



Creating Discussions Topics

After you have crafted discussion questions offline, you can add them to your course. Within the Discussions tool, you first create a topic, where messages related to your subject will be grouped.

Creating Topics

⇒ To create topics:

1. From the Discussions screen, click **Create Topic**. The Create Topic screen appears.
2. Select the type of discussion topic you would like to create.

Note: The following steps to create a topic are the same no matter the type of topic.

3. Enter a Title, Description, and select if you want to Show or Hide the topic.
4. To add a topic to a category, choose one or create one from the drop-down menu. Note: see next page for information on creating categories.
5. Select the desired grading option (not gradable, numeric, alphanumeric, or by Grading Form).

Grading
 Allow the assignment to be graded (A column is automatically created for this assignment in Grade Book)
Grade Book column title:
 Release grade to Students in *My Grades*
 Numeric grade: Out of
 Alphanumeric grade
 Grade by Grading Form:

For numeric grades, you must enter the maximum grade.

Note: Grading creates a column in the Grade Book, allowing you to mark students' contributions to the topic. You can choose to release the grade to students. If you make a topic gradable, you cannot revert back to non-gradable.

6. Select the options desired:
 - **Peer Review** – Allow students to review and evaluate messages posted by their peers using a simple rating scale or grading form.
 - **Student Posting Rules** – Define the limits of students' participation in a topic.
 - **Author Identification** – Indicate whether posts to this topic will exclude the author's name.
 - **Journal Privacy** - Determine if the journal entries will be shared with the entire class.
7. Click **Save**. The Discussions screen appears and the topic is created.

Creating Categories

Categories allow you to group similar or related discussion topics together. For instance, you can group all discussions topics for a unit of study under a single category to enable students to easily find a topic.

Topics that are not assigned to a category appear under a default category titled "Uncategorized Topics."

1. From the Discussions screen, click **Create Category**. The Create Category screen appears.
2. In the *Title* text box, enter a name for the category.
3. In the *Description* text box, enter a description for the category. The description can contain up to 4000 characters.
4. Click **Save**. The *Discussions* screen appears and the category is created.
5. You may now move topics to your new category, or select this category when creating a new topic.

Apply Your Knowledge



To make the Discussions area easy for students to use, be sure you have descriptive topic titles. Consider using some of the available topic options, such as peer review and blog format, to add variety and interest to Discussions to keep your students motivated.