



STUDENT
Discussion Board
GUIDE

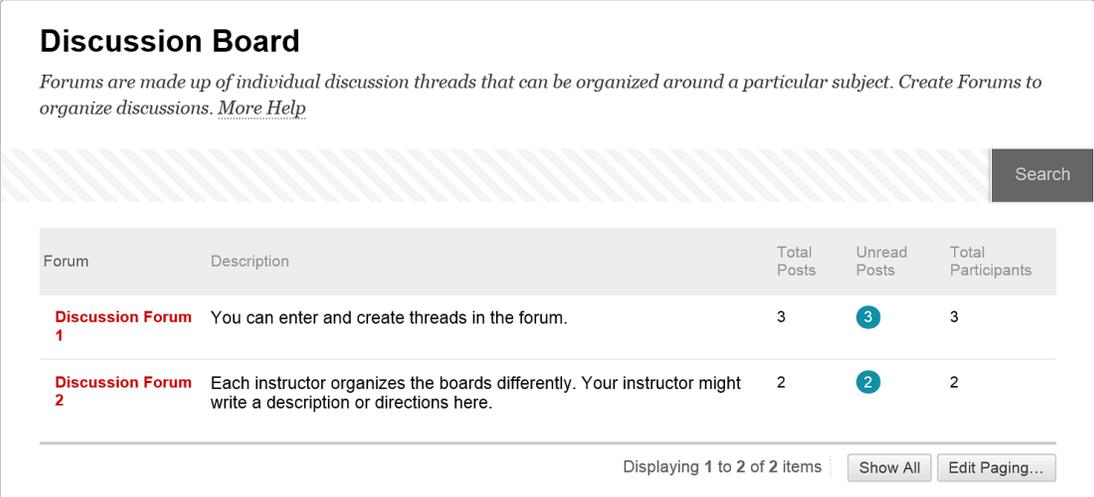
WRITE to engage peers online

Use this guide to avoid mistakes and improve the quality of your writing!

Contents

1. What is a Discussion Board?
2. How to Write a Discussion Post
3. Sentence Starters to Extend Discussion
4. Examples

1. What is a Discussion Board?



Discussion Board

Forums are made up of individual discussion threads that can be organized around a particular subject. Create Forums to organize discussions. [More Help](#)

Search

Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
Discussion Forum 1	You can enter and create threads in the forum.	3	3	3
Discussion Forum 2	Each instructor organizes the boards differently. Your instructor might write a description or directions here.	2	2	2

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A discussion board is like a structured online message board moderated by your instructor. It is a public place in the course where students can write and exchange information with others. Each instructor arranges their boards and its settings differently, but they can clearly see what you contribute.

Why do instructors use it?

To create a more engaging environment online

Let's face it. One can feel isolated in an online course! The board is a tool for students to express ideas and react to what others are thinking.

To assess students

Instructors gauge your understanding of the content through the boards. This is another reason why it is important to still do your best work here!

Learn the Technical Parts of a Discussion Board

[UH CLASS OET Knowledge Base - Discussion Boards webpage](#)

[Blackboard Help Discussion Board webpage](#)

[Blackboard Help Discussion Board video](#)

2. How to Write a Discussion Post

Steps

1. Read the instructor's directions.

Identify what the instructor wants you to write about.

2. Identify the timeline.

Answer the following: When is the post due? How many are due? Do you have to reply to others?

3. Gather resources.

The discussion board connects to what's being taught, so go over the corresponding course content before writing. Unless asked to, make connections to the content, not just your own experiences.

4. Write to solicit responses.

If students are required to respond to each other, check that your writing has information that others can build upon. Add your own thoughts and opinions.

5. Respond to others.

Here is your chance to exchange thoughts with others by analyzing and building on what they've presented. Agreeing with everyone's post isn't going to get the conversation far. Don't be afraid to suggest, challenge or play devil's advocate.

6. Check for spelling, grammar, tone of voice, and references.

Quality and mechanics count. Read your draft once over before submitting.

Common Mistakes and Ways to Avoid Them

Avoid:	How it can be perceived:	Do This Instead:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✘ Writing like you are texting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ You do not know basic writing conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Write as if you are writing a letter, not a text message.✓ Use proper grammar and writing conventions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✘ Writing about your personal experiences only.✘ Getting off-topic.✘ Making simple conclusions without evidence.✘ Agreeing with everything.✘ Forgetting to cite or use references.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ You did not go over the course content.→ You are not prepared to discuss the content in depth.→ You repeat what others say without contributing new information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Go beyond your personal experiences.✓ Follow the instructor's guidelines to ensure that your writing is connected to the topic or the given prompt.✓ Contribute new information.✓ Connect course content or outside resources to your writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✘ Using abbreviations, acronyms or obscure references.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ You assume others read the same content or know what you're talking about.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Write out the whole word or title before using acronyms. Avoid obscure references that do not pertain to the topic.

3. Sentence Starters to Extend Discussion

Unlike a face-to-face environment, you won't have the immediate presence of the instructor to direct a discussion along. In the online environment, you are expected to take the initiative and build on the writings of others by offering meaningful replies.

You can use the sentence starters on the next page to extend discussions when you reply to a prompt or reply to others.

Ways to Extend

1. Re-voice or summarize others' comments



"I understand what you're saying is that..."

"Let me make sure I understand what you're saying..."

2. Interpret or explain what others have said



"I think what Jack meant was..."

"Perhaps the author meant..."

3. Add to an idea



"I would like to piggyback on what Jill said by adding that..."

"In addition to..."

4. Make connections to experiences, readings, ideas, etc.



"This reminds me of the reading on... where the author discussed..."

"A recurring theme that I noticed is..."

5. Draw similarities and contrasts



"I noticed that both Jack and Jill discussed how..."

"On one hand... but on the other hand..."

Extend with Questions

6. Ask for clarification or elaboration

"What do you mean by...?"

"Can you explain that in a different way...?"

"I'm not sure I understand what you mean by... Can you explain?"



7. Ask for evidence or reasoning

"Why do you think...?"

"Can you provide an example of...?"

"How did you come up with...?"



8. Challenge or counterexample

"What if...?"

"Another way to look at this is..."

"I see what you're saying. Another person might otherwise say that... In that case, what do you think?"



Helpful Links

[*UNSW Australia - Guide to Discussion Skills*](#)

[*ReadWriteThink.org - How to Play Devil's Advocate*](#)

4. Examples

Prompt

*Why do you think the book is titled, *The Great Gatsby*? Explain your thinking in an initial 100+ word post by using examples from the reading or outside resources. Post your initial response by Wednesday, 11:59pm. Reply to two of your peers by Sunday, 11:59pm.*

Initial Post

Test Student 1 day ago

Irony of The Great Gatsby

I think that the book is titled, *The Great Gatsby*, to show irony. Jay Gatsby appears to be great on the outside because of his wealth, extravagant parties, and devotion to Daisy, but he is the opposite. His wealth is acquired through the illegal business of bootlegging, and the woman who he tries to impress, Daisy, is a former lover who initially rejected him for being poor. She becomes impressed by his wealth and later gets involved in an extramarital affair with him. Is it a surprise that it ends in tragedy? Despite having tons of guests who admire him at his parties, few people, excluding Daisy, actually attend his funeral.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Email Author](#)

- ✓ Followed the instructor's guidelines to ensure that writing is connected to the prompt.
- ✓ Wrote as if he was writing a letter, not a text message.
- ✓ Connected to course content
- ✓ Went beyond personal experiences.
- ✓ Used proper grammar and writing conventions.

Reply 1 (agreement)

Franklin 53 minutes ago

RE: Irony of The Great Gatsby

totally agree it ended in tradgedy because of his own fault he was doing bad things lik bootlegs and having afairs. if i were him i would have used my money for the greater good



- ✗ Wrote like he was texting.
- ✗ Wrote about his opinion only.
- ✗ Got off-topic.
- ✗ Made simple conclusions without text evidence.
- ✗ Forgot to cite or use references.

Reply 2 (different point of view)

 Sai 21 hours ago

RE: Irony of The Great Gatsby

I see your point about the ironic title, but I saw it differently. Have you considered the title of the book as an analogy to an illusionist? When I hear "The Great ___" I am reminded of The Great Houdini or some magician who creates illusions. Nobody at the parties knows anything about him, except that he's filthy rich, so all the gossip about him creates an illusion of a magnificent man. I don't think Gatsby himself was ever really in love with Daisy. He was probably obsessed with an illusion of her that he had created in his mind after she left him.

[Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Email Author](#)

- ✓ Followed the instructor's guidelines.
- ✓ Wrote as if he was writing a letter, not a text message.
- ✓ Connected to course content and thread.
- ✓ Contributed new information.
- ✓ Went beyond personal experiences.
- ✓ Used proper grammar and writing conventions.



Reply 3 (agreement)

 Prabha 22 hours ago

RE: Irony of The Great Gatsby

COLLAPSE

Hi, I agree for those reasons and more. Besides love and money, the greatest ironies are the twists and coincidences in the story. For example, when Daisy drives Gatsby's car and accidentally kills her husband's mistress. Also, if you read the text carefully, you will notice that Fitzgerald uses the word, "great," throughout the novel, often in reference to Gatsby, and not always in a good way. For example, "That's a great expression of yours" Daisy's husband, Tom, says sarcastically when he attacks Gatsby's manner of saying "old sport" all the time.

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Good luck! You can find more
teaching and learning resources by visiting:

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | CLASS

Office of Educational Technology

<http://uh.edu/class/oet/>

