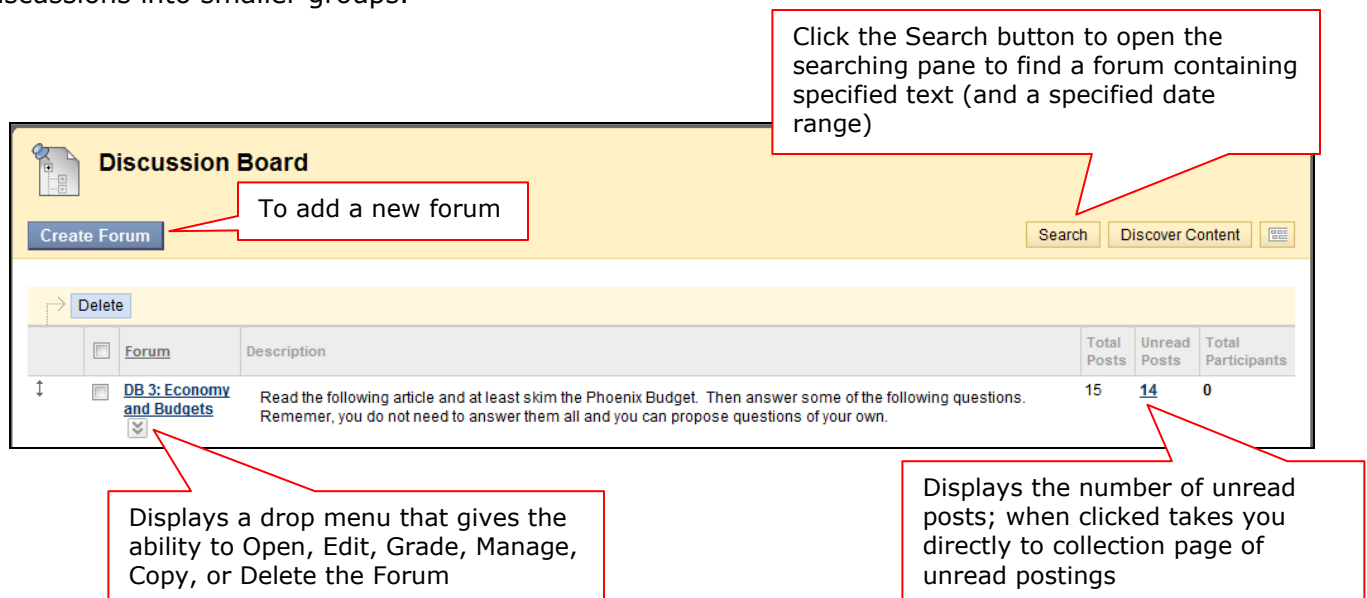


The discussion board is used for asynchronous (different-time) communication. The instructor can create a forum from which students submit responses (“threads”) and replies to threads (“posts”). The following guide describes the many features available with this tool, including how to create a forum, 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 callout box points to the 'Create Forum' button, stating 'To add a new forum'. Another callout box points to the 'Search' button, stating 'Click the Search button to open the searching pane to find a forum containing specified text (and a specified date range)'. A third callout box points to a drop-down menu for a forum, stating 'Displays a drop menu that gives the ability to Open, Edit, Grade, Manage, Copy, or Delete the Forum'. A fourth callout box points to the 'Unread Posts' column in a table, stating 'Displays the number of unread posts; when clicked takes you directly to collection page of unread postings'.

Forum	Description	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
DB 3: Economy and Budgets	Read the following article and at least skim the Phoenix Budget. Then answer some of the following questions. Remember, you do not need to answer them all and you can propose questions of your own.	15	14	0

Adding a New Discussion Board Forum

1. If available, click **Discussion Board** on the course menu. If it is not available, go to the Control Panel (left hand side under Course Management); click **Course Tools** and then **Discussion Board**. It is then possible to click the Course ID link.
2. Click **Create Forum**.
3. Under *Forum Information*, give the forum a *Name*. If the forum will be graded, keep the name short as this becomes the name of the column in the gradebook.
 - Provide a *Description* for the forum (e.g. either a short sentence informing students this is the forum for Week x or a description of what the students will be talking about – what question will they be answering).
4. At *Forum Availability*, decide upon forum availability and desired date/time restrictions.
5. 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 (even the instructor doesn't know who has posted).

- Disabling *Allow members to create new threads* lets you divide the discussion into subtopics. The instructor would create a thread for each subtopic to be discussed, and students would reply to those threads. If you want students to be able to post new threads, do not disable this option!
- Enabling *Grade Forum* and setting the points possible creates an item in the gradebook and provides a convenient method for scoring student submissions.

 All the Forum Settings options are described at the end of this guide (under Add Forum Settings).


6. Click Submit.


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.

1. From the Discussion Board area, click the forum name.
2. Click **Create Thread**.
3. Create your thread by entering a *Subject* and *Message*.

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

4. To preview the message, click  .
5. If attachments have been enabled for the forum, click the Attach a file link to attach an associated file.
6. Click **Submit**.

 Clicking on **Save Draft** will save the thread and display the word (*draft*) after the message title. This does **not** make it public to the group – it can be modified and submitted at a later date. If students accidentally hit Save Draft instead of Submit, they will have to change the display options to show all posts in order to see the draft message to publish it.

Reading and Replying to a Thread or Post



The screenshot shows a forum interface with a table of posts. Callouts explain the 'List View' and 'Tree View' options, and the 'Display' dropdown menu.

Date	Thread	Author	Status	1	1
2/11/10 12:45 PM	DB3: Economy and Budgets	Anonymous	Published	1	1
2/12/10 10:27 AM	DB #3	Anonymous	Published	1	1

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

To view a thread or post:

1. Click on the title of the Thread. The *Thread Detail* screen appears.
2. When viewing a forum with multiple threads, use the arrow buttons next to the title to navigate among threads.

To reply to a thread or post:


1. In the subject area of the thread or post, click **Reply**.

 To reply to someone else's reply, click on the reply first, before clicking **Reply**.

You can also Quote a message (if enabled in the discussion board forum settings) to include the original author's message in the body of your reply. Click **Quote** instead of **Reply**.

2. Write your message in the message field box and format as desired.

3. Click **Submit**. The reply appears indented below the original message.

 Clicking on **Save Draft** will save the thread and display the word (*draft*) after the message title. This does **not** make it public to the group – it can be modified and submitted at a later date. If students accidentally hit Save Draft instead of Submit, they will have to change the display options to show all posts in order to see the draft message to publish it.

Using the List View



Assign scores for forum postings

Place all selected messages into one screen for easy viewing and printing

Open the Search pane

Delete selected messages

Drop menu allows for multiple actions

Use check boxes to select one or multiple messages for an action

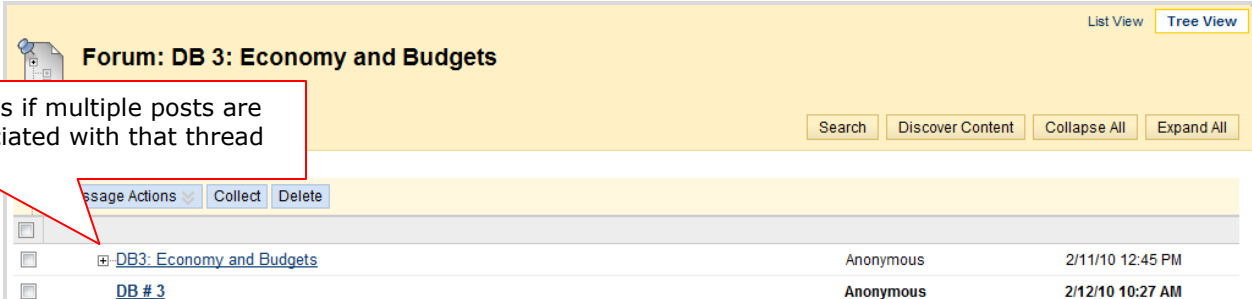
Drop menu allows for multiple actions

Shows if multiple posts are associated with that thread

Message	Thread	Author	Status	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/11/10 12:45 PM DB3: Economy and Budgets	Anonymous	Published	0	4
<input type="checkbox"/>	2/12/10 10:27 AM DB #3	Anonymous	Published	1	1

 Students only have the Thread, Collect, Mark Read and Mark Unread options.

Using the Tree View



Shows if multiple posts are associated with that thread

Message Actions	Collect	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		

The Tree View is slightly different. Notice you can still add threads, remove and collect postings, and mark threads as read and unread. Using Tree View you can set and clear flags and display all of the thread posts in one list. To view all messages in the forum, click the Expand All button. Notice that you cannot grade the forum using Tree View.

 Students also have a Tree View option, with the exception of the Delete button.