

## Discussions



The Discussions tool allows you to create topics relevant to the unit where students and staff can post and reply to messages. You can ask questions, generate discussion, and encourage students to share feedback and ideas. You can assign grades for quality of participation, just as you would in a classroom.





There are three types of discussion topics:

- **Threaded:** Create a threaded topic for a more traditional online discussion. Participants post and reply to messages. Replies that are associated with the same post are grouped together, creating message threads that can be expanded and collapsed.
- **Class blog:** Create a collaborative blog (weblog) space by allowing participants to post a chronological series of entries on a particular topic. Participants can then add comments to any blog entry.
- **Journal:** Create a journal topic to give your students a place for their own writing. The journals can be kept private between the student and the lecturer or can be shared with the class.

**For Example** - If you are teaching English literature, you can create discussion categories for different literary genres: English Novels and English Plays. In each category, you can create topics for the literary works that are being studied:

- **English Novels:** Pride and Prejudice, Oliver Twist, A Room with a View.
- **English Plays:** Romeo and Juliet, She Stoops to Conquer, The Importance of Being Ernest.

To start a discussion on the novel Pride and Prejudice, you can post a message such as "Do you think the characters in Pride and Prejudice are conscious of social class?"

Announcements		<p>You can use the <b>Announcements tool</b> to create and send text announcements to students and staff involved in a unit.</p> <p>Announcements appear on the My WebCT page or on the Announcements screen. Announcements can also appear as pop-up messages, which appears on log in. <b>For example</b> - You can use the Announcement tool to inform students that the due date for a quiz or assignment has changed.</p>
Chat		<p>The <b>Chat tool</b> allows you to communicate in real time with other people involved in the unit. You can use Chat to engage in real-time conversations with everyone or with a selection of individuals. You can also use the Chat tool's <b>Whiteboard</b> to draw objects, enter text, import images, and create slide shows that can be viewed in real time by other users. <b>For Example</b> - Use Chat to provide information on office hours, online guest speakers, exam reviews, and study groups. Use <b>Whiteboard</b> to display images, draw objects or draw freehand, and present slide shows.</p>
Mail		<p>The <b>Mail tool</b> allows you to communicate with students and staff involved in your unit through written correspondence, in text or HTML format and file attachments. The Mail tool is restricted to the LMS and ensures that you do not receive undesired or irrelevant messages from external sources. This restriction also contributes to the stability of the messaging system by limiting exposure to viruses.</p>
Who's Online		<p>You can use the <b>Who's Online tool</b> to chat in real time with students and staff users who are enrolled in any of the units with which you have an involvement and who are logged in to the LMS at the same time you are logged in. You can access the <b>Who's Online tool</b> from the My WebCT page.</p>