



Blackboard Quick Reference Guide

Getting Started with Discussion Board



The discussion board is used for asynchronous (different-time) communication. The instructor can create a forum from which students submit responses (“threads”) and replies to threads (“posts”). The following guide describes the many features available with this tool, including how to create a forum, controlling the flow of postings, grading student submissions, and allowing peer review.

It’s best to devise a strategy for how students post threads and replies and how many. For example, you could require that students reply to at least two other students in the class and set a deadline for submissions. You can also use the Groups function in Blackboard to break class discussions into smaller groups.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Discussion Board interface. A table lists forums with columns for Display Order, Forum name, Total Posts, Unread Posts, Total Participants, and Grade. Two forums are visible: 'Liberalism: historical comparison' and 'Columbus: Hero or Villain?'. Callouts point to various features: 'To add a new forum' points to the Forum icon; 'Find a forum containing specified text' points to the Search icon; 'Click here to post scores' points to the Grade column; 'Current counts' points to the Total Posts and Unread Posts columns; and 'Go to unread postings' points to the Unread Posts column.

Display Order	Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants	Grade	Modify	Manage	Remove	Copy
1	Liberalism: historical comparison How does liberalism of the early nineteenth century compare to liberalism today? Is liberalism a "dirty word" in today's America? In your answer, include information from renowned historian Eric Foner, in his commentary titled "Common Origins, Different Paths" (from a panel discussion on "Liberalism and the Left"). It can be found at this web address: http://chnm.gmu.edu/rhr/fooner.htm .	5	3	2					
2	Columbus: Hero or Villain? As your text mentions, the historical interpretation of Christopher Columbus is being hotly debated in recent years, particularly with the onset of the 500th anniversary of	2	2	0					

Adding a New Discussion Board Forum

Step 1: From the Tools area, click **Communication**, then **Discussion Board** (or click Discussion Board on the course menu, if available).

Step 2: Click  .

Step 3: At the *Add Forum* screen, give the forum a *Name*. Provide a *Description* for the forum (what will the students be talking about – what question will they be answering).

Step 4: For the *Forum Settings*, decide on what you want to allow students to do in the discussion. For example:

- Enabling *Allow anonymous posts* removes names from postings.
- Disabling *Allow members to create new threads* lets you divide the discussion into subtopics, for example; students would only reply to your threads.

- Enabling *Grade Forum* and setting the points possible creates an item in the gradebook and provides a convenient method for scoring student submissions.

Step 5: Click  .

Adding a Thread to a Forum


A **thread** is a reply to a forum. Threads can be created by instructors or by students. A discussion forum can have multiple threads.

Step 1: From the Discussion Board area, click the forum name.



Step 2: Click  **Thread** .

Step 3: Create your thread by entering a *Subject* and *Message*.

 It's best to keep the subject text short (like a keyword or phrase).

Step 4: To preview the message, click  .

Step 5: Click  .

 Clicking on  will only save the thread text (for later editing) and displays the word *Draft* after the in the Status column. This does **not** make it public to the group. Make sure students know the difference!

Reading and Replying to a Thread or Post



The screenshot shows a forum thread titled "Liberalism" with 3 posts and 2 unread posts. The thread list includes:

- Liberalism (Ron Schilling, 4/2/07 3:35 PM)
- RE: Liberalism (Artie 03Choke, 4/2/07 3:41 PM)
- RE: RE: Liberalism (Artie Choke, Sr., 4/2/07 3:48 PM)
- RE: Liberalism (draft) (Ron Schilling, 4/2/07 9:56 PM)

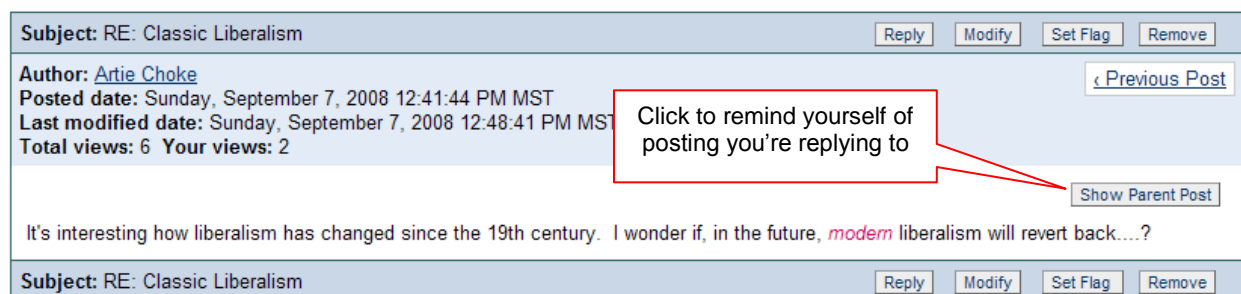
Annotations in the image include:

- "Maximize to see all posts" pointing to the maximize icon in the top right of the thread list.
- "Swap post list with Reply panel" pointing to the swap icon in the top right.
- "Bold means unread post" pointing to the bold text of the "RE: Liberalism" post.
- "Hide post list" pointing to the hide icon in the top right.
- "Flag" pointing to the flag icon in the bottom left of the thread list.

A **post** is a reply to a thread. To respond to a thread, a student posts a reply.

To view a thread or post:

Step 1: Click on the subject text. The text of the posting appear, as in the following example:



The screenshot shows a forum post with the following details:

- Subject:** RE: Classic Liberalism
- Author:** Artie Choke
- Posted date:** Sunday, September 7, 2008 12:41:44 PM MST
- Last modified date:** Sunday, September 7, 2008 12:48:41 PM MST
- Total views:** 6 **Your views:** 2

The post content reads: "It's interesting how liberalism has changed since the 19th century. I wonder if, in the future, *modern* liberalism will revert back....?"

Annotations in the image include:

- "Click to remind yourself of posting you're replying to" pointing to the "Show Parent Post" button.

To reply to a thread or post:


Step 1: Click on the subject of the thread or post, then click [Reply](#). The Reply to Post page appears.

 To reply to someone else's reply, click on the reply first, before clicking [Reply](#).

Step 2: To remind yourself of the text in the original posting, click [Show Parent Post](#).

Step 3: Write your message in the message field box and format as desired.

Step 4: Click [Submit](#). The reply appears indented below the original message.

 Clicking on [Save](#) will save the thread or post and displays the word “(draft)” after the *Subject* text. This does **not** make it public to you or fellow students. Make sure students know the difference!