use the provided search tools. To rearrange the order of the forums, click the arrow icons and move the forums into a preferred order in the form that appears.

B. **Sorting Filters** – The heading of each column is a clickable link that sorts forums ascending alphabetically. If you click on a sorting filter, a “Remove Sorting” button will appear on the page. While forum content is sorted, you will not be able to re-arrange forum order.

C. **Forum Link** – Click on the name of the forum to access it. To edit the forum, click on the gray arrow button next to its name and select the option you want to perform: Edit, Grade, Manage, or Delete.

D. **Forum Notifications** - The *Unread Posts* notification will display a number indicating the number of posts you have not read. The *Replies to Me* notification will display a number indicating how many replies have been added to a thread that you authored. Clicking on the notification will display the forum posts associated with it.

**CREATING THREADS IN A FORUM**

A thread is an individual, original response posted within a forum. It is a best practice for the instructor to add the first thread in a forum as an example for the students to use when creating their own responses.

The instructor and students may follow this process to add a new thread to a forum:

1. On the discussion board page, **CLICK ON THE LINK TO THE FORUM** to view the forum. On the forum page, click on the **CREATE THREAD** button.
2. On the CREATE THREAD page, complete the MESSAGE form. Then, click the SUBMIT button to publish the thread to the forum.

3. The published thread will appear on the forum page as a link. Students must click the link to view the thread’s message.

SAVING UNPUBLISHED THREADS AS DRAFTS
When you or students are composing a new thread, an unpublished thread can be saved for later revision and publishing by clicking the SAVE AS DRAFT button.

Finding a Draft

*Only the original author of draft thread can find, edit, and publish it.*

To find a draft thread, the user must access the forum where the draft thread was created. Then, roll his or her mouse over the DISPLAY button and choose DRAFTS ONLY from the menu that appears. This will sort the list of threads and display just those in draft status.
Editing & Publishing a Draft Thread

In the forum containing the draft thread, the user must view the thread by clicking on its title.

On the **THREAD DETAIL** page, the user must roll his or her mouse over the content of the thread and click the **EDIT** button that appears.

The user will then see a form to resume editing of the thread.

Once done, the user should click the **SUBMIT** button to publish the thread to the forum.
REPLYING TO THREADS

1. To reply to a thread, click on the thread you want to reply to.

2. This will open the thread’s detail page, where you can review the content of the thread. Here, click the REPLY button.

3. A drop-down form will appear, where you can add your reply to the thread.

   To publish the reply, click SUBMIT.
4. The reply will be added to the thread’s details page, indented underneath the thread it was added to.