



Guidelines for Posting to Discussion Boards

Treat your discussion board post as any other written paper or response for school. You will want to establish a process that works for you and use that process to produce engaging ideas that contribute to the online conversation you are having with your classmates and your professor. You shouldn't just strive for completion, but also discussion and engagement.

Before you begin:

- Read your prompt or discussion question carefully—pay attention to word count, citation requirements, and specific guidelines such as due dates and response requirements. Are you just answering one question or do you have to answer a question and then respond to others?
- Set an agenda—making a schedule will help you stay on task and not get behind, especially with two-part due dates and follow up responses.
- Narrow down what exactly you should be accomplishing in your post (are you arguing for or against something, are you stating your opinion, are you summarizing a reading?).

Drafting the post:

- Before you begin take a few minutes to observe your peer's posts. This will allow you to see what other people are saying and give you the opportunity to even quote some of your peers.
- Begin by drafting your post in MS Word or another application. This will give you the chance to explore your ideas without the fear of an accidental submission before you are finished.
- Use titles or headings to lead the reader through your post.
- Use a warm opening. Don't be too abrupt or forward right off the bat. Allow your reader time to get "into" your post without feeling lost or overwhelmed.
- Avoid jokes. Because you are not in a face-to-face environment, it's easier for someone to take something you say the wrong way.
- Consider your audience. Your post will be read by your professor and your peers, so be sure to maintain a professional tone.

Responding to a post:

- Address your classmates by their names when responding to their posts.
- Don't dominate the conversation. Ask questions and point out specific details that you found interesting about the other posts.
- Keep in mind that your goal in responding is rooted in keeping the conversation going.
- Quote or restate a few ideas from the post you are responding to.
- Be respectful and non-confrontational.
- Be as specific as possible to encourage discussion.