

Forums offer great opportunities for building community beyond the classroom, allowing students to reflect publicly on their learning and to negotiate shared understanding.

There are five types of forums in Moodle. This guide will focus on the **Standard forum for general use** format. To learn about other kinds of forums and how they work, see this [guide to forum types](#).

Create a Forum

1. With editing turned on, click on **Add an activity or resource....** and select **Forum** (Figure 1).

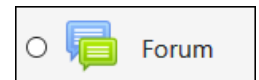


Figure 1: Add Forum

2. Enter a brief **name** for the forum (Figure 2). This title will determine the width of the forum's column in the gradebook—provide due dates and other details in the description area, not in the name.

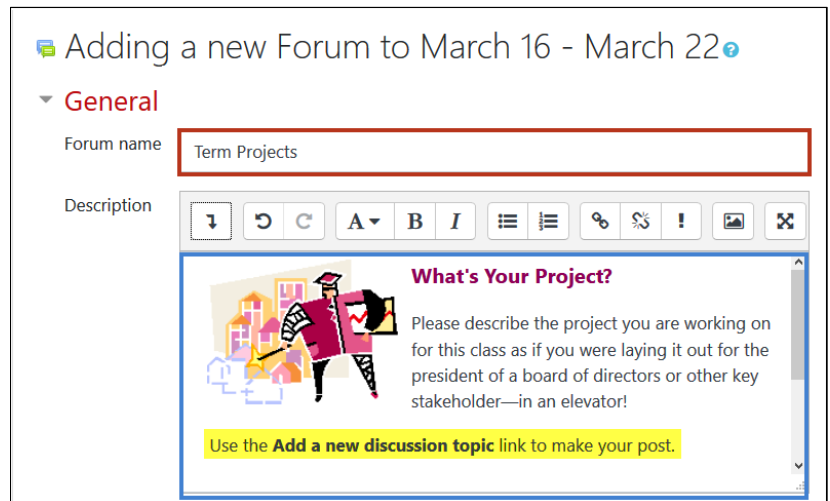


Figure 2: Add Title and Forum Prompt

3. Enter a discussion prompt in the **Description** area (Figure 2), including **instructions for students** describing how to participate in the forum, such as "Use the **Add a new discussion topic** button to add your response." [Embed a link](#) to a video or file resource, if needed. Be specific about what you are asking students to discuss and describe expectations for posting (e.g., one original post and replies to two students, citation requirements, etc.).

4. Check the **Display description on course page** box (Figure 3) to have the prompt shown on the course main page. (Keep in mind that students will have to scroll past it to access other materials in your course. If you display the prompt, consider turning the display off after the forum is completed.)

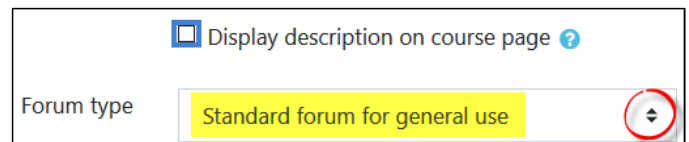


Figure 3: Display Options & Forum Types

5. The default **Standard forum for general use** forum type (Figure 3) is the most generally used.

Key Forum Options

While there are many possibilities in setting up a forum, this guide will highlight just a few options that you need to consider—it's safe to leave the other default settings as they are. (See [Advanced Forum Settings](#) for more information.)

Availability. If you want to set a **due date** for a forum, click the **enable** box and set the date. A cut-off date leaves the forum available for review, but will prevent students from making additional posts after the specified date.

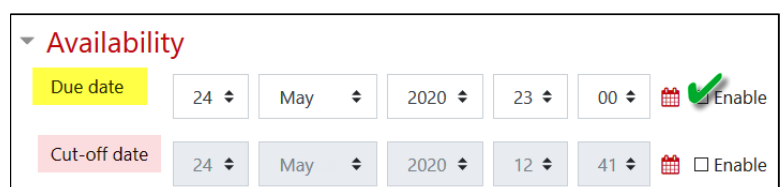
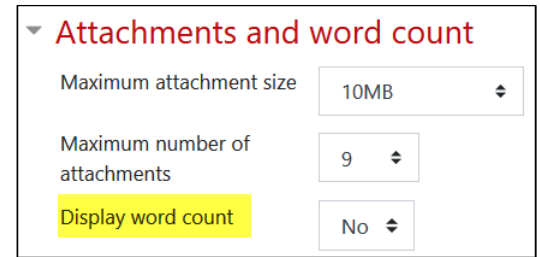


Figure 4: Availability

Create a Forum

Attachments and word count. If you want students to be able to attach files to their posts, indicate the number of files they may upload with each post (Figure 5). Activate the **Display word count** option if you wish.

Grading Options — There are two methods for grading forums: *Whole forum grading* enables you to view and assess all of a student's posts in one screen and allows you to grade with advanced grading tools like rubrics, while the *Ratings* method provides a link for scoring in each individual post so you can assign points as you read responses. Choose one method and safely ignore the other. **Note:** Choosing a grading method will automatically create an item in the gradebook for this forum.



▼ **Attachments and word count**

Maximum attachment size: 10MB

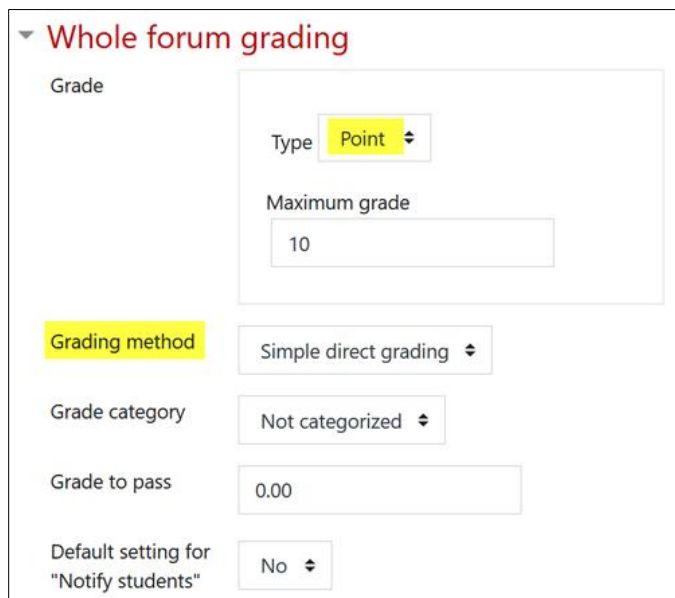
Maximum number of attachments: 9

Display word count: No

Figure 5: Attachments and Word Count

Whole Forum Grading

To review all of a student's responses in one screen or to grade with a rubric, select **Point** as the grade **Type** and enter the maximum points possible (Figure 6). The **Grading method** options menu includes *Simple direct grading* for simply entering points, *rubric*, *checklist*, and *grading guide*.



▼ **Whole forum grading**

Grade

Type: Point

Maximum grade: 10

Grading method: Simple direct grading

Grade category: Not categorized

Grade to pass: 0.00

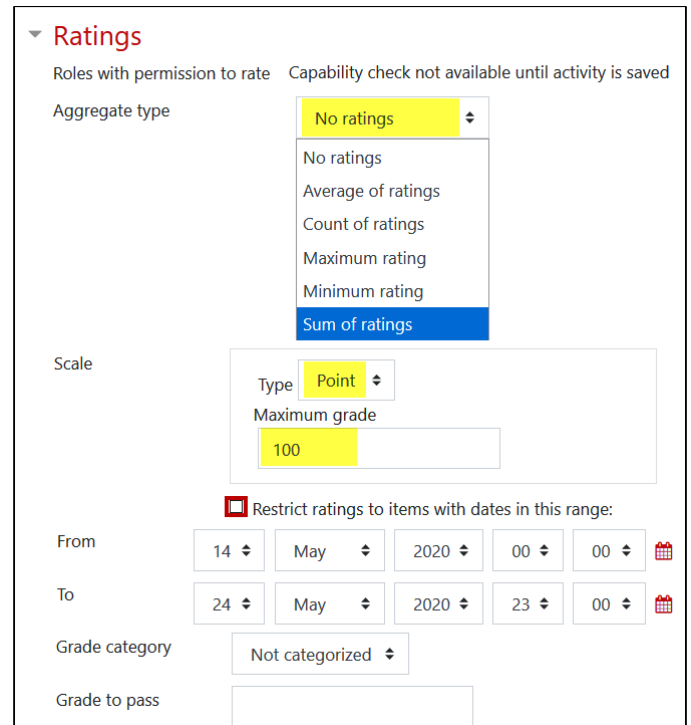
Default setting for "Notify students": No

Figure 6: Whole Forum Grading Options

Ratings

To assign points to each post as you review it within the discussion, begin by selecting an **Aggregate type**. Most instructors use **Sum of ratings** to calculate forum scores (Figure 7). **Note:** Points assigned cannot exceed the maximum possible.

Set the **Scale Type** to Point and enter the total points possible in the **Maximum grade** field.



▼ **Ratings**

Roles with permission to rate: Capability check not available until activity is saved

Aggregate type: No ratings

Scale

Type: Point

Maximum grade: 100

Restrict ratings to items with dates in this range:

From: 14 May 2020 00:00

To: 24 May 2020 23:00

Grade category: Not categorized

Grade to pass:

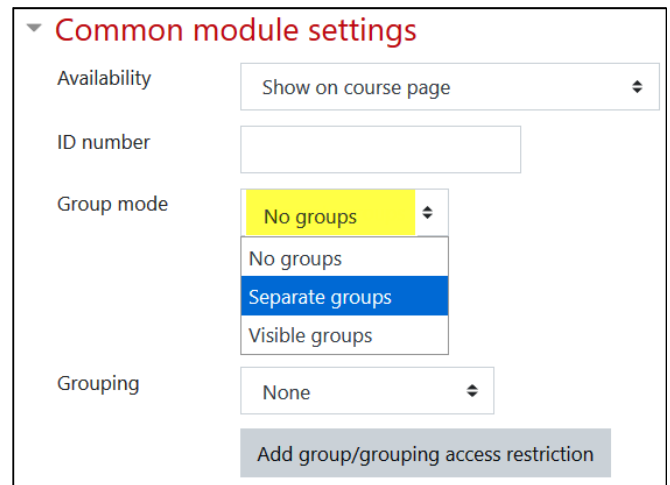
Figure 7: Rating Options

Set dates in the **Restrict ratings to items with dates in this range** field if you want to limit the posts that you evaluate in a forum set for "Ratings." Students will still be able to post after the closing date, but late posts will not be accompanied by a scoring menu.

Create a Forum

Common module settings. These settings control the availability (visibility) of the forum and group access (Figure 8). In the **Group mode** field, select **Separate** or **Visible** groups to limit access to the discussion to groups of students rather than having it open to the entire class.

- **Separate groups** – Posts will only be visible to the members of each group (and to the instructor). Students will not be able to see posts made by other groups.
- **Visible groups** – All posts will be visible to all students, but only members of a group will be able to reply to the posts of their fellow group members. **Caution:** The visible group setting can be confusing to students who expect to be able to reply in all forums.



The screenshot shows the 'Common module settings' for a forum. It includes the following fields and options:

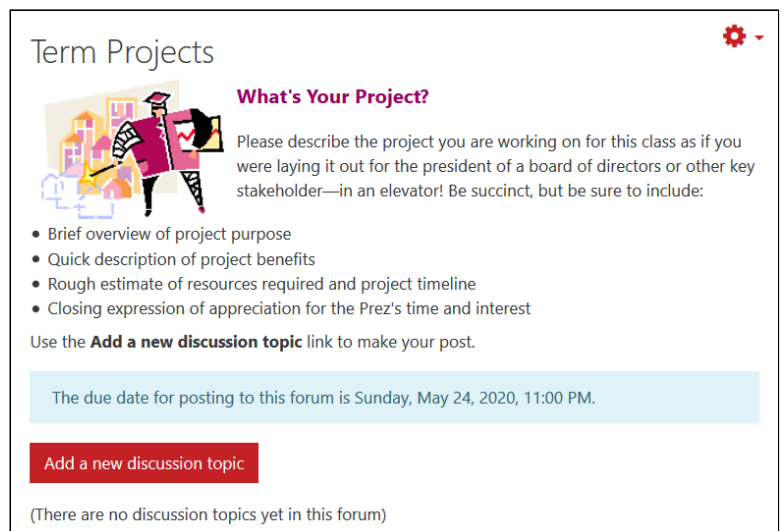
- Availability:** A dropdown menu set to 'Show on course page'.
- ID number:** An empty text input field.
- Group mode:** A dropdown menu with three options: 'No groups' (highlighted in yellow), 'Separate groups' (highlighted in blue), and 'Visible groups'.
- Grouping:** A dropdown menu set to 'None'.
- Buttons:** A grey button labeled 'Add group/grouping access restriction' is located at the bottom right.

Figure 8: Common Module Settings

See [Managing Forums for Groups](#) for more information on group forums.

Save and display to see how your forum looks!

Note the due date posted in blue above the **Add a new discussion topic** link. Here's what happens to it after a cut-off date has passed (Figure 10):



The screenshot shows a forum post titled 'Term Projects' with a gear icon in the top right corner. The post content includes:

- What's Your Project?** Please describe the project you are working on for this class as if you were laying it out for the president of a board of directors or other key stakeholder—in an elevator! Be succinct, but be sure to include:
- Brief overview of project purpose
- Quick description of project benefits
- Rough estimate of resources required and project timeline
- Closing expression of appreciation for the Prez's time and interest

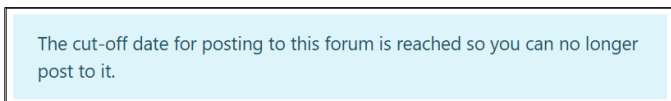
Use the **Add a new discussion topic** link to make your post.

The due date for posting to this forum is Sunday, May 24, 2020, 11:00 PM.

Add a new discussion topic

(There are no discussion topics yet in this forum)

Figure 9: Published Forum



The screenshot shows a light blue message box with the text: 'The cut-off date for posting to this forum is reached so you can no longer post to it.'

Figure 10: Cut-off Date Elapsed

Now that you know how to create a forum, see these additional guides to working with forums:

- [Forum Types](#)
- [Whole Forum Grading](#)
- [Ratings Forum Grading](#)
- [Managing Forums for Groups](#)
- [Advanced Forum Settings](#)
- [Tips for Forums](#)