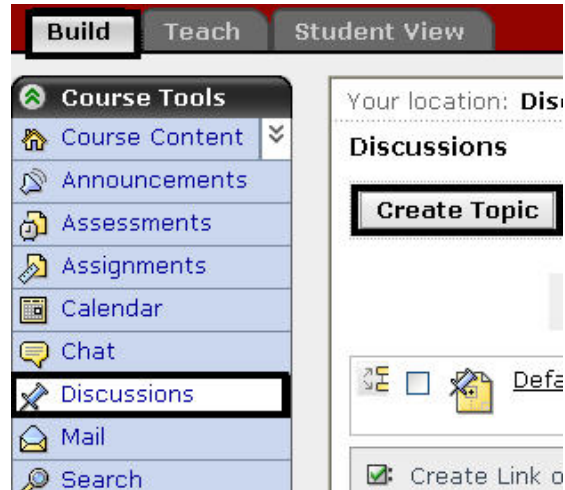


## Creating Discussion Topics

Discussion topics allow students to post entries in a chronological order on a particular topic. Students can also add comments to any blog entry.

To create a topic, start on the Build tab, select **Discussions** under Course Tools, and click **Create Topic**.



You can create threaded, blog or journal topics. To create a topic for your course, select the appropriate **Topic** radio button for the type of discussion you would like to create.

### Create Discussion Topic

#### What type of discussion topic wo

 **Threaded topic.**

Create a threaded topic for a  
are associated with the same  
collapsed.

 **Blog topic.**

Create a collaborative blog (w  
particular topic. Participants c:

 **Journal topic.**

Create a journal topic to give  
the Student and the Section Ir

- Choose a title for the topic. The title should be descriptive of the topic so students will not have to guess about what they are writing about. For example, you can name your topic "Interview Etiquette."
- Then you will enter a description. This description is very helpful so students will know what they are supposed to add. This is where you can add prompts for the students.
- Select whether to show or hide the topic to students. This will allow you to create your discussions but not release it until you are ready. If you hide the topic, select the **Show Item** radio button when you want to allow students to view it.

## Category

**Note:** The Category function only appears when you create a new topic.

- To add a topic to an existing category, select the category name.
- To create a new category, select **New Category** and enter a name and description.

The Category option allows you to group your topics together within the discussion area, which makes it easier for you and your students to find topics. If topics are not put into a specific category, they will be filed under "Uncategorized." Alternatively, if you do not have any categories for your topics, the "Uncategorized" section will not show up.

## Grading

You can also grade entries. To do this, decide how you want your grading set up.

Select grading options:

**Grading**

Topic is not gradable

---

Allow the topic to be graded

Numeric grade: Out of

Alphanumeric grade

Grade by Grading Form:

A column is automatically created for this topic in Grade Book

Grade Book column title:

Release grade to Students in *My Grades*

- **Topic is not gradable** – you will not have an option to give a grade through the tool.

**Graded** – you have the option to give a numeric (include how much it is worth) or alphanumeric grade or use a grading form. Remember, if you use alphanumeric, this grade will not be able to be included within a calculation. The grading form will be considered a numeric column and will be set up ahead of time so you and students are aware of what is expected.

- You can create a different Grade Book column title than the title of the blog. This will allow you to shorten the name of the entry to fit within the Grade Book column.
- The last option under Grading is to decide if you want to release the grade to students. This column will not be visible until there is a grade in it even if you release it when you create it. If you do not release it when you create it, you will have to manually enter the Grade Book and release it when you are ready.

## Peer Review

Another option when creating discussions is to decide if you want students to peer review each others' posts. Choose this if you want students to learn how to develop or sustain a discussion topic.

 **Peer Review** (Expand this area to see more options.)

Do not enable peer review in this topic

Allow Students to review messages using a simple rating scale

Allow Students to review messages using a grading form

If you do not want students to use peer review, select the first radio button, **Do not enable peer review in this topic.**

If you decide you want students to peer review their classmates' blog entries and replies, select from the following Peer Review Options:

- Allow students to use a rating scale and include comments when reviewing a topic. The simple rating scale includes: needs improvement, below average, average, above average, and excellent. This can be changed if you want to specify another scale.
- Allow students to review using a grading form. You must design a grading form representative of what and how you want students to review posts. The grading form must be created before selecting this option.

## Topic Behavior Options

The last option is to decide how students are going to interact.

Select the following Topic Behavior Options:

 **Topic Behavior Options** (Expand this area to see more options.)

Student Posting Rules

Students can post messages and reply to messages

Students can post messages but cannot reply to messages

Students can reply to messages but cannot post messages

Students can edit their messages after posting them

Lock this topic for Students (Section Instructors can post in a locked topic)

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Author Identification

Authors are identified by user names

Authors are anonymous to Students

- **Student Posting Rules** – choose how students post and reply to messages. You can allow students to post and reply, just post new messages but not reply, or just reply but not post messages. You can also decide if they can edit their own messages. If students are allowed to edit, you may lose a great learning experience of what the student posts first before going back and changing it.
- **Author Identification** – select this radio button if students are identified or anonymous when posting entries. Be careful with anonymity — students are already somewhat anonymous even if their names are displayed.

Once you click **Save** you will have a new topic under the Discussions tool that you can release to students.