

2.2.8 Forum

This is basically a bulletin board. You may create a forum to discuss various topics for your class. To add a “Forum,” select “Forum” from the “Add an activity” menu. This will take you to the “Forum” page:

Adding a new Forum

General

Forum name* *

Forum type ?

Forum introduction* * ?

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Path:

Force everyone to be subscribed? ?

Read tracking for this forum? ?

Maximum attachment size ?

RSS

RSS feed for this activity ?

Number of RSS recent articles ?

Grade

Allow posts to be rated? Use ratings

Grade ?

Restrict ratings to posts with dates in this range:

From

To

Post threshold for blocking

Time period for blocking ?

Post threshold for blocking ?

Post threshold for warning ?

Common Module Settings

Group mode ?

Visible ?

There are required fields in this form marked*.

Again, there are help buttons next to each pull-down menu (the “?” buttons). You will be required to give the forum a name, and an introduction.

The “Forum type” offers four choices: “A single simple discussion,” “Each person posts one discussion,” “Q and A” or “Standard forum for general use.” In “A single simple

discussion,” you have just a single topic, all on one page. Useful for short, focused discussions. In “Each person posts one discussion,” each person can post exactly one new discussion topic (everyone can reply to them though). This is useful when you want each student to start a discussion about, say, their reflections on the week's topic, and everyone else responds to these. The “Q & A” forum requires students to post their perspectives before viewing other students' postings. After the initial posting, students can view and respond to others' postings. This feature allows equal initial posting opportunity among all students, thus encouraging original and independent thinking. In “Standard forum for general use,” you have an open forum where any one can start a new topic at any time. The “Standard forum” is the most commonly used forum.

Next is the “Force everyone to be subscribed?” option. If this is set to “Yes,” then every student in your class will get an email copy of every post in the forum. This might get old in a big discussion group, but would be useful if the forum were a class news forum where students would be emailed any new announcements. Students can always elect to be subscribed to a forum if this setting is set to “No.”

Your next option is “Read tracking for this forum”. If 'read tracking' for forums is enabled, users can track read and unread messages in forums and discussions. The instructor can choose to force a tracking type on a forum using this setting. There are three choices for this setting:

- Optional [default]: students can turn tracking on or off for the forum at their discretion.
- On: Tracking is always on.
- Off: Tracking is always off.

The next setting is “Maximum attachment size,” which allows you to limit the size of any attachments that students may want to upload.

If your administrator has enabled RSS feeds (news feeders), you will see two additional entries:

Maximum attachment size: 500KB  

RSS feed for this activity: None  

Number of RSS recent articles: 0  

Allow posts to be rated?: Use ratings

If the RSS questions do not appear on your screen, then your administrator probably has not enabled RSS feeds. See your administrator for more information. Since RSS is available in multiple modules, it is covered in its own section. For more information, see Appendix 3: RSS Feeds.

The next section of setting up a Forum is the option to rate posts in a discussion. If you do not want to rate posts, then leave the “Use ratings” checkbox blank (or uncheck it if it is checked). If you do want to rate posts, check the box next to “Use ratings.”

Once you check “Use ratings,” the other options become available. Under the “Users” menu, you have the option of setting who can rate posts. Then you can set who can rate posts. You can allow everyone to rate posts, or you can select to only have administrators (teachers) rate posts.

Under the “Users” menu is the “View” menu. This lets you select if a user can see everybody’s ratings, or only the ratings for the user.

Once you have determined who can rate posts, then you can select the rating method. To set the evaluation method, select what you would like from the “Grade” menu. Under this menu, you will see any custom scales you set up under “Scales” (see above), as well as any numerical evaluation from 1 to 100. If you select a custom scale, the evaluator (you or the students) can select any of the words you set up (Excellent, Good, etc.). If you select a numerical evaluation, the evaluator can select a number from 0 to the upper limit you set (if you set a grade of 85, then the evaluator can select any number from 0 to 85).

If you wish, you can limit the rating of posts to just certain days or times. If you wish to do this, check the “Restrict ratings to posts with dates in this range” box. Set your “From” date and your “To” date, and the evaluator will only be able to assign grades during those times.

The **Post Threshold for Blocking** section has three options: “Time period for blocking”, “Post threshold for blocking” and “Post threshold for warning”. The concept of managed postings is very simple. Users will be blocked from posting after a given number of posts in a given period (set in the “Time period for blocking” field), and as they approach that number, they’ll be warned that they are approaching the threshold. Setting the warn threshold to 0 will disable warnings, and setting the block threshold to 0 will disable blocking. If blocking is disabled, warnings will automatically be disabled. None of these settings affect teachers posting

You also can set Group options and choose if this activity is visible to students. When you are done with the “Forum,” click on “Save changes.”