

Discussion Guidelines and Rubric

Directions: Use the information in this document as a guide for participating in discussion assessments.

Discussions are an interactive feature of an online course. In discussions, you can share conclusions, analyze concepts, and clarify ideas with classmates. You will have the opportunity to affirm one another's work and synthesize ideas.

To promote a safe and thoughtful forum for discussion, follow these guidelines when posting comments.

- **Respect diversity.** Families and individuals bring with them diverse backgrounds, faiths, and values. You must strive to respect all of them.
- **Keep it clean and safe.** Refrain from using any language or posting any material that could be construed as threatening, profane, or inappropriate.
- **Think before you post.** It is proper netiquette to avoid using all caps since it is a form of yelling. Since it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the tone and intent of an author in electronic communication, think before writing your response. Ask for clarification if you are unsure of the meaning of a comment. Do not include external links in any posting.

The rubric on the following page identifies the qualities of an excellent, a satisfactory, and a poor response. When you respond to your classmates, you are expected to go beyond "I agree" or "I disagree." Include facts to support your answer. You may also question a response and ask for additional clarification, support, or insight on the topic.

A persuasive response varies in length depending on the question; a paragraph is appropriate in most cases. If you are writing only one sentence to contribute to the discussion, you may want to consider your response more carefully. Also keep in mind that while citing evidence is essential, it's best to write concisely and avoid redundancy.

Points	Guidelines
9–10	<p>Excellent scores go to students who do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give comments that respond to the assigned topic clearly and effectively. • Show that you fully understand the topic by giving strong examples to support your ideas. • Return often to the discussion to respond thoughtfully to what others say. • Change your mind when you come upon something that makes you think differently. • Address your classmates in a polite and respectful manner.
7–8	<p>Satisfactory scores go to students who do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post in time for someone to respond. • Respond generally to the topic, although not as clear or as on-topic as others. • Show an adequate knowledge of the topic. • Post only occasionally, showing little response to what others say. • Hold on to positions even when you have been shown to be wrong. • Address your classmates in a polite and respectful manner.
0–6	<p>Students who demonstrate one or more of the following behaviors will earn six or fewer points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post late, if at all. • Give responses that are off-topic or limited. • Show minimal or no knowledge of the topic in your posts. • Do not respond to your classmates' posts. • Give responses that are off-topic or limited, or indicate that you did not take the time to carefully consider your post. • Address your classmates in a rude or insulting manner.