

Discussion Board can be a powerful tool for building community with your students. This guide, which moves beyond the separate “Getting Started with Discussion Board” guide, is designed to help you accomplish that goal. Discussion Board contains such features as grading, flagging, moderating, email alerts and conducting “peer review.”

## Using the List View Main Action Bar

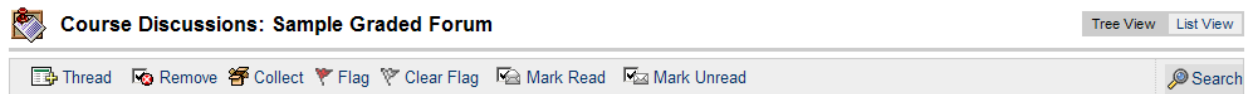


Add new thread
Delete selected messages
Assign student scores for forum postings


Place all selected messages into one screen for easy viewing and printing
Use Mark Read and Mark Unread for easy flagging of multiple messages
Open the Search pane

 Students only have the Thread, Collect, Mark Read and Mark Unread options on their action bar.

## Using the Tree View Main Action Bar





The Tree View action bar 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 (located on toolbar below all the messages.). Notice that you cannot grade the forum using Tree View. This is the same toolbar you see when viewing a thread.


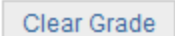

 Students also have a Tree View option, with the exception of the Remove button.



## Grading Forums or Threads

Depending on which option you chose when creating the forum, you can grade the whole forum or grade each thread separately.

**Step 1:** From the forum level (or the thread level), click  Grade Forum (or  Grade Thread).


**Step 2:** Click  next to the student name.

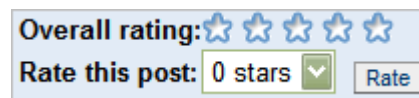
**Step 3:** Enter the point score in the Grade text box, then click . If you need to clear the grade, click the  button. Click .

-  Disabling the grade option later (by modifying the forum settings) will delete any grades that had been entered.
-  You can print, mark postings as read or unread, reply or quote when grading student's post(s).


## Rating a Post

In addition to commenting on a post, students can rate the post on a five-star rating system. This provides a “peer review” option for the forum.

- Step 1:** From the Discussion Board page, add or modify the forum.
- Step 2:** From the Forum Settings section, select **Allow Members to Rate Posts**.
- Step 3:** Click , then open the forum.
- Step 4:** Open a thread and select a post (other than your own). The following is displayed on the right side of the post header:



- Step 5:** Choose a rating from the pull-down menu, then click .

-  This action is final – you cannot go back and change your rating!

## Printing a List of Threads or Posts

- Step 1:** Select the postings to be collected, by checking the box next to each.


-  To quickly select all, click  next to .



- Step 2:** Click .

- Step 3:** Click .

## Flagging Posts (must be in Tree View or Thread Detail)

You or you students may wish to “flag” selected posts, perhaps for reviewing again at a later date. Flags are person (not forum) specific and are viewable only by the person who added the flag. Don't instruct your students to review flagged posts, because those flags would only be seen by you!

- Step 1:** Select the post(s) to be flagged, by checking the box next to it.
- Step 2:** Click . The red flag symbol appears next to the posting.

-  To remove the flag, select the post(s), then click .

## Sorting Posts (must be in List View)

By default, the messages are sorted by date. You can sort the messages by thread title, author, etc., by clicking on the triangle above the column heading.

## Searching a Discussion Board Forum

You can search for messages in a discussion board forum using the Search feature. This is particularly helpful if you need to find the responses written by one student. You can search at the discussion board, forum or thread level.

**Step 1** Click the Search button to open the search pane.

**Step 2:** Enter the text in the Search text box.

- You can specify a specific date range when the item was published by checking the boxes and indicating the dates.
- You can determine how broad the search will be by choosing a specific option from the *in* drop-down box (below the Search box).

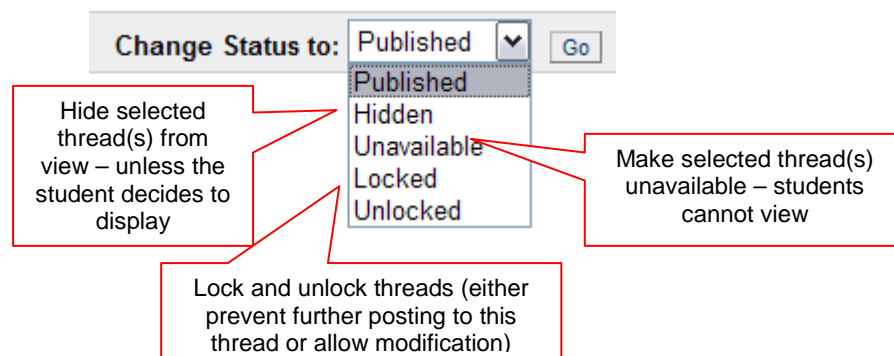
**Step 3:** Click . The search results appear, sorted by author.

- Using the  button, you can print out the search results.
- Using the *Sort by* drop-down menu, you can change the sort order.
- Using the *Filter* drop-down menus, you can limit the display to show only a specific author and/or status of post.

**Step 4:** Click  to close the search results and return.

## Changing the Status of Threads

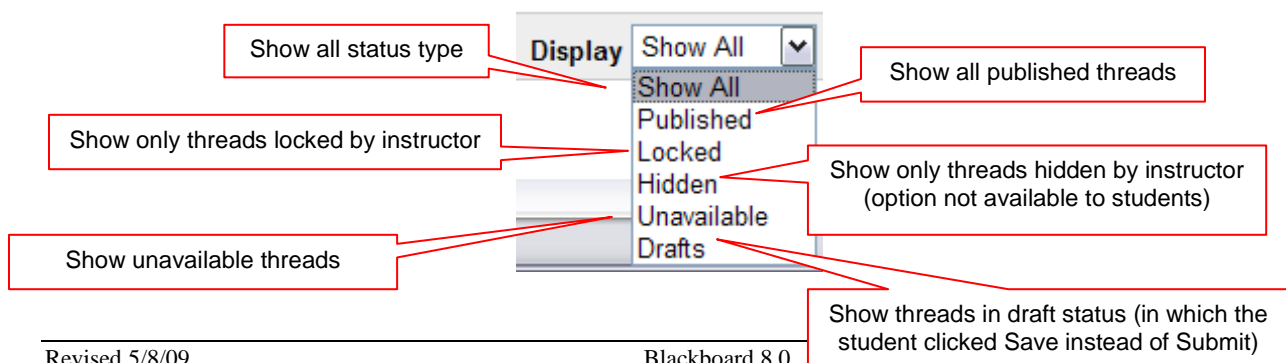
By default, threads are “published,” which means they are immediately available and visible to the group and can be modified or rated (if enabled). If needed, the instructor can change threads from “published” to a different status:



The message under the Status column changes to the status you selected.

## Filtering Threads

You and your students can limit the display of threads in the following ways:




## Preventing Changes in Thread Content

After students have submitted their threads/posts, you can make them “read-only;” additions, deletions and modifications cannot be made to the thread contents by anyone.

- Step 1:** Select the thread(s) to be locked, by checking the box next to it.
- Step 2:** Select Locked from the Change Status to drop-down menu and click the Go button. The message under the Status column changes to “Locked” for that thread.
  - To remove a lock, use the same steps, but select Unlocked.

## Moderating a Forum

As described above, submissions made by the group are, by default, immediately published. However, you have the option of controlling the flow of this publishing by turning on a moderator setting when creating or modifying the forum. This lets you review submissions before they go public.

- Step 1:** From the Discussion Board page, add or modify a forum.
  - Step 2:** From the Forum Settings section, select **Force moderation of posts**.
  - Step 3:** Click . Any submission made after enabling this setting will not be published automatically. New threads submitted do not display and new posts display the text (*Moderation Queue*) next to them.
  - Step 4:** From either the forum level or within a specific thread, click  **Moderate Forum**. A list of “quarantined” threads and posts appear.
  - Step 5:** Click  to the right of an item. The contents of the post appear, along with the option to either publish or return the message, with the option of sending a private message back to the student.
  - Step 6:** After choosing the desired option, click . The item is removed from the moderation queue page.
- NOTE:** If you disable the Force Moderation setting **after** students have posted to the forum, those postings may seem to “disappear.” To get them back, enable moderation, moderate the postings and then disable moderation.

## Being Alerted to New Submissions

You or your students can be alerted, via email, to new submissions to a forum.

- Step 1:** From the Discussion Board page, add or modify a forum.
- Step 2:** From the Forum Settings section, select the desired option from Subscribe (do not allow, allow to subscribe to threads or allow to subscribe to forums).
- Step 3:** Click . All group members now have the option of subscribing to a discussion forum or to selected threads, depending on the subscribe option set by the instructor.
- Step 4:** If “subscribe to forum” was set by the instructor, you would click  at the top of the screen when you first enter the discussion. Anytime anything is posted to that discussion forum, you will receive an email alerting you to the new post.

If “subscribe to threads” was set by the instructor, you would click  while reading a particular thread or post. Anytime a reply is submitted to that particular post, you will receive an email alerting you to the new post.



If a student has not entered their email address in Blackboard, they will not be able to subscribe to Discussion Boards.

## Message Tagging

You can create and apply text labels to messages in a forum (e.g. topics, themes or categories). Students can read, filter, and search messages using the tags, but cannot create new ones. Use tags to group similar messages.

- Step 1:** From the Discussion Board page, add or modify a forum.
- Step 2:** From the Forum Settings section, enable **Allow post tagging**.
- Step 3:** Click .
- Step 4:** Select messages using Tree or List view and click **Collect**.
- Step 5:** Select the messages to tag (you can select all of the messages using the Select All drop-down menu and clicking Go).
- Step 6:** Enter a tag name in the **Add Tag** field and click the **Go** button.

Once tags are in place, messages can be displayed based on the tags. You must be in List View.

## “Add Forum” Settings

Setting	Remarks	Default Selection
Allow anonymous posts	Useful when discussing sensitive topics.	Off
Allow author to remove OR modify own posts	Gives students ability to change their minds.	Off
Allow post tagging	Gives the instructor the ability to “tag” a post with keywords or phrases. Tags display in the discussion board forum for all users.	Off
Allow users to reply with quote	Gives students and instructor the ability to reply to a message with the original message quoted in the body of the reply.	Off
Allow file attachments	A single file (text, spreadsheet, etc.) can be uploaded to a thread or post. (Setting affects both instructor and students.)	On
Allow members to	By turning this setting off, you could divide the discussion into subtopics. That is, the instructor creates	On

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Default Selection</b>
create new threads	threads for each subtopic to be discussed, and students would reply to the instructor's threads. Must be disabled if grading threads.	
Allow members to subscribe to threads	Receive email alerts when a new thread or post is added to the forum. Instructor can set no subscription, subscription to threads or subscription to forums.	Off
Allow members to rate posts	This is based on a five-star system. (Setting affects both instructor and students.)	Off
Force moderation of posts	If enabled, you must review posts before they are "published" (made public). When a student submits a post, "(moderation queue)" appears after the post title. For the instructor, a Moderate Forum button is added to the action bar, where you can decide whether to "publish" to the group or "return" the post to the student with a private message explaining why.	Off
Grade forum OR threads	If forum is chosen, then set the possible points. If "threads" is chosen, then the possible points are set when each thread is created. In either case, scores can be recorded within the forum (and added automatically to the gradebook) and students can see their score(s) as well. If grade threads is selected, allow members to create new threads must be deselected.	Off