Forums in Sakai

The Forums tool in Sakai allows instructors to create areas for discussion that can be read or contributed to by the entire class, or designated groups. Students can respond to questions and exchange files. Forum and Topic posts can also be linked to the Gradebook for grading, but only Topics can be linked to from within the Lessons tool.

Discussions are organized under the hierarchy of Forums > Topics > Conversations > Replies.

Creating Forums

1. Click on the Forums tool from your left hand tool menu
2. To add a new Forum, click the New Forum button
3. Enter a title, and short description, then update settings for the Forum as desired:
   - “Lock forum” – blocks students from posting on the Forum
   - “Moderate topics in forum” – instructor will have to approve all posts before they are shared with the rest of the participants
   - “Require users to post before reading” – students can not see other posts until they have posted their own comments
   - “Grading” – use the drop down menu to associate the Forum with a Gradebook item – the Gradebook item has to be created first
   - “Permissions” – update roles and restrict access as needed
4. Click Save Settings & Add Topic
   - Topics must be created in order for the Forum to be visible for students.

Adding Topics

Once a Forum has been created, Topics must be added for the Forum to be active. Follow the steps above to add a Forum, and then continue with adding Topics by clicking on New Topic within the Forum.
Conversations

After Forums and Topics have been created and made available for students, users can start their own conversations, or reply to conversations already in progress.

1. Click on the **Topic name** to open the discussion.

2. Use the buttons at the top of the Topic to **Start a New Conversation** or **Display Message Content** to view all messages within the Topic.

3. Use the **Reply** button to Reply to Conversations already in progress.

Reorder Forums

Click the **Organize** button on the main Forums page to reorder Forums and Topics.

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Statistics & Grading

Forums and Topics can be linked to items in the Gradebook for grading. Please Note: The Gradebook item must be created ahead of time before trying to link to a Forum or Topic.

To view Forum activity by student:

1. Click on the Statistics & Grading button at the top of the main Forums screen.
2. Select “Statistics & Grading by User” or “Statistics & Grading by Topic” to view discussions by student or grouped by topic.
3. Click on a student’s name or a topic name to view postings.
4. Click the Grade link on the right to enter scores for a student.

Forum Notifications

Instructors and students may select to receive notification regarding new posts to Forums or Topics.

1. Click the Watch button at the top of the main Forums screen.
2. Update preferences for notifications by selecting the appropriate buttons.
3. Click Save.