

Creating, Using and Linking to Discussion Forums in Blackboard Enhanced

Discussion forums are often the heart of an online course in Blackboard, capable of fulfilling multiple pedagogical and organizational uses:

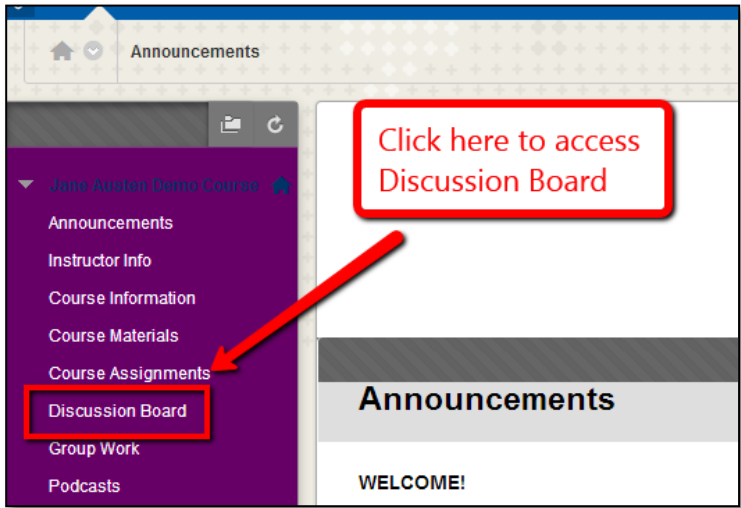
- At the beginning of a course, you can create a discussion board for students to introduce themselves, while also providing a place where students can ask questions at any point during the semester.
- You may choose to create different forums in alignment with each of the main topics of your course, where students can share ideas about readings, lectures, and assignments.
- Students may be prompted to respond to well-thought-out, open-ended questions posed by you that stimulate discussion.
- Group discussion boards can also provide a means for groups of students to share their projects with each other or collaborate on one larger project.

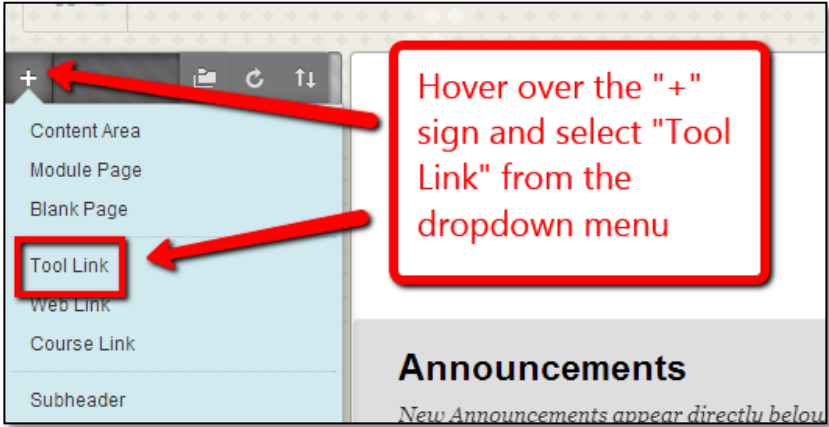
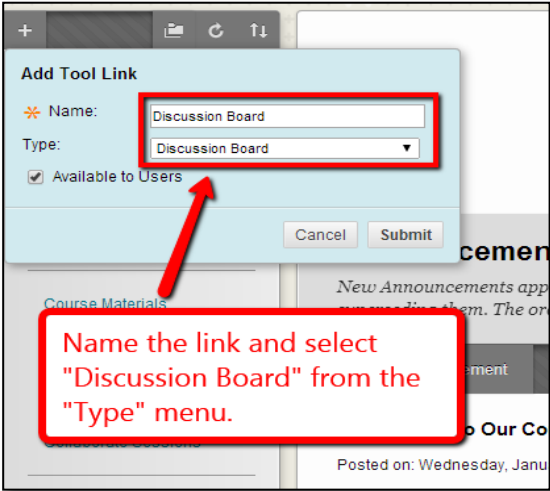
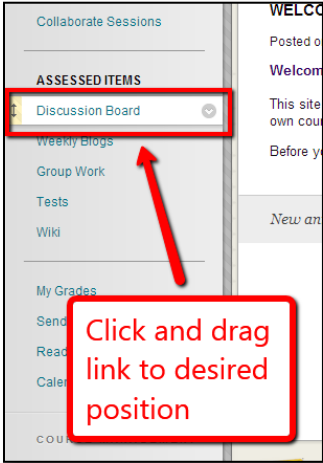
The asynchronous nature of discussion boards allows for reflection and extended interaction, giving you the opportunity to provide feedback, facilitate conversations, and interact with students on a regular basis.

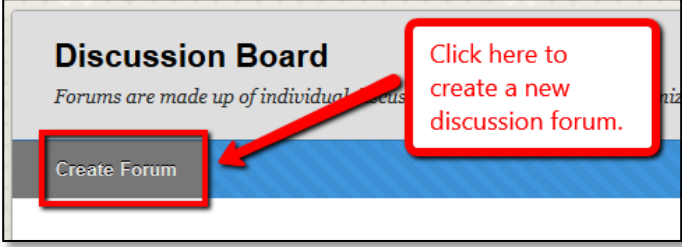
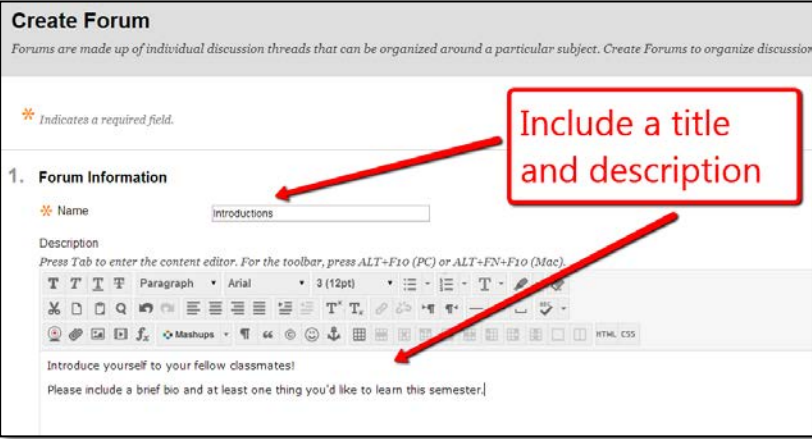
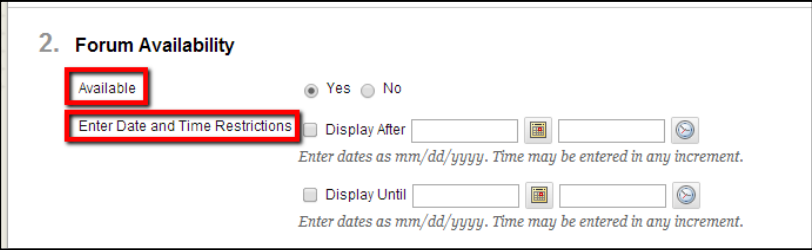
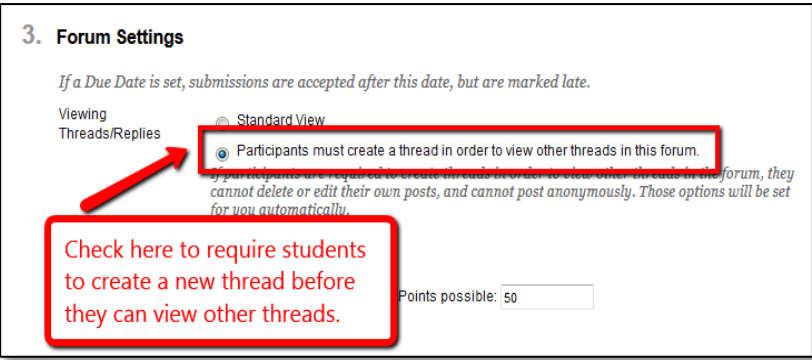
This guide is divided into three parts:

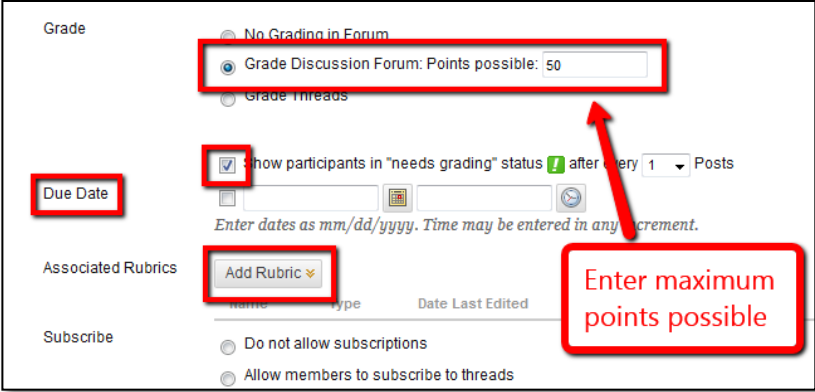
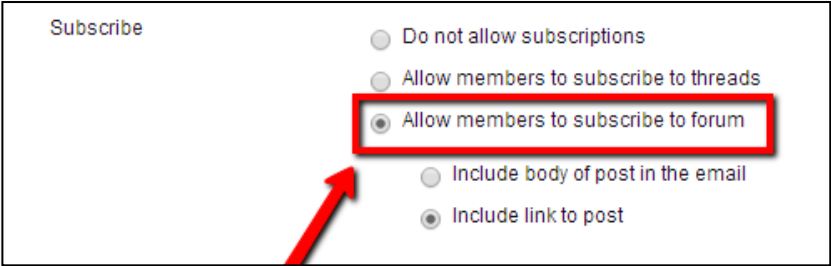
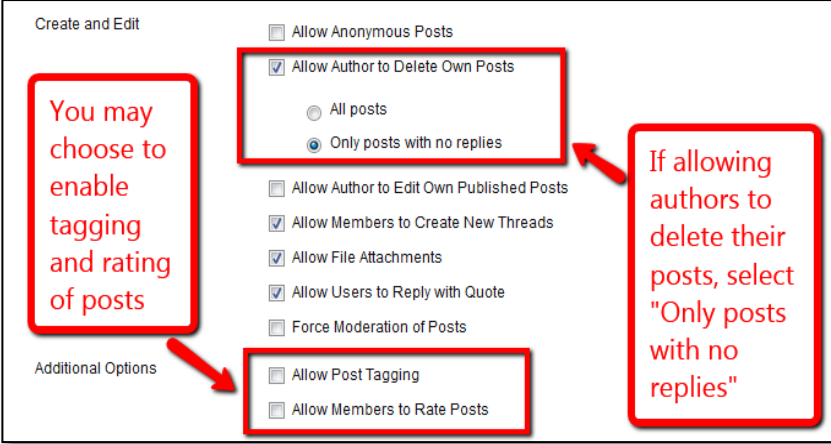
Creating a Discussion Forum	Steps 1-12
Using a Discussion Forum	Steps 13-20
Linking to a Discussion Forum	Steps 21-25

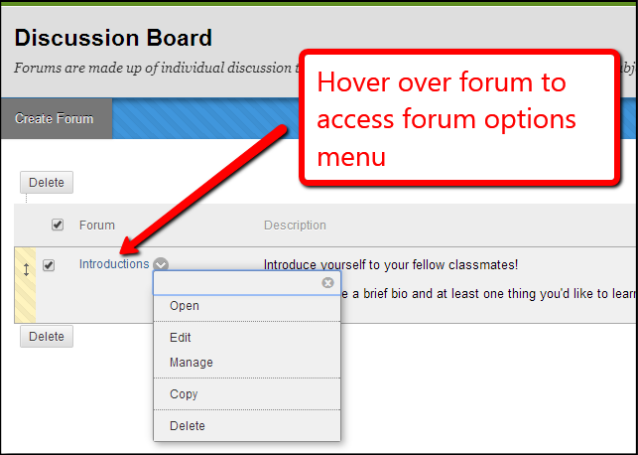
CREATING a Discussion Forum

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 1</u></p> <p>Most courses are already set up with a link to the discussion board in the course menu located on the left side of your course site.</p> <p>* If your course menu does <i>not</i> have a link to the discussion board, proceed to Step 2.</p> <p>* If your course already has a link to the discussion board, click the link and proceed to Step 5.</p>	 <p>The screenshot shows the Blackboard course menu for 'Jane Austen Demo Course'. The menu items are: Announcements, Instructor Info, Course Information, Course Materials, Course Assignments, Discussion Board (highlighted with a red box), Group Work, and Podcasts. A red arrow points from the 'Discussion Board' link to a red box containing the text 'Click here to access Discussion Board'.</p>
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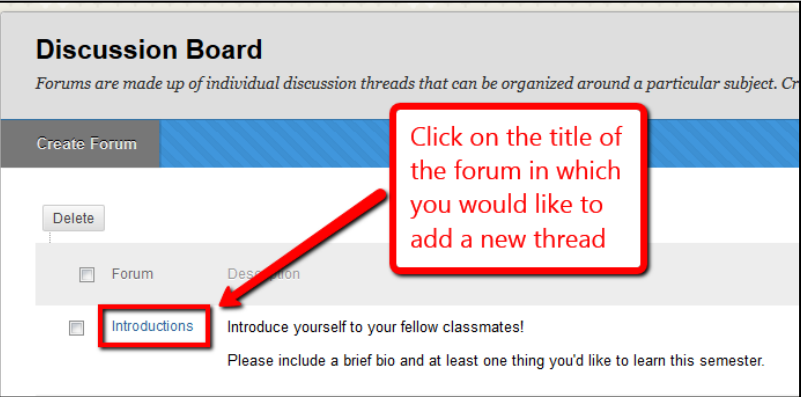
<p><u>Step 2</u></p> <p>To create a course menu link to the discussion board, hover over the "Add Menu Item" icon (the + button) at the top of the course menu and select "Tool Link" from the menu.</p>	
<p><u>Step 3</u></p> <p>Provide a name for the link (we suggest either "Discussions" or "Discussion Board") and select "Discussion Board" from the dropdown menu. Be sure to tick the "Available to Users" option and click "Submit".</p>	
<p><u>Step 4</u></p> <p>Your new link will appear at the bottom of the course menu. To move it, hover over the link and click and hold on the arrows that appear to the left. Drag the link to the desired location and drop it.</p> <p>To enter the Discussion Board, simply click on the new Discussion Board link in your course menu.</p>	

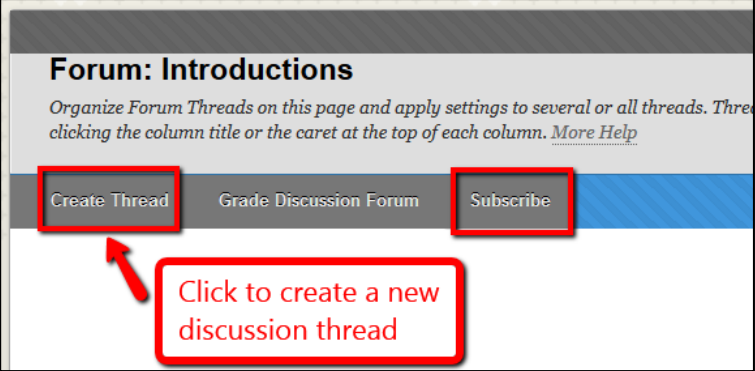
<p><u>Step 5</u></p> <p>The discussion board consists of forums, in which you or your students can create posts (called “threads”).</p> <p>To create a new discussion forum, click “Create Forum” on the upper left.</p>	
<p><u>Step 6</u></p> <p>Give the forum a title and add a description.</p> <p><i>N.B.</i> It’s a good idea to include a detailed writing prompt or directions for posting in your description of the forum, including due dates and/or required length of the post.</p>	
<p><u>Step 7</u></p> <p>In “Forum Availability”, you have the option to keep the forum hidden, or make it available only for a limited amount of time.</p>	
<p><u>Step 8</u></p> <p>There are a number of options available in “Forum Settings”:</p> <p>1) New in Blackboard Enhanced: You can require students to post their response as a new thread <i>before</i> they are able to view other students’ threads (you may choose this option when students should submit an original response to a discussion question without having been influenced by others’ submissions).</p>	 <p><i>N.B.</i> If you select this option, you will not be able to select some other options, including “Allow Anonymous Posts,” “Allow Author to Delete Own Posts” and “Allow Author to Edit Own Published Posts.”</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 9</u></p> <p>2) If this forum is to be graded, make sure to enter a value for the maximum points possible. You also have options for designating the number of posts a participant must add before showing up as "needs grading" in the Grade Center, adding a due date and associating a rubric with the forum.</p>	 <p><i>N.B.</i> We recommend you add due dates to <i>all</i> assessed items in your course, including Discussion Board assignments. Due dates will appear automatically in the Blackboard calendar and will be visible to everyone enrolled in your course.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 10</u></p> <p>3) We recommend you allow subscriptions to discussion forums. When subscribed (see Step 14), you and/or your students will receive an email whenever the forum is updated with a new post. You may choose to include the body of the post in the subscription email or just a link to the post for quick access.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 11</u></p> <p>4) You can allow students to edit or remove their own posts, but if you do so, select "only posts with no replies" so other students' posts are not deleted.</p> <p>You have the option of allowing authors to tag and rate discussion board posts. Allowing students to rate posts can enhance student interaction and their critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Click "Submit" when done.</p>	

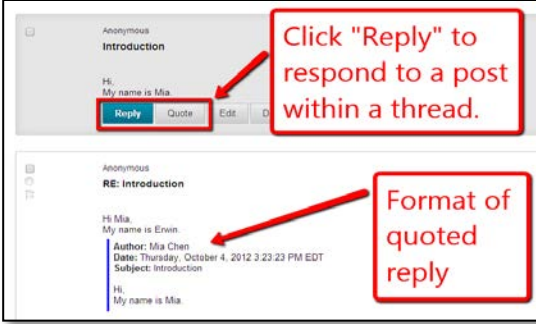
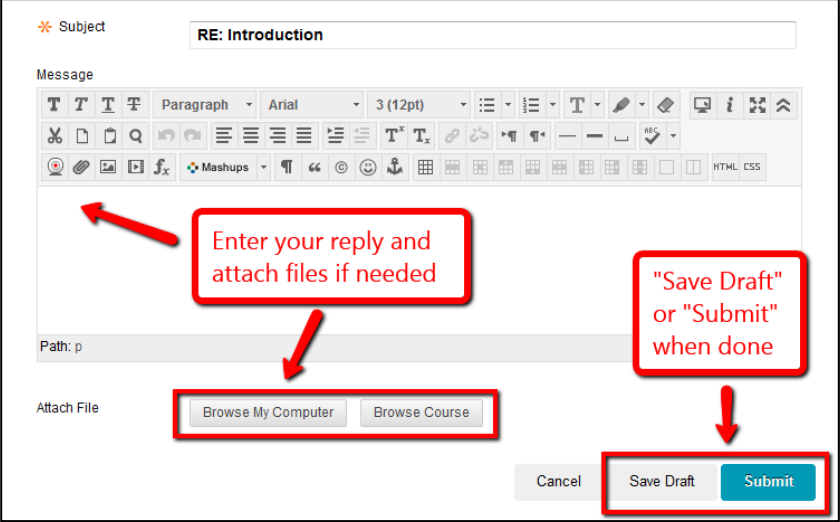
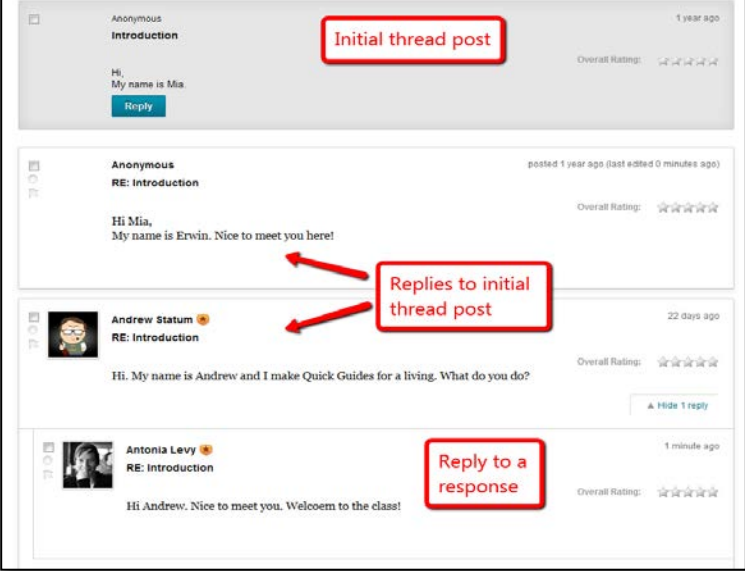
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 12</u></p> <p>The new forum will now appear in the Discussion Board content area. You can access the forum options menu by hovering over the forum and clicking the down arrow that appears to the right of the forum title. From there, you can edit the forum's description and settings, manage users, copy the forum, or delete it altogether.</p>	 <p style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Hover over forum to access forum options menu</p>
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USING the Discussion Board

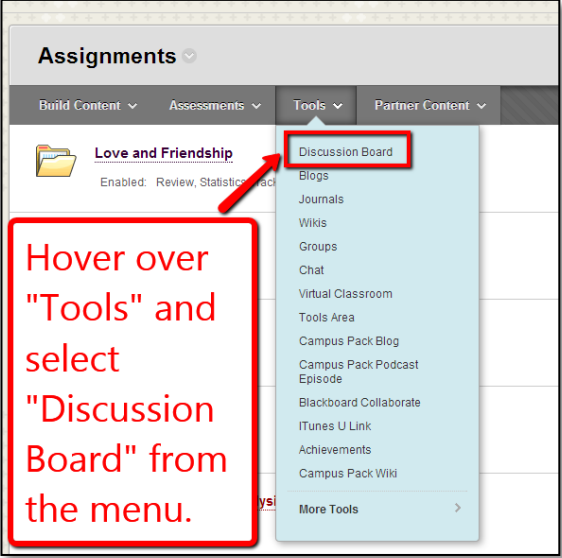
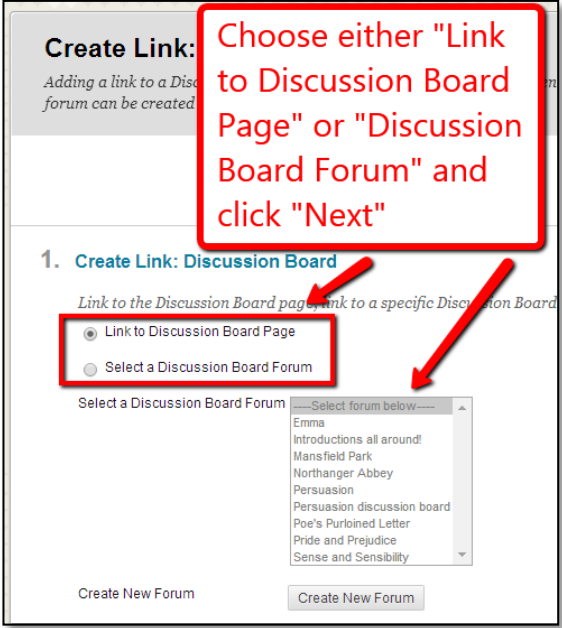
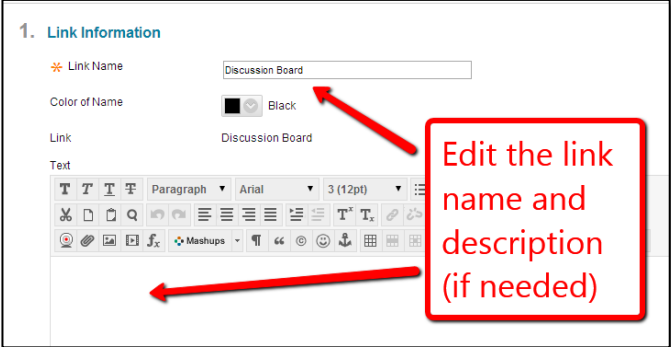
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 13</u></p> <p>To create a new thread in a discussion forum, click on the title of the forum in which you'd like to add the new thread.</p>	 <p style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Click on the title of the forum in which you would like to add a new thread</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 14</u></p> <p>On the next page, click "Create Thread" on the upper left.</p> <p><i>N.B.</i> You can subscribe to individual discussion forums by clicking the "Subscribe" button on this page.</p>	 <p style="color: red; border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Click to create a new discussion thread</p>
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<p><u>Step 15</u></p> <p>Give your new thread a title in the "Subject" line and enter the text of your thread in the text editor.</p> <p>When done, click "Save Draft" if you'd like to save your work without posting, or click "Submit" to post your thread.</p>	
<p><u>Step 16</u></p> <p>Once submitted, your post will appear at the top of the thread list on the forum's main page. You should also see a green confirmation message at the top of the screen.</p>	
<p><u>Step 17</u></p> <p>To view a thread's contents, click on the title of the thread within a discussion forum. The initial post will be at the top of the screen, with all replies listed below in the order they were posted.</p>	

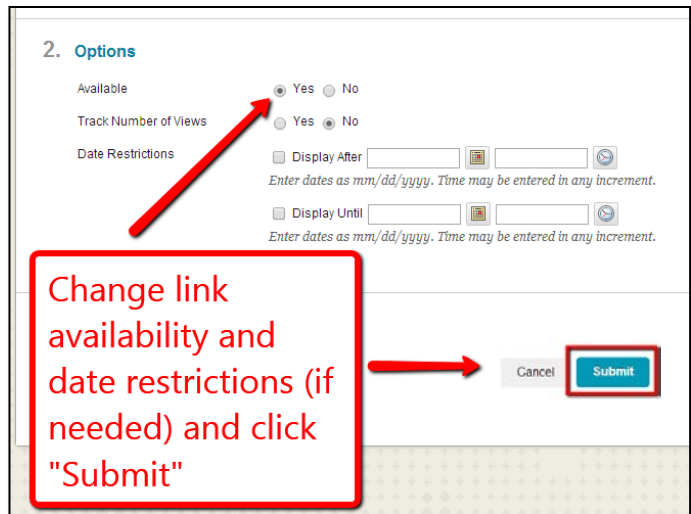
<p><u>Step 18</u></p> <p>To reply to a post, click "Reply." "Quote" will include the text of the post to which you're responding in the body of your response.</p>	
<p><u>Step 19</u></p> <p>Enter your reply in the text editor. You (or your students) may choose to attach a file to the response if you have enabled this option in the forum settings. Click "Browse Computer" to attach a file saved on your computer, or click "Browse Course" to add a file saved in the content collection of your course on Blackboard. Click "Save Draft" if you'd like to save without posting, or click "Submit" to post your response. The reply will appear at the bottom of the discussion thread.</p>	
<p><u>Step 20</u></p> <p>In addition to replying to the original post, you can respond to other replies within the thread. To do so, simply hover your mouse over the reply to which you'd like to respond, and click "Reply" or "Quote" as in Step 18. <i>N.B.</i> Replies to other responses in a thread appear indented underneath the response to which you are replying, instead of at the bottom of the entire thread.</p>	

LINKING to the Discussion Board:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 21</u></p> <p>You can link to an individual forum or to the main discussion board page from any content area within your course. In Edit Mode, navigate to the content area of your choice, hover over "Tools" and then select "Discussion Board."</p>	 <p style="color: red; border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Hover over "Tools" and select "Discussion Board" from the menu.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 22</u></p> <p>Choose whether to link to the main Discussion Board Page or to an individual Forum. Click "Next" to continue.</p> <p><i>N.B.</i> We recommend linking to the Discussion Board Page rather than to a particular forum because, when accessing the forum via a content area link, students are unable to see the forum's instructions unless you retype them into the link's description (see Step 21).</p>	 <p style="color: red; border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Choose either "Link to Discussion Board Page" or "Discussion Board Forum" and click "Next"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Step 23</u></p> <p>If necessary, edit the link's title and description.</p>	 <p style="color: red; border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Edit the link name and description (if needed)</p>

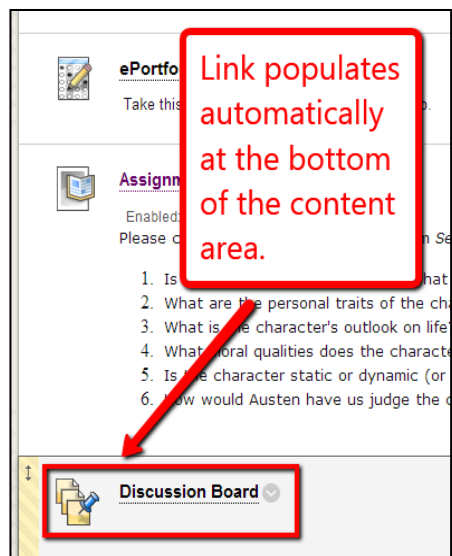
Step 24

You can also modify the link's availability settings and date restrictions from this same page. Click "Submit" when done.



Step 25

The new discussion board link will appear automatically at the bottom of the content area.



Step 26

To move the link, hover your mouse over the link, click and hold on the up-and-down arrows to the left of the link, drag the link to the desired location, and release the mouse button to drop it into place.

