How to Participate in Discussions

NARRATOR: How to participate in discussions. In your online courses, you will be required to participate regularly in discussions. First, on the course navigation menu, select the discussion in which you want to participate.

You'll notice that there are two views in which you are able to view and navigate through the discussion-- tree view and list view-- and that your classroom defaults to the list view. It is recommended that you switch your view from list view to tree view by clicking the tree view link. After you have done so, all future discussion forums that you enter within any of your classrooms will default to this view.

In tree view, the discussion thread now becomes expandable and you are able to view and navigate through your classmates replies in a tree-like structure. You can expand and collapse the tree-like structure either by clicking the plus and minus buttons next to individual posts or by clicking the expand all or collapse all button in the upper right corner.

Now that you are in the discussion forum and you have switched your view to tree view, let's take a look at how to reply to an assigned discussion topic. The first link you see at the top is called the discussion thread. This contains the assigned discussion topic. Click the link for the discussion thread to display the text of the assigned topic.

Next, move your mouse over the reply and options such as reply, edit, quote, and delete will appear. In order to reply to be assigned discussion topic, click reply. Enter your reply to be assigned discussion topic in the message box.

It is strongly recommended that you enter an original subject for your reply in order to provide easier navigation through the discussion for you, your classmates, and your instructor. To do so, update the subject box. If, at any point, you need to clear your reply, you can click the cancel button in the upper right corner.

While replying to your assigned discussion topic, you can also save a draft and return at a later time to complete your reply. To do so, click the save draft button in the upper right corner. You will then be directed back to the discussion thread and view your reply with the word draft next to it.

To open and complete your reply that you saved as a draft, click on the link that has the word draft next to it. Then click the edit button. Please note, saved drafts can only be seen by the author. Not even instructors can see their students' saved drafts. As a result, saved draft cannot count as submitted published replies.

You will now see your reply and can continue to construct it. When you are ready to submit your reply, click submit. Keep in mind that once you submit your reply, you will not be able to edit it. Finally, confirm that your reply, often called a post or posting, appears in the list.
Now that you have replied to the assigned discussion topic, let's take a look at how to organize your classmates' postings for review by collecting, sorting, filtering, and printing them. While participating in a discussion, it is also likely that you will be required to reply to a certain number of your classmates' posts. Before doing so, you may find it helpful to collect, sort, filter, and/or print your classmates' postings in order to read through them before replying to them.

After you have submitted your initial reply to the discussion thread, you may want to return to the initial discussion forum area to navigate and read through your classmates' posts. To do so, click on the link to the discussion forum in the bread crumb trail at the top of the classroom.

After you have return to the discussion forum and have switched to tree view, click the expand all button in the upper right corner to expand the tree of replies to the discussion thread. You will now see the structure of all replies to the discussion thread.

Collecting posts is a way to gather selected replies onto one page where they can be sorted, filtered, or printed. To collect specific posts for your classmates that you would like to review, select the check box next to each posting.

If you would like to collect all of the current posts, you can also select the check box in the bar above the discussion thread. This will select the check boxes for all of the current posts in the tree-like structure. Click on the collect button above the discussion thread. You will now be presented with a list of the posts that you collected, as well as the full text for each post.

The posts will initially be displayed in the order in which they appeared on the previous page. This is known in the sort feature as thread order. You can also sort of the posts that appear on this page by date of last post, subject, author's last name, and author's first name. To change how the posts on this page are sorted, click the button next to sort by at the top of the page.

Additionally, you can also update the order in which the posts appear by clicking on the button next to order and selecting ascending or descending. You can also organize the posts that you have collected by filtering them according to different attributes. To filter these posts, click on the filter button in the upper right corner.

Next, select the attributes by which you would like to filter the posts. You will probably find it most helpful to filter by author and/or read status. If you filter by author, select the author whose post you would like to view. If you filter by read status, select read or unread to view either the posts that you have read or not read. You can then close the filter by clicking the x in the corner of the filter bar.

After you've completed organizing the posts you collected by sorting and/or filtering them, you can also print the posts that appear on the page in order to read them offline.
by clicking the print preview button at the top of the page. You will then be prompted to select your printer, and you can then click print.

Now that you have collected, sorted, filtered, and/or printed your classmates' posts, let's take a look at how to read through and reply to your classmates' postings. As you read through your collected posts, you can also mark them as read or unread by selecting the check box next to one or more posts, clicking on the mark button next to the top of the page and selecting read or unread. Doing this can help you keep track of the posts that you have and have not read.

After you have read a selection of your classmates' posts that you have collected, you can reply to one of your classmates' postings by locating the post and then clicking on the reply button at the bottom of the post. Enter you reply to your classmate's post in the message box. When you are ready to submit your reply, click submit. Clicking cancel will clear your reply completely. Clicking save draft will save a draft of your reply.

To confirm that your post appears, click on the link to the discussion forum in the bread crumb trail at the top of the page to return to the discussion forum page. Then, in the expanded tree of replies, locate your reply in the list.

You can also reply to a classmate's posting in the discussion forum page by clicking on a posting's subject line to open it. After you have read your classmate's post, you can then reply to it by clicking the reply button at the top or bottom of the post. Enter your reply to your classmate's post in the message box. When you are ready to submit your reply, click submit.

After you have returned to the discussion thread page, confirm your posting appears in the list of replies. Congratulations. You have now completed the how to participate in discussions demonstration.