TLC Tips for Students

How to Participate in a Discussion

Canvas provides an integrated system for discussions, which allows both instructors and students to contribute to discussion topics. Discussions are often graded. You will typically be required to respond to a directive from your instructor. You may also be asked to respond to other students’ responses. All discussion entries are publically visible within the course. If you want to send a private comment to your instructor, please use the Inbox.

While navigating through Modules in your course, you may encounter a discussion. If the discussion is graded, the value is displayed to the right of the discussion title.

Discussion title and points value

Replying to your instructor

Discussions require you to post replies to your instructor. Your instructor will provide instructions for your discussion. Post your reply in the input text field below the instructions.

Instructions and reply field

Click in the reply field to enter your post. Canvas’ Rich Content Editor opens, enabling you to format text as you type. Enter your post in this field. Click Attach if you wish to attach a file. Click Post Reply when you are finished.

Reply to instructor post

Your post will be posted at the bottom of the discussion reply thread. The border of your post will flash blue indicating it has been newly posted. The dot indicator next to your post will be blue, indicating that your post is unread.

Replying to your classmates

Your instructor may enable you to reply to other classmates. In some instances, replying to classmates may be required. To do so, click Reply below your classmate’s entry.
Editing and deleting discussion posts

You can edit and delete your own discussion posts unless your instructor restricts this setting. To edit or delete your post, click the gear icon, then select Edit or Delete.

Read vs. Unread Posts

Canvas allows you to mark posts as read or unread, and to sort them accordingly.

The top of the discussion area displays two numerals. The numeral in blue indicates the number of unread posts. The numeral in gray indicates the total number of posts. In this example, there are 43 unread posts out of 62 total posts. The 43 unread posts are unread by you. You cannot tell which posts have been read by your instructor or classmates.

Dots appear to the left of all posts. A white dot indicates the post has been read. A blue dot indicates a post is new or unread. You can click in these dots to manually mark them as read or unread.
A white dot indicates the reply has been read. A blue dot indicates a reply is new or unread.

**Sorting posts**

Canvas enables you to sort posts based on “unread” status or by other search criteria. To view only unread posts, click the Unread button at the top of the discussion page.

You can also use the search field to show only posts that meet certain criteria. Entering terms here forces Canvas to search author names and all post content.