

# Course Materials: Discussions

## Creating Discussions

You can create an interactive discussion for your students. Each discussion has threaded commenting that allows students to respond to any post by another student. These comments can also be moderated, which will require a Course Admin (the teacher) to approve each post before it is published. Deleted posts will be listed under Moderate Posts in the Course Options section.

1. Click **Add Materials**.
2. Select **Add Discussion**.
3. Fill out the Discussion form.
  - Enter a Description (optional instructions for the discussion).
  - To have the discussion displayed in the Upcoming feed, enter a Due Date. If you do not enter a due date, the discussion will remain accessible in the Discussions index or course folder.
  - To make the discussion a graded item, select **Enable Grading** and adjust the grading preferences.
4. **Options**
  - Use Individually Assign (Enterprise only) to only display the discussion to a specific member of a course or a grading group.
  - Align Learning Objectives to add custom learning objectives, Common Core, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning, College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, AERO Curriculum Frameworks, or State Standards.

Enterprise users: Once you have aligned your material with learning objectives, use the Mastery tool to track your students' progress.

Common Core, NGSS, ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning, College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education, AERO Curriculum Frameworks, and State Standards are consistently updated in Schoology. Any learning objective titles that contain a year indicate the original publication date and not the most recent update.

- Lock prevents students from posting in the discussion. You may want to lock the discussion after the due date has passed.
- Published enables you to display or hide the discussion from your students.
- Members can see other responses before participating: You can decide if students are able to access their peers' responses before they post. If this is enabled, the other students' posts will be greyed out. You may choose this option to encourage originality in your students' posts.
- Shared Discussion: Enables sharing the discussion with other courses. Shared discussions cannot be graded.
- Copy to Course: Click this to simultaneously create this discussion in another section you administer.

5. Click **Create** to complete.

Discussions can also be created within course folders, or added to folders after their creation.

## Sharing Discussions

You can share your ungraded discussion with other courses. Shared Discussions is located in the Options section when creating a discussion.

Sharing the discussion will give the discussion a ShareID that other instructors can use to join their classes into the same discussion. Other instructors can find the discussion in Materials by changing the filter from All Materials to Discussions and then clicking **Join Shared Discussions** from the Options drop-down menu. Enter the Share ID and password into the pop-up window.

You can also automatically share the discussion with your courses and sections.

### Limitations of Shared Discussions:

- If you do not see the option to share the discussion under Advanced, it is likely that Grading is enabled. Graded discussions cannot be shared with other courses.
- You cannot share discussions after they have been created.
- Shared discussions are not available across linked sections.

## Reading Discussion Posts

From the Discussion post, you can access a toolbar that remains on the screen as you scroll through each post. The toolbar includes the following tools:

- **Post Count and Unread Posts:** The Post Count displays the total number of posts and replies on the discussion. The Unread Posts displays the number of posts and replies that have been added since you last loaded the page.

Opening a discussion on the mobile app does not affect the Unread Posts count. Posts that you read while logged into the Schoology mobile app will still be marked as unread the next time you log in to the web version.

Unread Posts are highlighted in orange.

- **Expand All and Collapse All:** On very long discussions, you may find it useful to use Collapse All to make the page easier to scan and to find posts more quickly. Clicking Collapse All truncates all posts and hides all replies to each post.

To expand the text on a particular post, click **Read More** next to where the post is truncated.

To show the replies on a particular post, click **View Replies** below the post.

To display all posts and all replies, click **Expand All**.

- **Scroll to Top:** When you are finished reading the latest posts by your students, you can quickly jump back to the top of the discussion in one click by clicking the **Scroll to Top** icon in the toolbar.

## Formatting Posts

Sometimes, students opt to draft their discussion posts in another program — such as Microsoft Word or another text editor — and then copy and paste the response into the Schoology discussions post field. Copying and pasting can sometimes bring in unwanted formatting from another program. If this happens, encourage your students to use the **Remove Formatting** button.

## Grading Discussion Posts

### Highlight User

Click **Highlight User** to filter posts by author. Clicking **Highlight User** displays a list of members in the course, accompanied by the number of posts each member has contributed to this discussion. The total posts appear in green, and the number of posts you have not yet read appears in orange. Students who have not yet posted to the discussion display in the **Not Submitted** section.

Selecting a student from the drop-down menu highlights all of the posts that student has created in this discussion, allowing you to access all of the discussion posts by a particular student at a glance.

### Unread Posts

Discussions are one of the most dynamic course material types on Schoology. To help you stay organized and keep track of the posts you haven't reviewed yet while grading students' posts to a discussion, you can now review the number of unread posts on a discussion right from the **Course Materials** page. The number of unread posts display in orange in line with the discussion's title.

### Administering Discussions

Course Admins have a star icon attached to their personal image on discussion posts. This helps students see at a glance which posts may be directions or feedback from the instructor, and which are from their fellow students.

To delete or edit students' posts:

1. From the three vertical dots on the post click **Edit** or **Delete**.
2. Click **Delete** to confirm or enter your change and click **Save Changes**.

## Grading

Students who have not yet received a grade for the discussion are indicated by an orange dot.

Clicking the grading button brings up the grading window, where you are able to enter a grade and a comment for the student. This grade applies to all of the students' posts on the discussion, not just the one you have selected.