



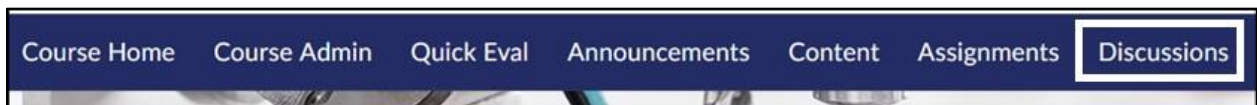
Create Discussion Forums and Topics

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Discussion boards provide a space within Brightspace courses in which instructors and learners can interact in threaded, text-based conversations. Instructors can create a discussion forum and topic for learners to ask questions, discuss course materials, and collaborate on ideas for projects.

Access Discussions

1. To access Discussions, select **Discussions** on the Course Navbar.

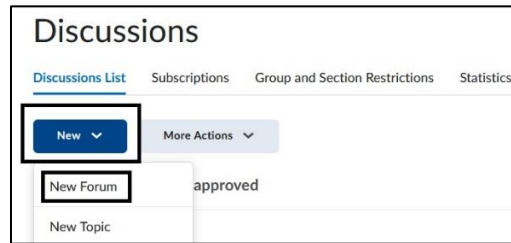


Note: Discussions can also be created through **Content** by accessing a module and selecting **Upload/Create**. Select **New Discussions** from the drop-down menu.

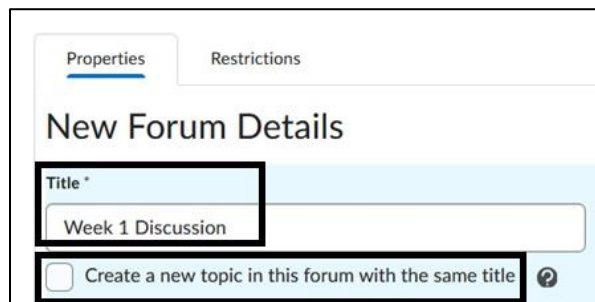
Access [Add quicklink to a discussion topic](#) for more information.

Create a Discussion Forum through the Discussion Tool

1. Begin by creating a Forum to organize your Discussion Topics. On the Discussion page, under **Discussion List**, select **New** then select **New Forum**. **Note:** Students cannot post to Forums. Once a forum is created a topic must be created within it for students to be able to post threads. Creating a Topic is discussed later in this document.



2. On the **New Forum** page, under the **Properties** tab, enter a **Title** for the forum. Instructors can choose to have one forum for the entire course duration with multiple topics within it or create a forum for each unit, week or specific course content. Select **Create a new topic in this forum with the same title** to automatically create the topic when saving the forum.

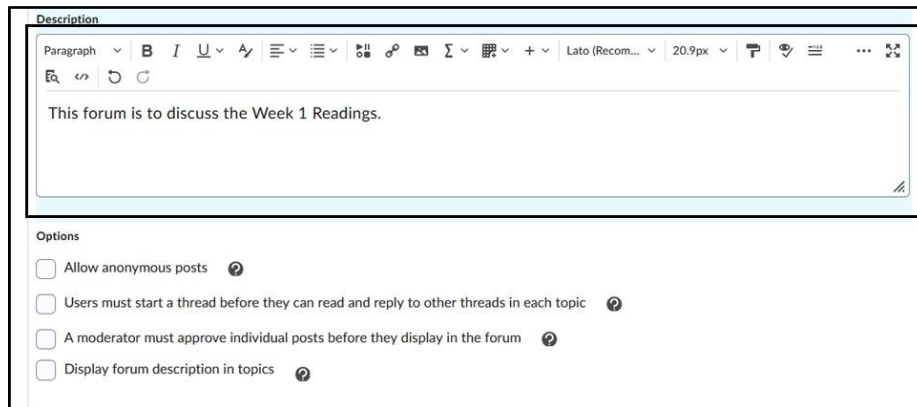


3. Enter a **Description** of the forum. This should be a general description of the forum and not where questions should be placed for students to answer. Questions and prompts for students should be placed within the **topic**.

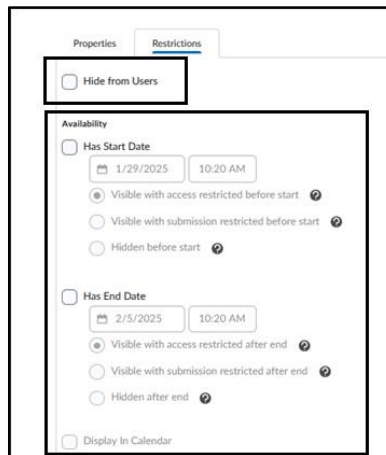
Under **Options**, select additional settings for the Forum. Please note that any setting at the **Forum level** will override any settings in the topic within the forum.

For example, if a Forum is hidden from users but the topic is available within that same forum, both the forum AND the topic will be hidden. DOES LMS Support

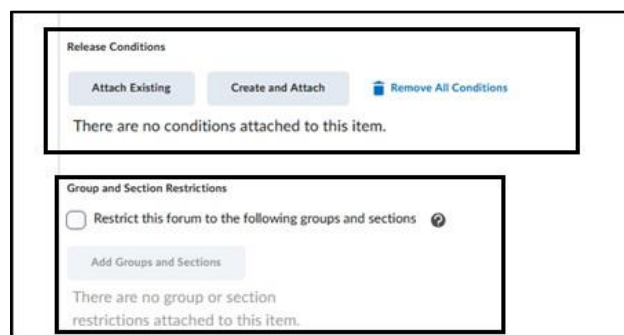
recommends setting specific restrictions **within the topic** rather than the Forum to reduce unforeseen issues.



4. Under the **Restrictions** tab, the forum can be hidden from users. Availability Dates can be set to restrict the entire forum and the topics within it. Please note that hiding a forum from users supersedes Availability dates and the forum will not be accessible to learners.



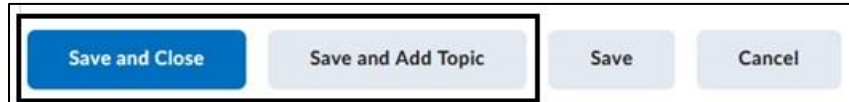
Release Conditions can be set for the forum and additional Group and Section Restrictions can be applied.



Access [Release Conditions](#) for more information.

Access [Groups](#) for more information.

5. Select **Save and Close** to complete the forum creation process. Select **Save and Add Topic** to be brought directly into the create topic settings for this forum.

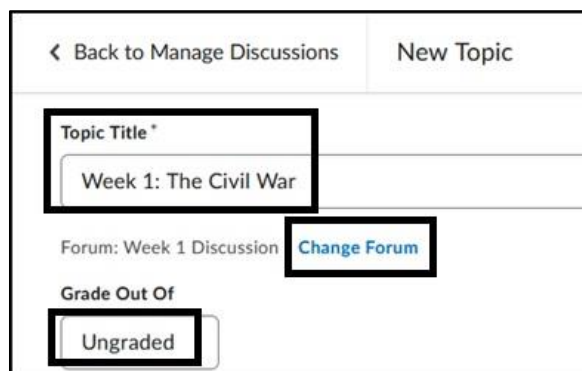


Create a Topic

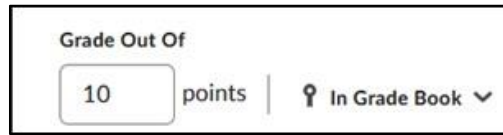
1. The **topic** is where the discussion will take place within a forum. To create a topic once a forum is created, select the drop-down arrow to the right of the **Forum Name** and select **Add Topic**.



2. On the **New Topic** page, enter a **Topic Title**. The associated Forum is displayed immediately under the Topic Title. If you want to move the topic into another forum, select **Change Forum**.

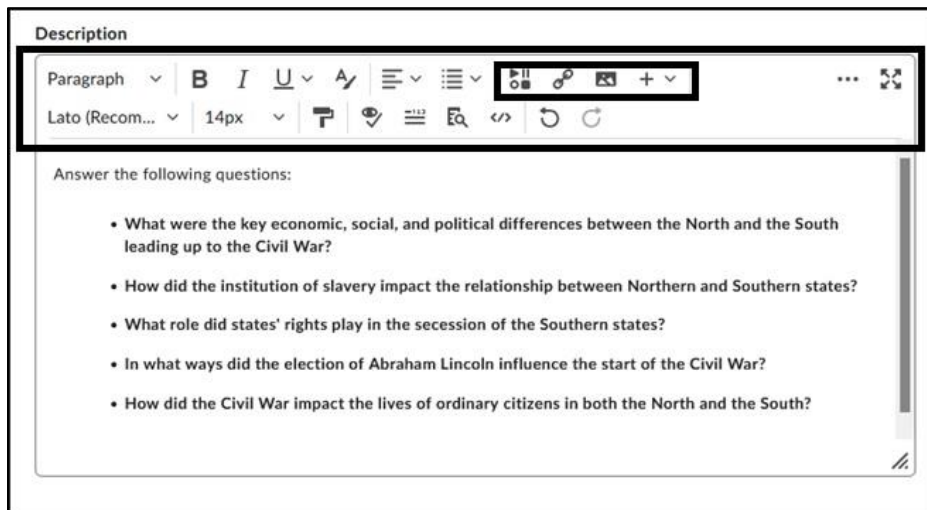


By default, a discussion topic is not graded. Select the **Ungraded** box to set points and connect it to the Grade book.



A rectangular box containing the text "Grade Out Of" at the top. Below it, there is a text input field with the number "10" inside, followed by the word "points". To the right of this is a vertical separator line, followed by a key icon and the text "In Grade Book" with a downward-pointing chevron.

3. In the **Description** box, enter the discussion prompts and instructions for the students. Use the **Insert Stuff Button** to add additional documents and media.

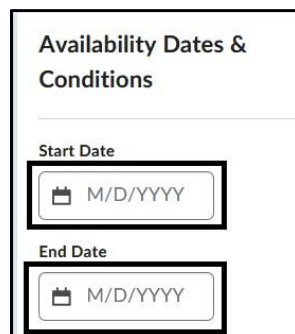


A screenshot of a "Description" editor. At the top, there is a title "Description". Below it is a rich text editor toolbar with various icons for text formatting (bold, italic, underline, text color, background color), alignment, list creation, and a highlighted "Insert Stuff" button with a plus sign. Below the toolbar, the text "Answer the following questions:" is followed by a bulleted list of five questions related to the Civil War. The questions are: "What were the key economic, social, and political differences between the North and the South leading up to the Civil War?", "How did the institution of slavery impact the relationship between Northern and Southern states?", "What role did states' rights play in the secession of the Southern states?", "In what ways did the election of Abraham Lincoln influence the start of the Civil War?", and "How did the Civil War impact the lives of ordinary citizens in both the North and the South?".

For more information on entering content, access [Brightspace Editor](#).

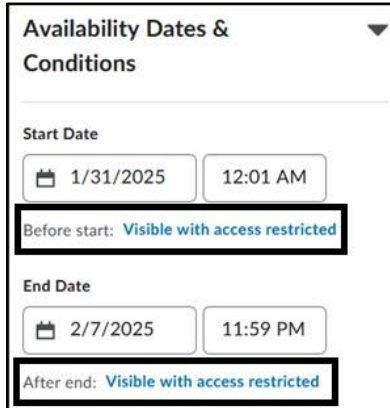
Availability Dates & Conditions

1. Set a **Start Date** and an **End Date** for the discussion topic. The Start and End Date is the timeframe during which students can post a thread within the topic. If no Start and End Date is set, it will default to "Always Available".



A rectangular box titled "Availability Dates & Conditions". Inside the box, there are two sections. The first is labeled "Start Date" and contains a calendar icon followed by a text input field with the placeholder "M/D/YYYY". The second is labeled "End Date" and also contains a calendar icon followed by a text input field with the placeholder "M/D/YYYY".

Once a Start and End Date is entered, the ability to restrict posting before or after that date appears below each date. Select **Visible with access restricted** to see further settings for either Start Date or End Date.



Availability Dates & Conditions

Start Date

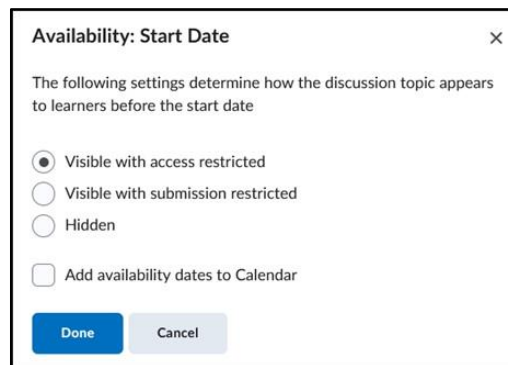
1/31/2025 12:01 AM

Before start: **Visible with access restricted**

End Date

2/7/2025 11:59 PM

After end: **Visible with access restricted**



Availability: Start Date

The following settings determine how the discussion topic appears to learners before the start date

Visible with access restricted

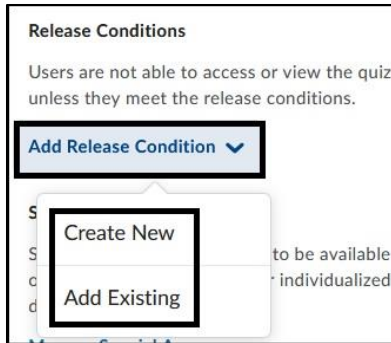
Visible with submission restricted

Hidden

Add availability dates to Calendar

Done Cancel

- **Visible with access restricted** – Learners will see the topic but cannot access it.
 - **Visible with submission restricted** – Learners will see the topic, be able to click into it and see previously posted threads but cannot submit any new threads.
 - **Hidden** – Learners will not be able to see the topic.
 - **Add availability dates to Calendar** – Learners will be able to see the Start and End Dates of the topic on their class calendar.
2. **Release Conditions** allow instructors the ability to set criteria for the release of a topic. For example, you can require a learner to submit a post to an Introduce Yourself topic before having access to any further topics on the Discussion page. Select **Add Release Conditions**. Select **Create New or Add Existing** if you have created previous criteria.



For more information access [Release Conditions](#).

3. Under **Group and Section Restrictions**, instructors can restrict access to a topic by creating groups within Brightspace. Select **Manage Restrictions** to apply those restrictions. Please note that Groups must first be created within Brightspace to access this setting.



Access [Groups](#) for more information.

Post & Completion

1. The default Topic setting is **Default Participation**, which means that learners can see all threads from other learners before making a post of their own.

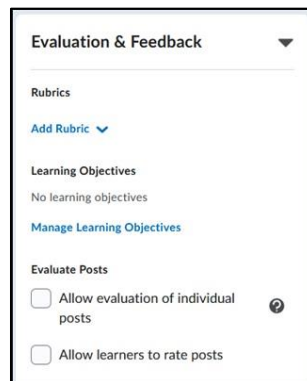


Additional settings:

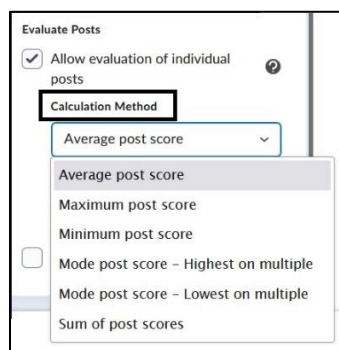
- **Allow learners to hide their name from other learners** – Allows learners to post anonymously to other learners while instructors can still identify who wrote each post.
- **Learners must start a thread before they can view or reply to other threads** – Learners will not see other learners' threads until they have posted within a topic themselves.
- **Posts must be approved before they display in a topic** – This is moderation of posts. The default moderator would be the instructor unless otherwise assigned.

Evaluation & Feedback

1. Under **Evaluation and Feedback**, instructors can attach **Rubrics** for grading.



If the topic is graded, instructors can **Evaluate Posts** by selecting **Allow evaluation of individual posts**, to set points **per thread** within the topic. If this setting is chosen, the **Calculation Method** must be set. Additionally, instructors can allow learners to rate the posts of other learners, based on a five-star scale. Post ratings appear in the upper right corner of each thread, if selected.



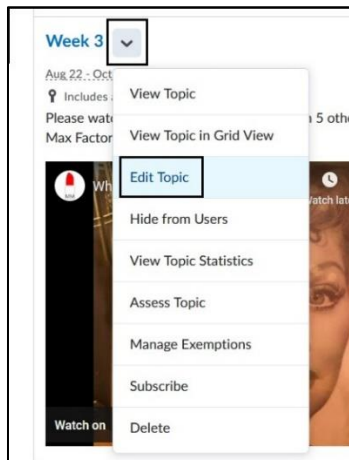
Access [Calculation Method](#) for more information.

2. Once all settings are entered, make sure that the topic is set to **Visible** so that students can see and access the topic. Select **Save and Close** to retain all changes.



Edit a Discussion Topic

1. To edit a topic, select the **drop-down arrow to the right of the Topic Name**. Select **Edit**.



Access [Manage Discussion forums and topics](#) for more information.

Access [Create a discussion forum and associated topic](#) for more information.

For more information and assistance, please email Department of Online Education and Support - Learning Management System Support at LMS.faculty@jjay.cuny.edu