# USING MOODLE FORUMS

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## What is an online forum?

An online forum is a discussion board where you can share your thoughts on questions posed by your instructor and fellow students.

Forums might feature:

* Course Q&A—a chance to ask general questions about the course
* Homework—a place to discuss assignments and give each other help and hints
* Analysis—an opportunity to share reflections, thoughts, arguments, evidence, or ideas
* Group work—a work space for discussing a project and sharing files with small groups

## Accessing Forums

Enter a forum from your home page by clicking on the forum name or click on Forums in the Activities block, then click on the forum title.

## Drafting your response

Open the forum link and click on **Add a new discussion topic** to start a conversational thread. Insert a snappy subject line, then draft your response. Long responses can be drafted in Word, then copied and pasted into your post.

## Posting your response

When you have finished drafting your response, click on **Post to forum** to make it available to others. Take advantage of editing functions like the ability to insert an image to format your post. Beware: Photos appear in their original size, so be sure to resize that 16"x20" photo before you post it!

Use the **Advanced** link to attach a file to your post.

## Editing your post

During the 15 minutes after you post a response, you may edit or delete your post by clicking on the appropriate link. Note that if someone has replied to your post, you will **not** be able to delete it from the forum.

## Viewing posts

Click on the title of a discussion post to read it and any replies that have been made to it. New posts you haven't read are highlighted in the **Replies** column.

Click on a star to move a post to the top of the list (in your view only). Click on the button on the right to *subscribe* to your thread—you'll get an email any time someone replies to your post.

## Replying to a post

Click on the **Reply** link to draft your response. With the other person's post open, type (or paste) your reply in the textbox, then click on **Submit**. Click on **Advanced** to format your post or attach a file.

Viewing instructor feedback

Your instructor might use a rubric to assess your work. Open the forum and click on **View grades** to see your feedback.

## Types of Forums: Standard

Most forums are set up in the “standard, general” format: each topic posted by a course participant appears as a separate link. Variations on this type include “Q and A” forums that require you to post a response *before* you can read anyone else’s post. (You’ll be able to read their responses after the 15-minute editing period ends.)

## Types of Forums: Simple

In a “single, simple” forum, all responses are visible when you open the forum. New posts will be highlighted for you. Click on **Reply** to respond to a classmate.

## Types of Forums: Blog-like format

This type of format showcases your work like a blog. [Insert images](https://support.sou.edu/kb/articles/students-inserting-images-in-moodle) to illustrate your post. In a blog-like forum, you'll click on **Discuss this topic** to comment on a classmate's post.

## Subscribing to forums

When you “subscribe” to a forum, you’ll receive an email copy of every post made by all forum participants. Open the forum and click on the **Action menu** icon in the upper right corner of the forum. Click on **Subscribe to this forum** to receive an email each time someone posts to the forum. Subscribe to your own post by clicking on the circle to the right of your post title. You'll get an email each time someone replies to you. Keep the conversation going!

Update your forum preferences to stop being auto-subscribed to all forums. Open the user menu at the top of the page to access your forum preferences.

## Announcement forums

Everyone is always subscribed to the **Announcements** forum. Your instructor uses this forum to share important information about the course, so you will receive an email each time an announcement is posted.

**Note**: This is not a true forum—it's a one-way tool for instructors to make announcements. You cannot reply to an **Announcements** forum posting.

## Tips for posting

* Forums are considered homework—
* Good writing counts!
* Post early to maximize your contribution to the discussion.
* Always review your posts for spelling and grammar.
* Be careful with your tone and language—the online environment lacks the visual cues that help us interpret intentions when we discuss face-to-face.
* SOU policies relating to [appropriate use and language](https://inside.sou.edu/assets/policies/docs/Computer_Account_Policy.pdf) are also enforced in Moodle.
* Browsers can time out while you are drafting your careful reply. Draft your response in a Word or Google document, then copy and paste it into your response textbox using Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V.
* Remove extra spaces between paragraphs before you paste from Word into a textbox to eliminate big gaps.
* Make sure that your browser is set up to check your spelling as you type.

Have fun using Moodle forums!