



FoxTALE Forums (Online Discussions)

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What are Forums?

Forums are the primary FoxTALE tool used for holding an online discussion. Professors and students can post messages and log in at any time to read them. Forums are **asynchronous**, meaning that everyone doesn't have to be online at the same time.

Each forum can contain one or more discussions. Each discussion is comprised of one or more posts and replies. Students can take their time in composing a post or reply. After posting, you have thirty minutes to make changes to your post.

In contrast, **chats** are **synchronous**, meaning that everyone must be online and in the chat room at the same time in order to communicate. Chats are available as an activity in FoxTALE, but the chat module does not work well.

Forums are divided into two categories. You will see the two categories when you click the **Forums** link in the **Activities** block on the course home page.

- **General forums** are found in section 0 of the course. The News forum and Teacher forum are included with your FoxTALE course by default. The Teacher forum is a private forum available only to teachers of that course.
- **Learning forums** are forums that appear in specific parts of the course. These forums are organized and numbered according to the course sections in which they appear.

Creating a Forum

1. Turn editing on.
2. In the topic or week to which you would like to add the forum, go to **Add an activity > Forum**.
3. Enter a name and introduction. The introduction should contain specific instructions for the student: To how many classmates should the student respond? Should they answer the question posted? Etc...



4. Select the forum type. The most common type of forum is **Standard forum for general use**.
5. **Force everyone to be subscribed?** Subscriptions are email subscriptions. If you subscribe to a forum, you receive an email every time someone posts to the forum. People seem to love or hate this feature. You might want to set **Force everyone to be subscribed** to **No** so that students can decide whether or not they want to subscribe. See the **Setting Subscriptions to a Forum** section below.
6. Set the **Grade** settings if you want to give students a grade for this forum. You can give a rating for each of the student's posts to this forum.

Grade

Aggregate type ? Average of ratings

Grade ? 10

Restrict ratings to posts with dates in this range:

From 17 November 2008 15:15

To 17 November 2008 15:15

The **Aggregate type** allows you to specify how to compute the grade for the forum.

The **Aggregate type** choices are:

- **No Ratings** – This forum will not be graded.
- **Average of ratings** - The mean of all the ratings given to the student's posts in that forum. This is especially useful with peer grading when there are a lot of ratings being made.
- **Count of ratings** - The number of rated posts becomes the final grade. This is useful when the number of posts is important. Note that the total cannot exceed the maximum grade allowed for the forum.
- **Maximum rating** - The highest rating is returned as the final grade. This method is useful for emphasizing the best work from participants, allowing them to post one high-quality post as well as a number of more casual responses to others.
- **Minimum rating** - The smallest rating is returned as the final grade. This method promotes a culture of high quality for all posts.
- **Sum of ratings** - All the ratings for a particular user are added together. Note that the total is not allowed to exceed the maximum



grade for the forum. This type is helpful if you want to give, for example, 6 points for the student's original posting and 2 points for each response to classmates.

Other Settings

- **Grade:** Select the maximum grade for the forum (from 1 to 100); the forum in this example is worth 10 points.
- If desired, you can restrict ratings to posts within a specific date range

Grading the Forum

After a student posts to the forum, you will see a **Rate...** dropdown box in each post for assigning a grade. Click **Send in my latest ratings** when you're ready to save.

Students can only see their own ratings. In this example, Daffy was given 10/10, and Bugs was given 9/10. You'll also see the **Aggregate type** that you chose: **Average of ratings** in this example.

Re: test post
by [Daffy Duck](#) - Tuesday, 5 August 2008, 02:42 PM
reply from Daffy
[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)
Average of ratings: 10 / 10 [Rate...](#)

Re: test post
by [Bugs Bunny](#) - Tuesday, 5 August 2008, 02:43 PM
response to Daffy's reply
[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)
Average of ratings: 9 / 10 [Rate...](#)

[Send in my latest ratings](#)

7. You can find extensive documentation on creating forums, including the various settings and types, at moodle.org. See *Chapter 4 Using Forums, Chats, and Dialogues* in [http://docs.moodle.org/en/Using Moodle book](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Using_Moodle_book).



Posting to a Forum

1. From the course outline, click the forum's name. Existing discussions will be listed.
2. To begin a new discussion, click **Add a new discussion topic**. To reply to an existing discussion, click the name of the discussion. Then click the **Reply** link.

FoxTALE » SB-ABERC » Forums » Graded Forum: Colors

Search forums

Everyone can choose to be subscribed
Subscribe to this forum

What color is your car, and why did you choose this color?

Add a new discussion topic

Discussion	Started by	Replies	Last post
black	Daffy Duck	0	Daffy Duck Thu, 24 May 2007, 10:35 AM

3. Enter your information, and click **Post to forum** at the bottom.
4. You have thirty minutes to change or delete the post before it is final. Professors can delete any posts at any time, but students cannot delete their posts after thirty minutes.

How do I start or stop all the emails?

When you subscribe to a forum, you receive email copies of every post in that forum. Emails are sent about thirty minutes after the post was written. Some people prefer to receive emails for every post, and some people dislike emails and prefer to log in to FoxTALE to read posts.

By default, students can choose whether or not they want to be subscribed to each forum. However, if a professor forces subscription on a particular forum, then students no longer have this choice, and everyone in the class will get email copies.

In a particular forum, professors or students can click **Unsubscribe to this Forum** to stop the emails. You will then have to log in to FoxTALE to read the posts to this forum.

You can also set a global setting to apply to all forums. Edit your profile. Go to the **Forum auto-subscribe** setting, and choose your desired setting. You can override this setting for individual forums.



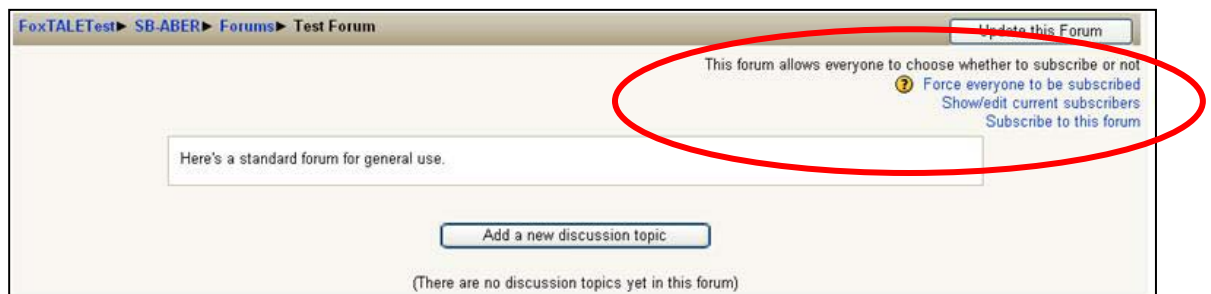
Setting Subscriptions to a Forum

When you create a new forum or update an existing forum, you will see the setting **Force everyone to be subscribed?** with these choices:

- **No**
- **Yes, forever.** Students will not be able to unsubscribe themselves.
- **Yes, initially.** All current and future course students will be subscribed initially but they can unsubscribe themselves at any time. Note how the **Yes, initially** option behaves when you update an existing forum: Changing from **Yes, initially** to **No** will not unsubscribe existing students, it will only affect future course students. Similarly changing later to **Yes, initially** will not subscribe existing course students but only those enrolling later.
- **Subscriptions Not Allowed.** Students will not be able to subscribe.

After you create a forum, if you click the forum name on the course's home page, then you will see the forum's main screen.

In the upper right corner, you will see three links.



- The first link will read **Force everyone to be subscribed** (meaning you have chosen not to force) or **Allow everyone to choose** (meaning you have chosen to force), depending on which setting you have chosen. Click this link to toggle back and forth between forcing and not forcing subscription.
- The second link allows you to view and change a list of who is subscribed if you are not forcing subscription.
- The third link allows you to subscribe to the forum. (Note: As a professor, you are not subscribed automatically if you do not force subscription.)



Changing a Forum

You can change the name, introduction, or settings on an existing forum.

To edit your forum, turn editing on. Click the hand icon next to the forum name in the course outline.



Be sure to save your changes by clicking **Save changes** at the bottom of the screen.