

# Moodleguide

Moodle version 1.9



## using discussion forums

This Moodleguide will help you to:

- think about how to use discussion forums
- format and post your message
- add an attachment

Being able to talk to more than one person can allow us to build up discussions. This practice can help learning, clarify points, raise issues otherwise not thought of, and allow us to get feedback from others on our ideas. Discussion forums are a good way of building relationships between fellow learners and reduce feelings of isolation. They are also an excellent way of sharing knowledge, answering questions, and aiding communications in general.

The tutor or moderator should get involved in discussions along with everyone else in the group, and should prompt the forum with new topics of interest. Use of the discussion forum is often an essential part of coursework in online courses.

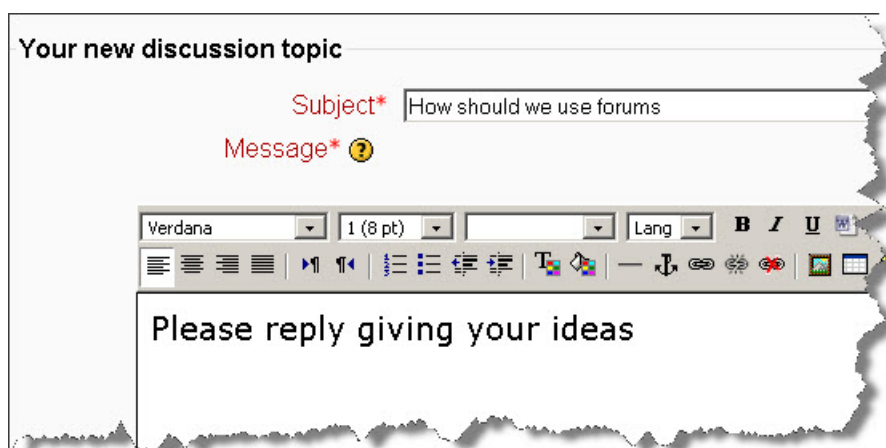
## Setting up a discussion forum

The first step is to *turn editing on*, select *Add and activity*, and then choose *Forum*. You then have choices to make.

- The forum needs a title that will appear on the front page
- You need to add a short summary of what the forum is about
- There are a number of different types of forum, but normally the standard forum type is ok.
- You can choose whether users will be subscribed to the forum or not. If users are subscribed it means they will get an email notifying them of forum posts. See also the Moodleguide on editing your profile. Sending email from a forum can be a great time saver over conventional email
- You can also set a maximum attachment size for files. This will help to prevent problems caused by users uploading large images or even videos (it happens!).



This is what you will see. Add a subject and compose your message.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Your new discussion topic". It has a "Subject\*" field containing the text "How should we use forums" and a "Message\*" field with a question mark icon. Below the fields is a rich text editor toolbar with options for font (Verdana), size (1 (8 pt)), language (Lang), bold (B), italic (I), underline (U), and various text formatting icons. The message area contains the text "Please reply giving your ideas".

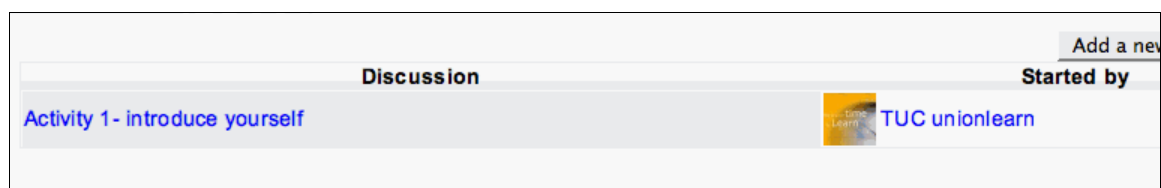
## Attachments and links

You can choose to attach a file to your message, just as you would in an email. This can be a quick way of distributing a new document, or adding a resource for learners to use for example.

You can also make weblinks inside your message. How to do this is covered in the Moodleguide *using weblinks*.

When you have finished click the *post* button.

## Replying to messages



Click on the discussion you wish to join in and click on the **reply** button. In the example above, there is one topic for discussion, *Activity 1 – introduce yourself*.

**Write your message:** Just write your reply in the window. Then you can format your message using the tools there (i.e. you can make text bold, italic, change size, etc. as in word processing). You cannot spell check here so you might like to use a word processor and then copy and paste your message.

**Subscription:** This means that you can subscribe to this forum so you will receive emails regarding messages that have been posted to this area.

**Attachment:** If you want to attach a file, like a document or a picture, click the *Browse* button, find your document on your computer and click *Open*. Be sure your document is smaller than the maximum attachment size for the forum .

When you have finished, click the *post to forum* link.

Once you click submit your discussion topic, you'll see a screen telling you the post was successfully saved, and how long you have to make changes to your post. The time you have to make changes is 60 minutes, so you'll have time to go back and edit your post before it's mailed out to the subscribers. After it's been sent, you can't edit.

The success screen should automatically send you back to the main screen for discussions. You'll see the message you just created. If you click on the discussion name, you'll see the message you wrote with any attachments in the upper right hand corner of the message body.

If you can still edit the post, you'll see three links on the bottom of the message body. You can choose to edit or delete the post, or post a reply. You have 60 minutes to do this.



Edit | Delete | Reply

## Moderating your forums

Your forums will almost always need to be *moderated*. This can mean a number of things:

- watching the forum posts and replying to any queries
- encouraging use of the forum by posting new topics
- as a last resort, deleting any inappropriate posts

## Checklist

think about how you can use forums actively  
use forums to send email messages to your users  
find out how to use weblinks and attachments  
moderate your forums actively

Open Learning Partnership©2009

Contact us for information about training, support, hosting, authoring materials

[info@olp.org.uk](mailto:info@olp.org.uk)

[www.olp.org.uk](http://www.olp.org.uk)