



Discussion Board Guide For Instructors

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Basic Structure and Use

Blackboard's Discussion Board provides the backbone for fully online courses and gives students in hybrid and face-to-face courses the opportunity to share ideas beyond the classroom. In this guide, we'll first look at the structure and main elements of the Discussion Board, and then cover how to set it up.

To enter the Discussion Board

Click **Discussion Board** in the left navigation menu OR

Click **Communication** in the Toolbox, then click **Discussion Board** OR

In the **Control Panel** under Course Tools, click **Discussion Board**

This view displays both the regular discussion board area and the Group Discussion Boards that you added

The instructor first sets up a **Forum** to serve as the container for one or more topics, or **Threads**. You and your students type messages (**Posts**) that everyone else in the class can read. Anyone can respond (**Reply**). Each Reply is attached to its parent message. Together, the Posts and Replies form the **Thread**. As more students read an original Post, the number of responses can grow. Your students and you can have a dialogue on a number of topics, reading and responding at your convenience.

The following *screen shot* illustrates the instructor's view of the Discussion Board layout after some Fora have been added.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Discussion Board interface. At the top, there is a 'Discussion Board' header. Below it, there is a 'Forum' link (1) and a search function (2). The main area displays a list of forums with the following columns: Display Order, Forum, Total Posts, Unread Posts, Total Participants, and Grade. The forums listed are: Cyber Soda Fountain (4), Housekeeping Questions (2), Graded Threads (3), and Graded Forum (4). The 'Cyber Soda Fountain' forum has 4 total posts and 2 unread posts. The 'Housekeeping Questions' forum has 1 total post and 1 unread post. The 'Graded Threads' forum has 1 total post and 0 unread posts. The 'Graded Forum' forum has 1 total post and 1 unread post. Each forum row has a set of control links (6) for Modify, Manage, Remove, and Copy. The 'Cyber Soda Fountain' forum description is: 'Use this forum to share non-academic conversations about what's going on in your life, prayer requests, etc.' The 'Housekeeping Questions' forum description is: 'Have a question about the course? a lesson? Something else logistical? Ask it here.' The 'Graded Threads' forum description is: 'This forum is designed to show how Thread Grading works.' The 'Graded Forum' forum description is: 'This forum is designed to show how Forum Grading works.'

Display Order	Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants	Grade
1	Cyber Soda Fountain	4	2	3	-
2	Housekeeping Questions	1	1	1	-
3	Graded Threads	1	0	1	-
4	Graded Forum	1	1	0	-

1 – Link for adding a Forum

2 – Search function

3 – Column for Display Order

4 – Column for Forum Titles, which are boldfaced if they contain Unread Posts

5 – Columns for Forum details, including whether a Forum is set up to be graded

6 – Links for Instructor Controls (Modify, Manage, Remove, Copy)

Note: Students do **not** see the links for adding Forums, columns for Display Order, grading, or instructor controls.

To enter a Forum
Click its underlined title.

Viewing a Forum

Clicking a Forum produces a screen showing the discussion **Threads**. All users, including your students, can choose how to view this page.

- **List View** displays all Threads in a list that is completely *flush left* on the screen.
- **Tree View** displays Threads in a collapsible/expandable *tree* structure that indents replies.

Features common to both views include

- Each **Thread** displays the date/time it was entered (based on the server clock), its title, and the name of the person who entered it.
- Any **Threads** with unread Posts appear in boldface.
- **Instructor** link options include *Thread*, *Remove*, *Collect*, *Mark Read*, *Mark Unread* and, if enabled, *Subscribe* and *Forum Grading*.

Here's a closer look at what is unique to each view; details about these functions follow.

Forum List View

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Forum List View interface. At the top, there are buttons for 'Tree View' and 'List View'. Below these are several action links: 'Thread', 'Remove', 'Collect', 'Mark Read', 'Mark Unread', and 'Subscribe'. A 'Change Status to:' dropdown menu is set to 'Published'. The main area contains a table with columns: 'Date', 'Thread', 'Author', 'Status', 'Unread Posts', and 'Total Posts'. Three threads are listed. Callout 1 points to the 'Change Status to:' dropdown. Callout 2 points to the 'Flag' column (checkboxes). Callout 3a points to the 'Thread' column checkboxes. Callout 3b points to the 'Collect' icon. Callout 4 points to the 'Status' column. Callout 5 points to the 'Display' dropdown menu at the bottom.

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/18/07 3:55 PM	<u>I Got the Job!</u>	Lynn Bynet	Published	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/18/07 3:53 PM	<u>Prayer Request for Cousin</u>	Katie Hill	Published	1	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	12/18/07 1:23 PM	<u>My Favorite Time of Year</u>	Crystal Nielsen	Published	0	1

1 – The **Change Status to** dropdown menu lets you update the status of any checked Thread(s): *Published*, *Hidden*, *Unavailable*, *Locked* or *Unlocked*.

2 – The **Flag** column displays a Flag icon if any Posts within that Thread have been flagged by the user (such as to remind the user to follow up).

3a & b – Click Thread **Check Boxes**, then click the **Collect** icon to see selected Posts on a single page.

You can place a checkmark by an individual Post in the collection and select **Mark Read**.

4 – Only the *List View* shows the Status of a Thread (see No. 1 above).

5 – The **Display** function at the bottom lets you select the Status of Thread(s) you want displayed in the instructor view: *Show All, Published, Locked, Hidden, Unavailable, and Drafts*. Students see only *Published* items. An item may be both *Published* and *Locked*.

Forum Tree View

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Forum Tree View interface for a course titled "Course Discussions: Cell Phones". The interface includes a top navigation bar with "Tree View" and "List View" buttons. Below this is an action bar with icons for "Thread", "Remove", "Collect", "Flag", "Clear Flag", "Mark Read", "Mark Unread", and "Search". The main content area displays a list of forum threads with columns for thread name, author, and date. The threads listed are: "Ideas" by Wesley Taylor (1/22/09 8:48 PM), "RE: Ideas" by Crystal Hammers (1/24/09 3:55 PM), "RE: Ideas" by Wesley Taylor (1/24/09 6:46 PM), "Cell Phones Scenario Document" by Crystal Hammers (1/27/09 10:54 AM), and "How we did our Poll" by Kevin Carmack (1/27/09 7:20 PM). At the bottom, there is a control bar with "Refresh", "Select All", "Go", "Expand All", and "Collapse All" buttons. Numbered callouts (1-4) highlight specific features: 1 points to the "Flag" and "Clear Flag" buttons; 2 points to the "Search" button; 3 points to the "Refresh" button; and 4 points to the "Expand All" and "Collapse All" buttons.

1 – In the *Tree View*, the **Flag** options appear in the top action bar.

2 – The **Search** function is at top right.

3 – A button to **Refresh** the screen is at bottom left.

4 – The *Tree View* can show all the Posts of a Forum on one page (**Expand All**) or close each Thread so only its first Post appears (**Collapse All**). To expand a single Thread, use the + (plus) sign to the left of the first Post; to collapse the Thread, use the – (minus) sign.

Viewing a Thread and Its Posts

To enter a Thread
Click the underlined title OR,
in the *List View*, click the underlined number in the *Unread Posts* column.

The screenshot shows a Blackboard 'Thread Detail' page. At the top left, there is a 'Thread Detail' header with a speech bubble icon. Below this is an 'Action Bar' (callout 1) containing buttons for 'Collect', 'Flag', 'Clear Flag', 'Mark Read', and 'Mark Unread'. To the right of the Action Bar is a 'Search' button (callout 2). The main content area is a 'Thread tree' (callout 3) showing a thread titled 'cell phone activity' with two posts. The first post is by Barbara King on 1/24/09 11:53 AM. The second post is a reply by Crystal Hammers on 1/24/09 4:22 PM. Below the thread tree is a 'Refresh' button (callout 4) and a dropdown menu labeled 'Select All' with a 'Go' button. The bottom section (callout 5) shows the details of the selected post, including the subject 'cell phone activity', author 'Barbara King', posted date 'Saturday, January 24, 2009 11:53:00 AM PST', last modified date 'Saturday, January 24, 2009 11:53:00 AM PST', and total views '11 Your views: 1'. It also shows an attached document 'King_cellphone_activity.docx (10.506 Kb)' with the text 'Attached is an activity with a cell phone that could be used for a lesson activity.' At the bottom right of the page is an 'OK' button.

The **Thread Detail** page includes

- 1 – The **Action Bar** with options for various actions
- 2 – **Search** function
- 3 – The Thread *tree* listing all the Posts of the Thread
- 4 – A link to **Refresh** the screen and a dropdown for selecting Threads for the options above (to be used in conjunction with the Go button)
- 5 – The body of whatever Post is highlighted in blue in the Thread tree

Note: The options lining the top and bottom of a Post (in this case, *Reply*, *Quote*, *Modify*, *Set Flag* and *Remove*) are largely dependent on the instructor's settings.

If you want to move the *Post* area above the *Thread* tree, click the small black arrow in the top right corner of the tree (**Search** in the image). Click it again and the Post will once again appear under the tree. The *minus* sign hides the tree altogether.

Reading and Replying in the Discussion Board

To read a Post, click the underlined message title, or click **Previous Post/Next Post** in the right corner of a Post. To make a response, click **Reply** or click **Quote**. The latter will place the Parent Post into the body of your response. Type your reply, then click **Submit**.

The Reply feature will bring up a textbox and automatic title, as in the screen shot below. (You may want to instruct students to write more specific subject lines that reflect their contribution to the discussion). Notice that you can choose to see the parent Post while replying.

Reply to Post

1 Message

Show Parent Post

Subject: RE: Prayer Request for Cousin

Message

Normal 3 Times New Roman B I U S x₂ x² | [List icons] | [Link/Quote icons]

Jane,
So sorry to hear about the tornado that has affected your family members.

Path: [body](#)

2 Attachments

Attachments [Attach a file](#)

3 Submit

Click **Save** to save a draft of this message. Click **Submit** to submit the post. Click **Cancel** to quit.

Cancel Save Submit

If you wish, you may **Save** a draft of a Post and come back to it later. It will only appear in **your** view of the Thread until you click **Modify** to finish it, then **Submit**.

[RE: Prayer Request for Cousin](#) (draft) Crystal Nielsen 3/24/08 12:25 PM

Setting Up the Discussion Board

To create a Forum

Click **Discussion Board** in the Control Panel > Click your course ID link > click **+Forum** in the tool bar.

Note: The Control Panel view is a bit different from the course menu view. It lists
1 - The main course discussion board (which shows the course ID)
2 - The discussion boards for groups

Discussion Board	Forums	Participants	Posts
GS08 BU 512 3L	3	4	9
Group A	1	0	0
Group B	1	0	0

On the *Add Forum* page, enter or select the three main elements of a Forum: 1) the basic Information (Name required, Description is optional), 2) Availability, and 3) Settings, then click **Submit**.

You can either enter specific details in the Description or start a discussion with the first Thread and give your instructions there. If you do not check the boxes for *Display After* and *Display Until*, the Forum will remain available (or unavailable) for the duration of the course.

Add Forum

1 Forum Information

Name

Description

Normal 3 Times New Roman B I U S x₂ x²

Path: [body](#)

2 Forum Availability

Available Yes No

Choose date and time restrictions

Display After Jan 03 2008 05 10 PM

Display Until Jan 03 2008 05 10 PM

Forum Settings

3 Forum Settings

- Allow anonymous posts
- Allow author to remove own posts
 - All posts
 - Only posts with no replies
- Allow author to modify own published posts
- Allow post tagging
- Allow users to reply with quote
- Allow file attachments
- Allow members to create new threads
- Subscribe
 - Do not allow subscriptions
 - Allow members to subscribe to threads
 - Allow members to subscribe to forum
 - Include body of post in the email
 - Include link to post
- Allow members to rate posts
- Force moderation of posts
- Grade
 - No grading in forum
 - Grade Forum: Points possible:
 - Grade threads

The options checked in this illustration are recommended for most Forums. Grading is optional, but is key to online courses.

4 Submit

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

* Required Field

Allow Anonymous Posts

If you plan to grade participation in the Discussion Board, it's best to avoid this!

Allow Author to Remove Own Posts

If you allow users to remove their own Posts without also checking *Posts with no replies*, they could potentially wipe out the Posts of their classmates.

Allow Author to Modify Own Published Posts

Check this one if you want users to correct their typos, etc.

Allow Post Tagging

Tags allow instructors (or Forum managers) to **tag** a Post with the key topics one might find in it, (e.g., the topic *child-rearing*). This is different from the *Search* function because Search looks for keywords, and Tagging will grab Posts that may discuss a topic but not use the actual label (in other words, a user may talk about child-rearing without ever using that particular phrase). Tagging works independent of Thread or Thread Status. Tagging can slow loading and using the Discussion Board, so you may want to use it sparingly for a course. More about how Tagging works later.

Allow Users to Reply with Quote

This includes the Parent Post in the body of their Reply.

Allow File Attachments

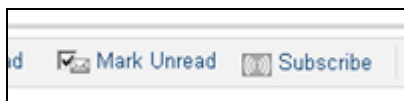
This setting is automatically checked and is recommended if students will be uploading papers for peer review or otherwise attaching documents for others to see. You can remove it if you wish.

Allow Members to Create New Threads

This setting is automatically checked. If you choose to *Grade by Thread*, Blackboard automatically disables this so that you can create the only Thread to which students respond.

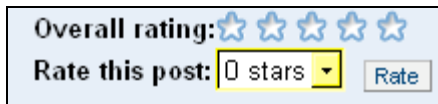
Subscribe

This setting lets users to click a button that tells Blackboard to notify them by e-mail each time a new Post is added to a Thread or Forum. The button appears in the action bar on the Forum page or in the Thread Detail. If you want students to create new threads, select Allowing Subscriptions by Forum. If you choose *Subscribe to Thread*, Blackboard will disable the setting for allowing students to create new Threads.



Allow Members to Rate Posts

Users can rate Posts in the Forum on a scale of one to five stars as a form of peer review. Peer rating can be used to pedagogical advantage, perhaps as part of the grade you give.



Force Moderation of Posts

A feature often seen in cyberspace, moderation refers to the screening of Posts before they are viewable by the rest of the users. Forums on the World Wide Web are often moderated to prevent cranky users from Posting inappropriate messages (e.g., with foul language, etc.)

This feature has some great pedagogical uses. For instance, you can use the Moderation feature to have students write Posts (or even submit files) that only you can see at first, then after you determine a grade, you Publish the Post for the rest of the class to make comments. Or, you may choose to delegate responsibility for reviewing Posts to a student Moderator, who would review submitted Posts and decide whether to Publish them. More about Moderation later.

Forum and Thread Grading

Instructors may choose to grade by Forum or by Thread. The grade icon appears in the Grade column for Forums or for Threads as appropriate. The main difference is whether you will allow students to create new Threads, or if you will be writing the initial Thread yourself to which students Reply. If you choose *Grade by Thread*, Blackboard will warn you that users will not be able to create new Threads, although a bug may still allow them. If students do create new Threads, Blackboard will let you enable grading for those Threads. More about grading later.

5	Graded Forum This is a sample forum to show how the grading feature works.	2	0	2		Modify	Manage	Remove	Copy
6	Graded Threads This forum is designed to test out the grading of threads.	2	1	2	-	Modify	Manage	Remove	Copy

Managing the Discussion Board

Some ways to work more efficiently in the Discussion Board.

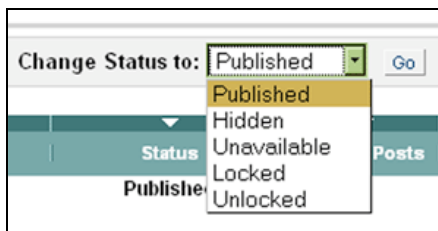
Changing the Thread Status and Display

In the *List View* only, a dropdown field allows users to display desired Threads within the permissions of their role (for instance, students cannot select Unavailable Threads).



To change the Status of a Thread

In List View, place a **check next to the desired Thread** > Highlight the **desired Status** in the Change Status To: dropdown list on the right side of the action bar > Click **Go**.



Types of Thread Status

- **Published Threads** - By default, Threads are considered Published, meaning they are available to users.
- **Hidden Threads** - On occasion, you may wish to Hide outdated Threads to make relevant content easier for students to find. Students may still choose to display Hidden Threads. Hidden Threads may not be modified.
- **Unavailable Threads** - Unavailable Threads are only visible to Forum Managers (a default role for Instructors). Even then, Forum Managers must choose to view these Threads. Making Threads unavailable means users can no longer view the Thread.
- **Locked Threads** - This is a way for you to *archive* a Forum but keep it available for students to read Posts. The Reply button no longer appears if a Thread has a status of Locked. *Unlocked* reverses this Status.

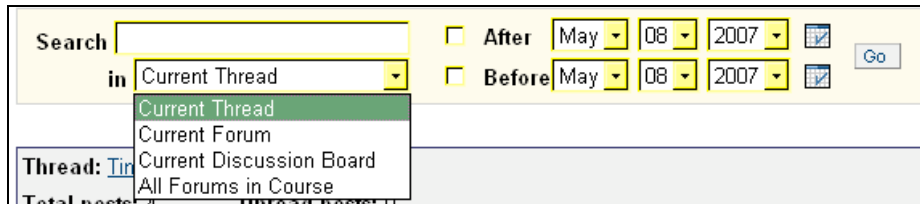
Note that one's own Drafts may be chosen for Display, but only when they are an original Post. A Reply Post that has been saved as a Draft must be located within the Thread.

Using Search

A search link is at the top right of the page throughout the Discussion Board.

To create a Search

Click the **Search** button > Enter a **keyword or phrase** > Choose the desired option for **where to search** > Choose **date restrictions** (optional) > Click **Go**.



The screenshot shows a search interface with a search box containing a yellow highlight. Below the search box is a dropdown menu labeled 'in' with 'Current Thread' selected. To the right of the search box are two date restriction options: 'After' and 'Before', each with a date selector (May 08 2007) and a checkbox. A 'Go' button is located to the right of the date selectors. Below the search box is a 'Thread: Title' field with a dropdown menu showing options: 'Current Thread', 'Current Forum', 'Current Discussion Board', and 'All Forums in Course'.

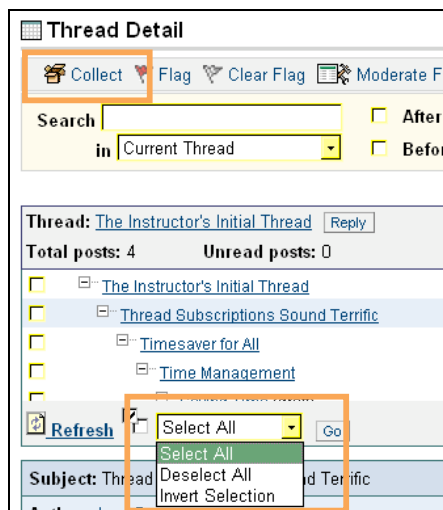
The search function starts at the current level, and options exist to work up. For example, in a Thread, the default search option only searches that Thread, but options exist to search the entire Forum or all Forums, including any Forums that appear in the user's groups.

Collecting Posts

You can group Posts into **Collections**, which is handy for reading multiple Posts on one screen or printing collected posts.

To Collect Threads

Click the **checkbox** next to the desired Post(s) > Click **Collect** on the action bar. If you want all the Posts on the page, use the **Select All dropdown** at the bottom of the page, click **Go**, and then click **Collect**.



The screenshot shows a 'Thread Detail' page. At the top, there is an action bar with buttons for 'Collect', 'Flag', 'Clear Flag', and 'Moderate'. Below the action bar is a search box and a dropdown menu for 'in' (Current Thread). The main content area shows a list of posts with checkboxes. The first post is 'The Instructor's Initial Thread'. Below the list is a 'Refresh' button and a dropdown menu with options: 'Select All', 'Deselect All', and 'Invert Selection'. A 'Go' button is located to the right of the dropdown menu. The 'Subject' field is visible at the bottom of the page.

Blackboard will Collect the checked Posts onto a single page for easier reading, as shown. The default view shows the Posts in the order they were written, from the bottom up.

- 1 – Action bar for printing or marking Posts as Read or Unread
- 2 – Filter to show Posts based on Author, Status or Read Status (Read or Unread)
- 3 – Selection dropdown and Sort feature
- 4 – Bottom action bar for acting on a single Post.

The screenshot displays the 'Collection: Discussion Board Overview' page. At the top, there is an action bar (1) with 'Print', 'Mark Read', and 'Mark Unread' buttons. Below this is a filter section (2) with dropdown menus for 'Filter Author' (set to 'Show All'), 'Status' (set to 'Show All'), and 'Read Status' (set to 'Show All'), followed by a 'GO' button. A third section (3) contains a selection dropdown (set to 'Select All') with a 'Go' button, and a 'Sort by' dropdown (set to 'Author's LastName') with an 'Order' dropdown (set to 'Descending') and another 'Go' button. The main content area lists three posts. The first post (by Crystal Nielsen) has a 'Draft' status and a '4' callout pointing to its 'Reply', 'Quote', and 'Mark as Unread' action bar. The second post (also by Crystal Nielsen) has a 'Published' status. The third post (by John Doe) also has a 'Published' status. Each post includes a title, author, date, status, and a brief text snippet.

Note: A Print option appears at the top of the Collect page. You can print to your regular printer, or save the page as a PDF file and save it on your computer.

To save a page of Collected Posts as a PDF

Mac

Click **File** > Click **Print** > Click **PDF** > Select **Save as PDF** > Select the location to save > Rename the file if desired > Click **Save**

Windows

Use the MS Office tool (download from MicroSoft) to save a file as PDF or install a freeware PDF printer driver.

Flagging Threads or Posts

Flagging is useful for finding Threads or Posts at a later time, perhaps to help you remember where someone wrote of a useful resource, or to remind you to Reply later.

To flag the initial Post of a Thread

In the Forum Tree View, place a check next to the desired **Thread title** > Click **Flag** on the action bar.

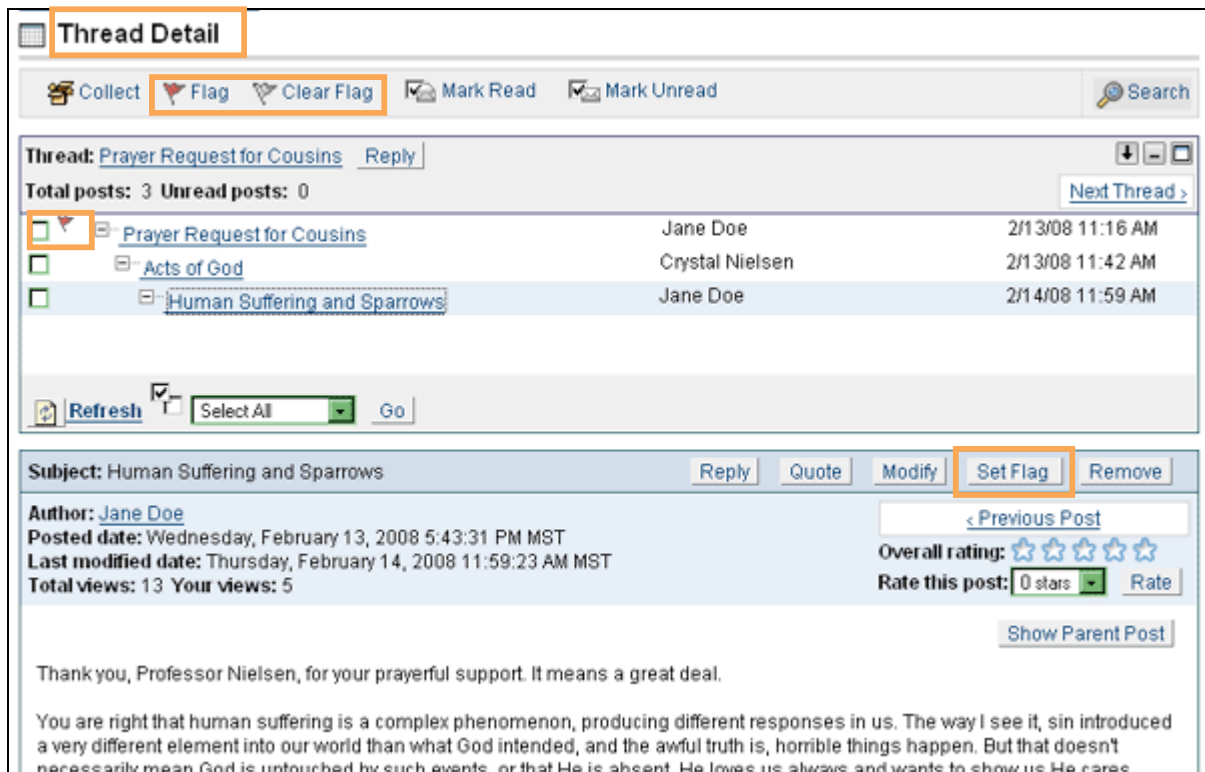


The screenshot shows the 'Course Discussions: Student Lounge/Water Cooler' interface. At the top right, 'Tree View' and 'List View' buttons are visible. Below them is an action bar with icons for Thread, Remove, Collect, Flag, Clear Flag, Mark Read, Mark Unread, and Search. The 'Flag' button is highlighted with an orange box. Below the action bar is a table of threads:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Thread Title	Author	Date/Time
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prayer Request for Cousins	Jane Doe	2/13/08 11:16 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	I Got the Job!	John Doe	2/13/08 2:44 PM

To flag any Post

On the Thread Detail page, place a check next to the desired **Post title** > Click **Flag** on the action bar. Or, using the action bar at the top or bottom of a Post, click **Set Flag**. (This will only appear if a Post is not yet Flagged.)



The screenshot shows the 'Thread Detail' page for the thread 'Prayer Request for Cousins'. At the top, there is an action bar with icons for Collect, Flag, Clear Flag, Mark Read, Mark Unread, and Search. The 'Flag' button is highlighted with an orange box. Below the action bar, the thread title and a 'Reply' button are shown. The thread statistics are: Total posts: 3, Unread posts: 0. Below this is a table of posts:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Post Title	Author	Date/Time
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prayer Request for Cousins	Jane Doe	2/13/08 11:16 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts of God	Crystal Nielsen	2/13/08 11:42 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Suffering and Sparrows	Jane Doe	2/14/08 11:59 AM

Below the table is a 'Refresh' button and a 'Select All' dropdown menu. Below that is the post details for 'Human Suffering and Sparrows':

Subject: Human Suffering and Sparrows [Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Modify](#) [Set Flag](#) [Remove](#)

Author: Jane Doe [Previous Post](#)

Posted date: Wednesday, February 13, 2008 5:43:31 PM MST

Last modified date: Thursday, February 14, 2008 11:59:23 AM MST

Total views: 13 **Your views:** 5

Overall rating: ☆☆☆☆

Rate this post: 0 stars [Rate](#)

[Show Parent Post](#)

Thank you, Professor Nielsen, for your prayerful support. It means a great deal.

You are right that human suffering is a complex phenomenon, producing different responses in us. The way I see it, sin introduced a very different element into our world than what God intended, and the awful truth is, horrible things happen. But that doesn't necessarily mean God is untouched by such events, or that He is absent. He loves us always and wants to show us He cares.

To unflag any Post
On the Thread Detail page, place a check next to the desired **Post title** > Click **Clear Flag** on the action bar. Or, using the action bar at the top and bottom of a Post, click **Clear Flag**. (This will only appear if a Post is Flagged.)

Using Forum Moderation

Moderation refers to the screening Posts before they are viewable by the rest of the users. Instructors are the moderators by default, but you may delegate responsibility for reviewing Posts to a student Moderator.

Moderating Posts

When moderation is checked in the Forum Settings, the tool titled *Moderate Forum* appears at the top of the Thread Detail.



When students write a Post in a Moderated Forum, their Post goes into a queue, or holding area, until you or your designated moderator releases the Post for viewing by all. This is what student Jane would see while she is waiting for her Post to be moderated:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Prayer Request for Cousins	Jane Doe	2/13/08 11:16 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts of God	Crystal Nielsen	2/13/08 11:42 AM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Suffering and Sparrows (Moderation Queue)	Jane Doe	2/13/08 5:43 PM

As the instructor, only you can read the Post until you take action.

To moderate Posts

Click **Moderate Forum** on the action bar seen on the Thread Detail page > In the Moderation Queue, click **Moderate** next to the student's Post > On the Moderate Post page, choose whether to **Publish** the Post or **Return** it to the user; if you return it, meaning it will not be Posted to the Discussion Forum, explain why > Click **Submit**.



The screenshot shows the 'Moderation Queue' interface with a table containing one row of data. The 'Moderate' button at the end of the row is highlighted with an orange border.

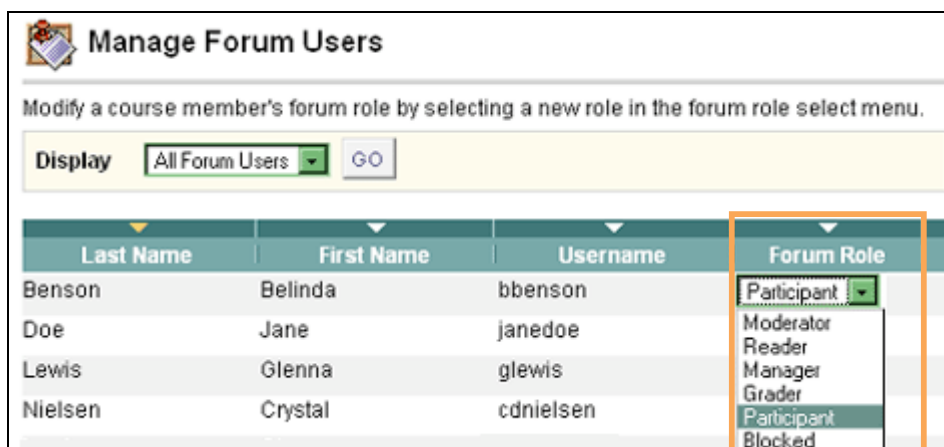
Post	Author	Date	
Human Suffering and Sparrows	Jane Doe	Wed Feb 13 17:43:31 MST 2008	Moderate

Delegating Moderation Duties

Discussion Board Forums include roles for each user involved in the Forum; the default role is Participant. These roles define privileges within the Forum. The Forum roles with administrative privileges that can be assigned to users in a Forum are

- **Managers** have full control over the Forum. Managers can change the Forum settings, moderate Posts, and assign grades. Instructors and TAs have this role by default.
- **Moderators** review Posts before they are made available to all users in the course. NOTE: **Moderators may also delete and modify all Posts in any Forum, even if the Forum does not use the Moderation Queue.** Make sure that Moderators are responsible and understand the criteria for appropriate Posts. Unless the instructor delegates the Moderator role to a student, the instructor has Moderator permissions.
- **Graders** review Discussion Board Posts and enter grades in the Gradebook. The Grader role has some access to the Gradebook but not to the Control Panel as part of its Forum privileges.

To change a user's role in a Forum
Click **Manage** next to the Forum > Select a **role** from the dropdown list.



Manage Forum Users

Modify a course member's forum role by selecting a new role in the forum role select menu.

Display

Last Name	First Name	Username	Forum Role
Benson	Belinda	bbenson	Participant
Doe	Jane	janedoe	Moderator
Lewis	Glenna	glewis	Reader
Nielsen	Crystal	cdnielsen	Manager
			Grader
			Participant
			Blocked

Tagging Posts

Forum managers can create and apply text labels of their own choosing to messages in a Forum; other Discussion Board users can read, filter, and search messages using the Tags but cannot create new ones. Tags allow arbitrary message grouping independent of Thread or Thread status.

To create Tags

In the Forum List View, select specific Posts and click **Collect** > Select the Posts to Tag using the checkboxes (or use the Select All dropdown and click Go) > Enter a new Tag name in the Add Tag field in the action bar > Click **Go**.

Or, **Collect** desired Posts > Click **Add** in the action bar beneath a Post > Enter a Tag name > Click **OK**.

The screenshot shows a forum post titled "Thread: Prayer Request for Cousins" by Crystal Nielsen. The post content includes a greeting to Jane and a discussion about "Acts of God" events. At the bottom of the post, there is a "Tags" field containing "prayer" and "God's sovereignty" with an "Add" button. Above the post, there is a "Tag" input field and a "Go" button. The interface also includes filters for Author, Status, Read Status, and Tags, and a sorting option by Author's Last Name in descending order.

For you or your students to view Tags

In the Forum List View, click the underlined links in the Tag column.
Or, highlight the desired Tag category in the dropdown and click **Go**.

The screenshot shows a forum list view with a table of posts. The table has columns for Author, Status, Tags, Unread Posts, and Total Posts. The "Tags" column contains underlined links for "prayer" and "prayer, God's sovereignty". Below the table, there is a "Tags" dropdown menu with a "Go" button. The dropdown menu is open, showing the options "Show All Tags", "prayer", and "God's sovereignty".

Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
John Doe	Locked	prayer	0	1
Jane Doe	Published	prayer, God's sovereignty	0	3

Note: Tagging can lengthen the time needed for Discussion Board page loads. You may want to enable Tagging on a temporary basis at certain times in the course, Tag selected messages at that time, and then disable it during times of anticipated heavy Forum usage. Re-enabling Tagging at the end of the course would restore all of the previously entered Tag data to view in the pages.

To remove a Tag:
Click the red "X" icon next to a Tag.

Grading Discussions

In a classroom setting, students are often expected to participate in class discussions where that participation is part of the equation when assessing performance. For online courses, student interactions in the Discussion Board most typically provide a specific record of participation. Instructors can assign students a grade for either the quality or quantity of their discussion Posts, or for both.

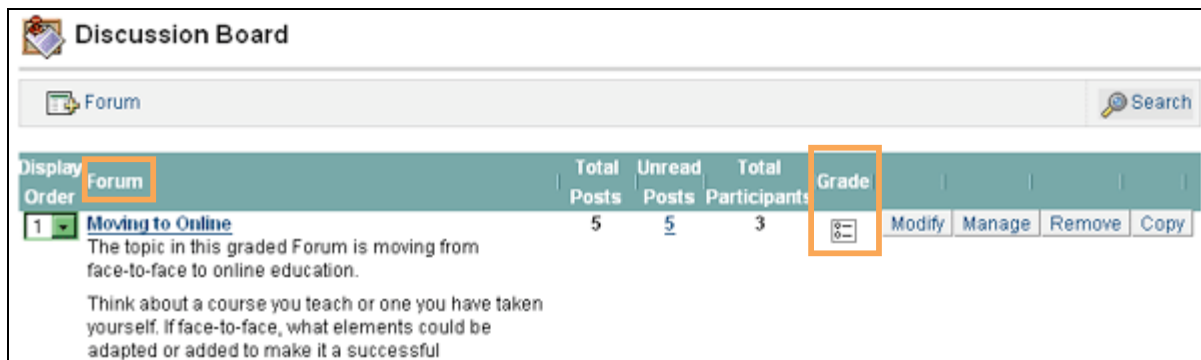
Grading Via the Discussion Board

Grade students in the Discussion Board itself at the Forum level or at the Thread level. In the section on setting up the Discussion Board (page 8), we saw that the instructor chooses at that time whether and how to grade. This can later be changed by *Modifying* the Forum settings.


Accessing the Grade Feature

Blackboard will show a Grade icon in different areas, depending on whether you have chosen the Grade by Forum or Grade by Thread setting.

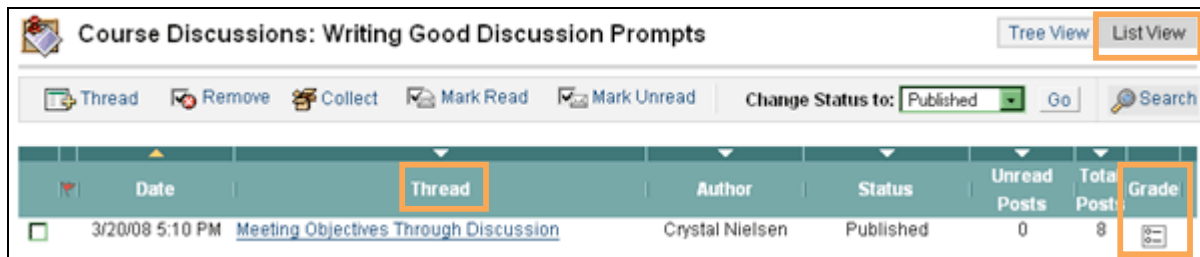
If you've chosen to ***Grade by Forum***, an icon will appear in a Forum's Grade column.



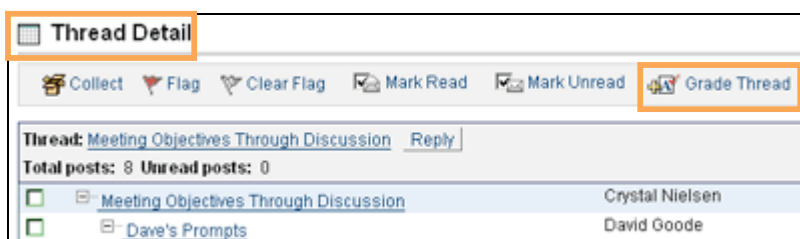
The screenshot shows the Blackboard Discussion Board interface. At the top, there is a "Discussion Board" header with a search icon. Below that is a "Forum" header with a search icon. The main content is a table with the following columns: Display Order, Forum, Total Posts, Unread Posts, Total Participants, and Grade. The first row of the table is for a forum titled "Moving to Online". The "Total Posts" column shows 5, "Unread Posts" shows 5, and "Total Participants" shows 3. The "Grade" column contains a grade icon (a small square with a percentage sign and a minus sign). To the right of the "Grade" column are buttons for "Modify", "Manage", "Remove", and "Copy".

Display Order	Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants	Grade				
1	Moving to Online	5	5	3		Modify	Manage	Remove	Copy

With **Grade by Thread**, the Grade icon appears to the right of the Thread list when in Forum List View.

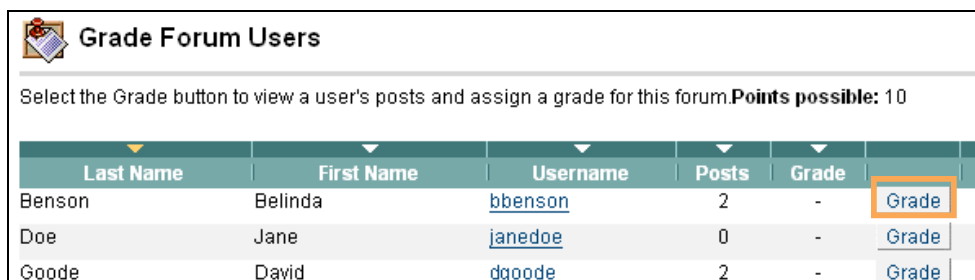


In the Forum Tree View, click the Thread link to see **Grade Thread** in the action bar. Grade Thread is visible on the Thread Detail page regardless of your Forum view.



Assigning Grades

The grade feature creates a list of all users and their number of Posts. Clicking **Grade** next to a student's name will produce a page of his/her Collected Posts and a place to enter a grade.



To assign a grade via the Discussion Board
 As a user with a role of Manager or Grader, click the **Grade** icon in Forum List View or **Grade Thread** in Tree View > Click **Grade** for any given student > If necessary, review the Collected Posts for that student > Enter the points earned > Click **Submit** (next to the grade box) > Click **OK** at the bottom of the page.

Thread Grade: Belinda Benson

Grade: Submit Points possible: 10

Print Mark Read Mark Unread

Filter Author Show All Status Show All Read Status Show All GO

Select All Go Sort by Author's Last Name in Descending Order Go

Thread: Using Primary Sources **Posted Date:** March 20, 2008 3:32 PM
Post: [Moderation a Helpful Tool](#) **Last Modified Date:** March 20, 2008 3:32 PM
Author: Belinda Benson **Status:** Published

These are great ideas, Dave. I especially appreciate how you incorporated the interaction ideas that are key to online instruction.

It sounds like the reflections would be open for not only the instructor to read, but also the other students. I've read that the Forum Moderation feature in the Discussion Board could be a great way for just the instructor to read student posts, then make posts available for the rest of the class to see. You might try it!

Belinda

Reply Quote Mark as Read

Thread: Start with Syllabus and Contact Info **Posted Date:** March 20, 2008 3:08 PM
Post: [Start with Syllabus and Contact Info](#) **Status:** Published
Author: Belinda Benson

Starting with a face-to-face course, I would post the course syllabus, relevant contact information, and other helpful items about the class online so that students would have access to this information. Transitioning from a supplemental to a more blended approach

When you grade via the Discussion Board, Blackboard automatically creates a column in the Gradebook. After you enter grades, they will appear in the appropriate Gradebook column.


Moving to Online
Forum Grade
Pts Possible 10
Weight 0%
8
-
9

Grading Via Item Grade in the Gradebook

Alternately, you can grade discussion Posts via the Gradebook itself. The disadvantage here is that the actual Posts don't appear on the page where you enter the grades. The advantage is that you can assign grades to all students at once and readily see information about the nature of the scoring, such as whether the grade is viewable by users or included in score calculations.

To assign grades via the Gradebook

In the Gradebook, click the **underlined link to the desired Forum or Thread** in its column > Click **Item Grade List** > Enter grades in the Manual Grade column > Click **Submit**.

 View Item Grades: Meeting Objectives Through Discussion

Category	Thread Grade
Display As	Score
Points Possible	10
Weight	0
Available to Users	Yes
Included in Calculations	Yes

The Current Grade is the grade shown to the user if the item is available to users. Click on the Current Grade to show details and modify the grade for the particular user. The Manual Grade is the grade entered by hand. The Override can be used to supply a new current grade value without deleting the manual grade.

Last Name, First Name	Username	Student ID	Due Date	Last Submitted Modified Date	Current Grade	Manual Grade	Override	
Benson, Belinda	bbenson		Mar 17, 2008	Mar 24, 2008 9:42:00 AM	8	<input type="text" value="8"/>		Modify Comments
Doe, Jane	janedoe		Mar 17, 2008	Mar 24, 2008 9:42:11 AM	8	<input type="text" value="8"/>		Modify Comments
Goode, David	dgoode		Mar 17, 2008	Mar 24, 2008 10:03:13 AM	9	<input type="text" value="9"/>		Modify Comments

Giving Feedback

You can use the Comments feature to write a note of encouragement or give feedback separate from the Discussion Board, just for the student to see. You must submit a grade before you can enter a Comment.

To write a Comment:

In the Gradebook, click the **underlined link to the desired Forum or Thread** > Click **Item Grade List** > Click **Modify Comments** next to any given student > Enter text > Check the box next to **Is Public** if you wish the student to see your comments (otherwise, these are notes for yourself) > Click **Submit**.

Or, click the underlined link to a student's grade and click **Modify Comments**.

Modify Comment: Meeting Objectives Through Discussion

1 Comment

Comment

Jane, your thoughts are on target, but I'd just like to see a little more depth. Use the critical thinking skills that I know you have!

Professor Nielsen

Is Public

When the student next goes into My Grades, s/he will be able to view the Comment.

View Grades

Your grades for this Course

Item Name	Due Date	Last Submitted, Modified or Graded	Calculated Grade	Points Possible	Average Score	Weight	
Practice: Fairy Tale Assignment	Mar 15, 2008		-	40	0	0%	
Meeting Objectives Through Discussion	Mar 17, 2008	Mar 21, 2008 2:49 PM	7	10	8	0%	View Comments
Moving to Online	Mar 19, 2008	Mar 21, 2008 3:30 PM	8	10	8.25	0%	View Comments

Viewing Discussion Board Statistics

Discussion Board statistics are a part of the Performance Dashboard, accessed via the Control Panel. The dashboard displays the total number of Forums in which the user has participated.

Performance Dashboard

Use the links provided to view user progress details for each performance measurement.

Print

Last Name	First Name	Username	Role	Last Course Access	Days Since Last Course Access	Review Status	Adaptive Release	Discussion Board	Early Warning System	View Grades
Benson	Belinda	bbenson	Student	Mar 21, 2008 9:41:48 AM	3	0		<u>2</u>	-	
Doe	Jane	janedoe	Student	Mar 24, 2008 9:19:51 AM	0	0		<u>1</u>	-	
Goode	David	dgoode	Student	Mar 21, 2008 9:49:42 AM	3	0		<u>2</u>	-	

The number in the Discussion Board column is also a link to more detailed statistics about the student's activity in each Forum

Discussion Board: bbenson

Email User

Forum	Total Posts	Date of Last Post	Average Post Length	Minimum Post Length	Maximum Post Length	Average Post Position	Grade
Moving to Online	2	Thu Mar 20 15:32:35 MDT 2008	496	470	523	1	8
Writing Good Discussion Prompts	1	Fri Mar 21 09:42:45 MDT 2008	241	241	241	3	-

OK

Clicking a linked number in the Total Posts column will lead to a Collection of the student's Posts in that Forum.

Glossary of Discussion Board Terms

Blocked	The user is not allowed to access the Forum.
Collect Posts	The process of selecting one or more Posts or Threads for inclusion in on a page that can be sorted, filtered, printed, and saved as a document. The collection is gathered into a format that can be sorted, filtered, printed, and saved as a document that can be viewed in a browser.
Copy Forum	The process of creating a clone of a Forum or the Forum settings in the same discussion board or in another discussion board in the same course or organization.
Draft	A Post that has been saved for future editing.
Flag	A mark used to call attention to the Post.
Forum Role	A role type that is assigned to all members of the Discussion Board for each Forum and enables specific privileges within the Forum. A user may have one role per Forum, however, a user's role in each Forum may differ.
Grade Forum	The process of assigning a grade to a user for their performance in a Forum.
Grade Thread	The process of assigning a grade to a user for their performance in a Thread.
Grader	A Forum role that grants the user Participant privileges as well as the Grading privileges for the Forum.
Hidden Thread	A Thread that is locked and not visible by default. Users may view hidden Threads by enabling the Display Hidden Threads feature.
Locked Thread	A Thread that is visible for reading but cannot be modified. Users may not Post to a locked Thread.
Manager	A Forum role that grants all privileges.
Moderation Queue	A list of Posts that must be approved before they will appear in the Discussion Board.
Moderator	A Forum role that grants Participant privileges as well as the ability to modify, delete, and lock Posts. If a Moderation Queue is used, the Moderator may also approve or reject Posts in the queue.
Participant	A Forum role that grants the user read and write privileges in the Forum.
Post	A Discussion Board entry Posted to a Thread or used to start a Thread. Also used as a verb to refer to the act of submitting a Post.
Post Position	The position of a Post in a Thread relative to the other Posts.

Published Post	A Post that has been submitted and, if necessary, approved by a moderator.
Rate Post	The process of evaluating a Post based on a fixed, 5 point scale.
Reader	A Forum role that grants the user the rights to read the contents of a Forum. Users with this role may only view content and cannot add or respond to Posts.
Save Posts	The act of saving a Post as a draft.
Thread	The initial Post and the entire series of replies to that Post within a Discussion Board Forum.
Thread Detail	The page that displays the Threaded view of all Posts in a Thread along with the selected Post.
Unavailable Thread	A Thread that is hidden and inaccessible to all users except Forum Managers.