

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. Usually, a *Standard forum for general use* will serve your objectives, but you may find that another type meets a special need for structure or content. See this [guide to creating a forum](#) for an introduction to setting up a *Standard forum for general use*. **CAUTION:** Once students have begun posting to a forum, changing the forum type can cause problems.

Common Forum Functions

Figure 1 illustrates some basic functions common to forums:

- Any thread may be **starred** by anyone, moving the thread to the top of the forum. Stars can be added by clicking on the star icon itself or by clicking on the thread options icon on the right.
- Anyone can **"subscribe" to any thread** to receive an email copy of any responses added to it. (Individuals can also **subscribe to the entire forum** if they wish.)
- Teachers have the added right to "Pin" a thread which places it at the top of the forum for all users. A teacher can also "Lock" a discussion—the thread may still be read by students, but the reply links will be removed. (Teachers have the further right to edit or delete posts, as well.)

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

Search forums [input] [search icon] Add discussion topic [button] Subscribe to forum [button]

Grade users [button]

Discussion	Started by	Last post ↓	Replies	Subscribe
★ Bakery Business Rising	Student1 One 25 Mar	Student1 One 25 Mar	0	[toggle]
☆ Business Remodel	Student1 One 29 Jan	Test Teacher 1 Mar		[toggle]
☆ Enterprise Content Management System	Student5 Five 29 Jan	Student6 Six 29 Jan		[toggle]
☆ Summer Horse Camp	Student6 Six 29 Jan	Student6 Six 29 Jan	0	[toggle]
☆ Fitness Challenge	Student4 Four 29 Jan	Student5 Five 29 Jan	1	[toggle]
☆ Patio Greenhouse	Student2 Two 29 Jan	Student3 Thr... 29 Jan	1	[toggle]
☆ House Remodel	Student3 Thr... 29 Jan	Student3 Thr... 29 Jan	0	[toggle]

Figure 1: Standard General Forum – Teacher Options

Forum Types

Standard forum for general use

When to use: A *Standard forum for general use* is the default discussion type and it's great for establishing clear conversational threads (Figure 1). Students use the **Add discussion topic** link to post an initial thread. They may reply to anyone's post and may use the Add discussion topic link as many times as they wish.

TIP: To have your students reply to specific threads and eliminate the possibility of creating new topics, see [Preventing New Threads](#).

Guide to Forum Types

Each person posts one discussion

When to use: This kind of forum is useful for students posting work for other students to critique.

Forums that limit participants to posting one discussion are similar to the standard general forum but with a twist—each person may use the **Add discussion topic** link just once (Figure 2). After posting an initial thread, students may reply to as many other postings as they wish, but they cannot initiate any more new threads.

Q and A forum

When to use: A Q and A forum (Figure 3) is one way to ensure that students make original posts without cadging ideas off their classmates.

Before students can read any replies made by others, they must first post a reply of their own (Figure 4).

After waiting out the 15-minute grace period set aside for editing a post and then refreshing the screen, students will be able to read and reply to all of the other current and future posts made in the forum (Figure 5).

IMPORTANT: *You must post a thread to initiate the discussion.* Students do not have an **Add discussion topic** link in this forum format. If you do not make an initial post, they will not be able to post. Be sure to provide clear instructions to your students about replying to your initial thread to make their post.

Single simple discussion

When to use: Single simple forums are good for free flowing, less structured discussions.

In single simple forums, students see your prompt and use the **Reply** link to post their thoughts. They can also reply to other students. (Note that they do not have an **Add discussion topic** link in this type of forum.) All responses are immediately open and visible to other students (Figure 6, next page).

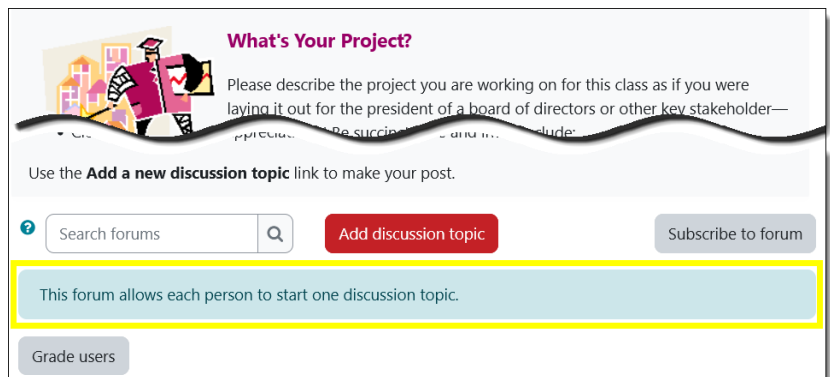


Figure 2: Each Person Posts One Discussion

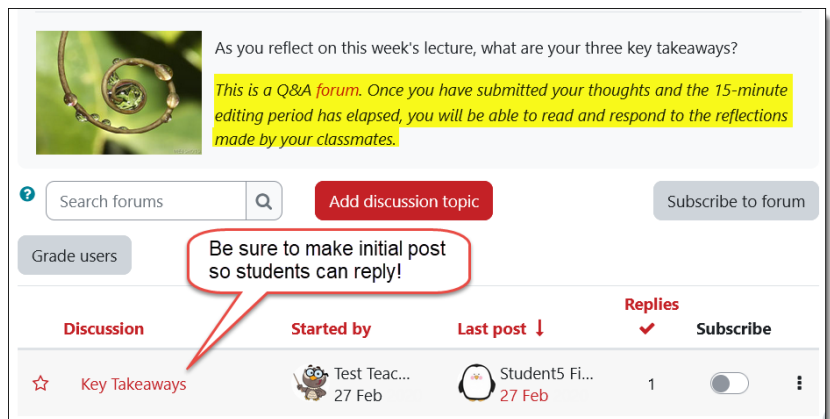


Figure 3: Q and A Forum – Teacher View

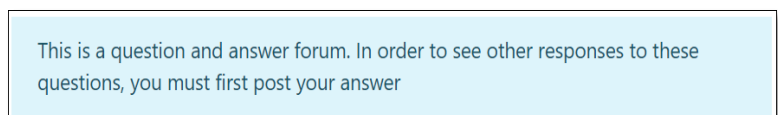


Figure 4: Q and A Forum – Student Notice

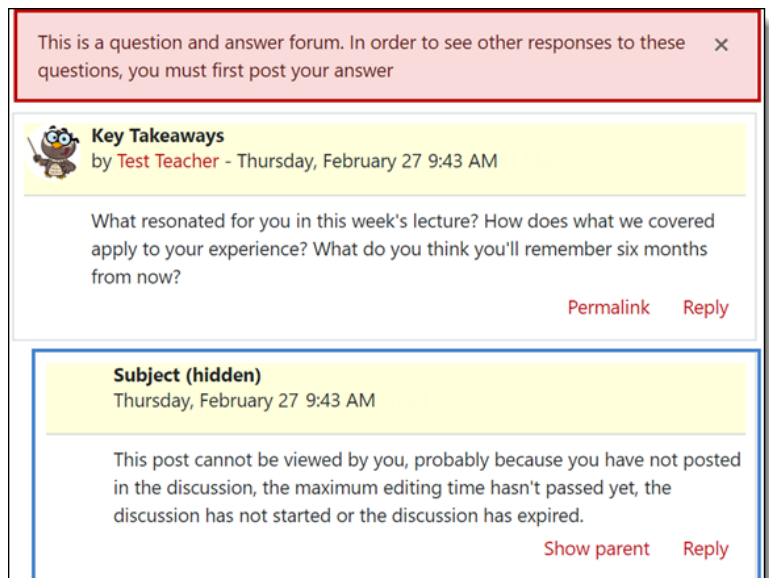


Figure 5: Q and A Forum – Student View

Guide to Forum Types

A single simple discussion forum is great for free ranging discussions as students can easily read posts made by their classmates and build off their ideas. Responses are displayed in a nested format to indicate the flow of conversation. In Figure 6, for instance, you can see that Student Three has replied to Student One and to the instructor, while Student One and Student Two have only replied to the instructor so far.

Note: The image below each student's name is reserved for group membership. If you were using groups in your course and added a picture to the group settings, the image would appear in place of the generic group image.

Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format

When to use: The blog-like format changes the look and feel of a forum, giving it more of a long-form (blog-like) aspect. Similar to the single simple format, all of the posts are fully visible when a participant opens the forum. Unlike those forums, however, any responses to a post made in this kind of forum appear on another page.

Rather than just seeing the title of the post as they would in a Standard general forum, course participants see the entire post (Figure 7). Students click on the **Add a new topic** link to create a post, then click on **Discuss this topic** to reply to their classmates.

Forums and Groups

You can use a *Standard forum for general use, Each person posts one discussion, Q and A forums and Standard discussion displayed in blog-like format* forums for groups. *Single simple discussions will not work with group settings.* (Learn more about [supporting group work with forums](#). Be sure to catch details about posting messages to all groups.)

See these additional guides to forums:

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

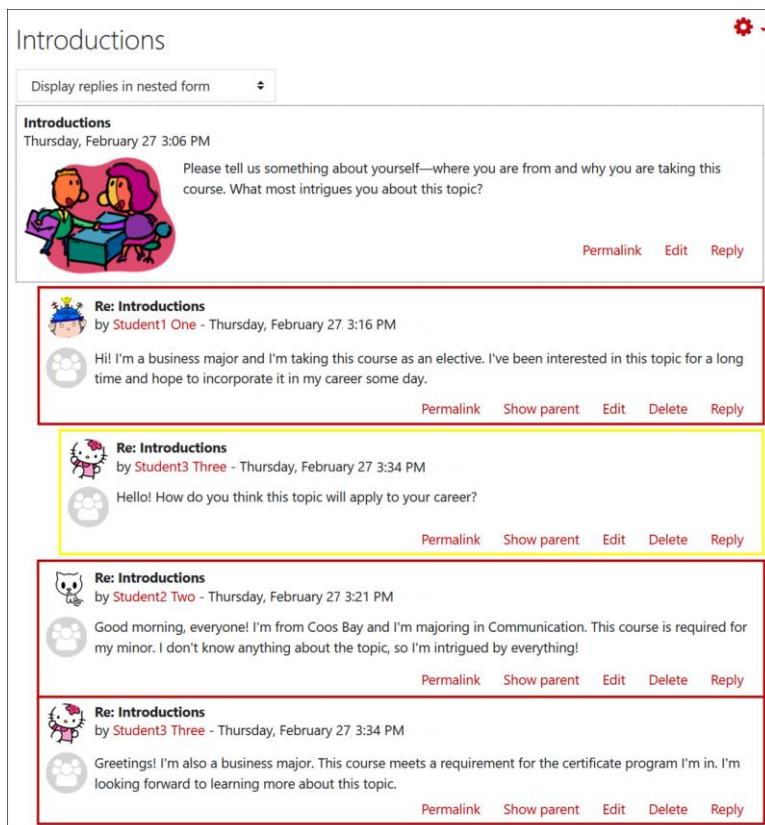


Figure 6: Single Simple Forum – Teacher View

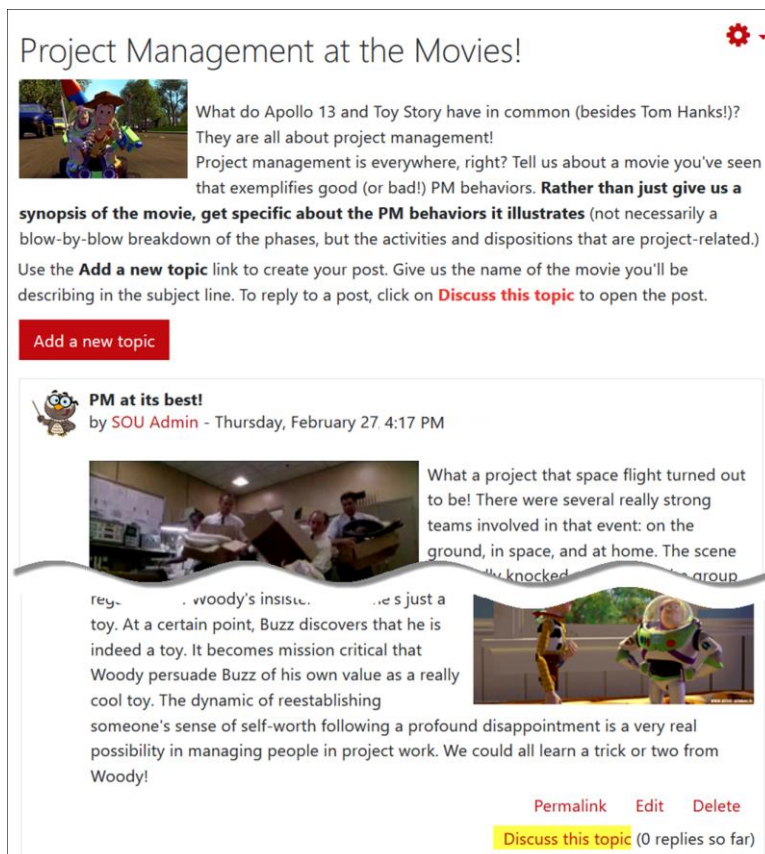


Figure 7: Standard Forum Displayed in Blog-like Format