

# Reading and Posting in Discussion Boards

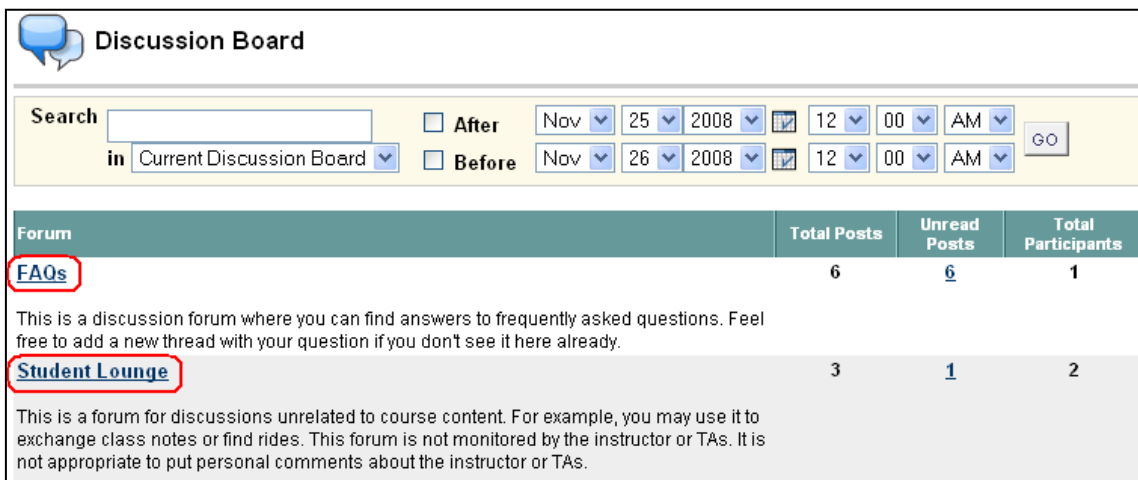
## Overview

Discussion boards are online spaces that can extend communication beyond the confines of the classroom. Discussion boards in Blackboard are composed of two items—**forums** and **threads**. **Forums** are areas that include one or more threads related to a theme. Only instructors can create discussion forums. Students and instructors can participate in discussions, by replying to posts or creating new threads (if the instructor has made that option available to students). This document contains step-by-step instructions for reading and posting messages on discussion boards.

**Note:** The screen shots in this document correspond to the student view of the discussion board. Instructors have additional options that are not shown or discussed in this document.

## Reading a Discussion Board Post

1. Click on **Discussion Board** on the course navigation menu. (If you do not see **Discussion Board**, then click on **Communication** and then on **Discussion Board**.)
2. Click on the name of the forum you wish to read.



The screenshot shows the Blackboard Discussion Board interface. At the top, there is a search bar and filters for 'After' and 'Before' dates. Below the search bar is a table with columns for Forum, Total Posts, Unread Posts, and Total Participants. Two forums are listed: 'FAQs' and 'Student Lounge'. The 'FAQs' forum has 6 total posts, 6 unread posts, and 1 total participant. The 'Student Lounge' forum has 3 total posts, 1 unread post, and 2 total participants. Red boxes highlight the forum names in the table.

Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
<a href="#">FAQs</a>	6	6	1
<a href="#">Student Lounge</a>	3	1	2

- Once you are in a forum, you will see that there are two ways to view the threads in the forum: **List View** and **Tree View**. You can choose which way you prefer to view threads by default. **List View** displays a list of all threads. The total number of posts in each thread is displayed in the **Total Posts** column. Threads containing an unread post appear in boldface.

	Date	Thread	Author	Status	Tags	Unread Posts	Total Posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/24/08 2:35 PM	<a href="#">Simulation website</a>	Hunter Student	Published		0	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	11/24/08 2:32 PM	<a href="#">Notes for next class</a>	Hunter Student	Published		1	1

**Tree View** gives you a visual indication of which threads have responses. You can click on the + sign to the left of the thread title to see the entire structure of a thread, including responses and responses to responses. A post that is indented is a response to a previous post.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Notes for next class</a>	Hunter Student	11/24/08 2:32 PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Simulation website</a>	Hunter Student	11/24/08 2:35 PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	RE: <a href="#">Simulation website</a>	Gertrude Student	11/25/08 11:50 AM

- To view the content of a thread or post, click on its title. In the top box, you will see the structure of the thread. A post that you have not read yet appears in boldface. In the bottom box, you will see the text of the post.

Thread: [Simulation website](#) [Reply](#)

Total posts: 2 Unread posts: 0 [< Previous Thread](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Simulation website</a>	Hunter Student	11/24/08 2:35 PM
<input type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">RE: Simulation website</a>	Gertrude Student	11/25/08 11:50 AM

[Refresh](#)  Select All [Go](#)

**Subject:** Simulation website [Reply](#) [Quote](#) [Set Flag](#)

**Author:** [Hunter Student](#) [Next Post >](#)

**Posted date:** Monday, November 24, 2008 2:35:18 PM EST  
**Last modified date:** Monday, November 24, 2008 2:35:18 PM EST  
**Total views:** 8 **Your views:** 7

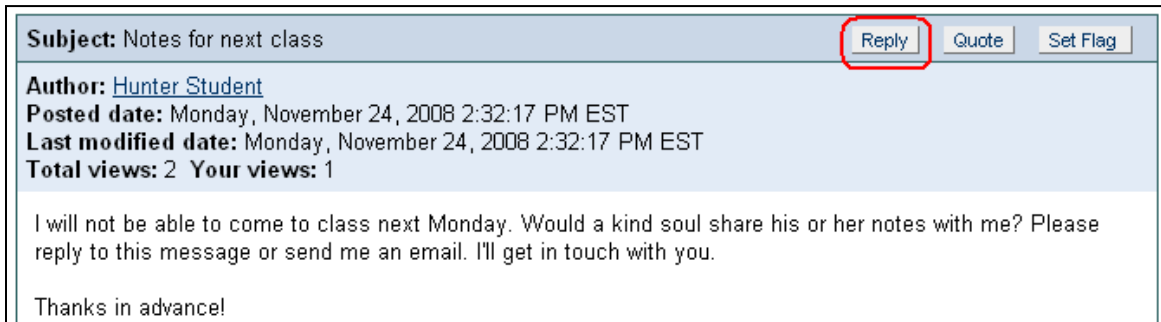
I seem to have made a mistake writing down the address for the website that the professor showed in class today. Can someone tell me what it was?

## Posting to a Discussion Board

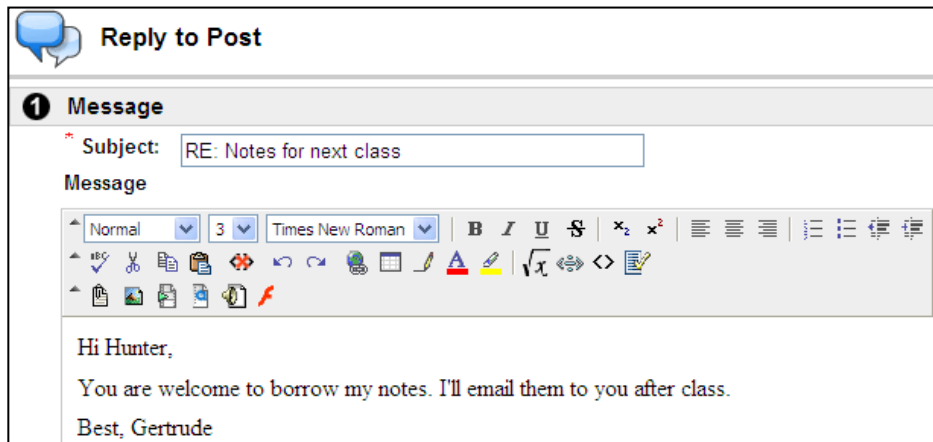
There are two ways to participate in discussion boards. You can write a reply to a post or you can start a new thread, if the instructor has made that option available.

To reply to a post, follow the instructions below:

1. View the post to which you want to reply and click on the **Reply** button.



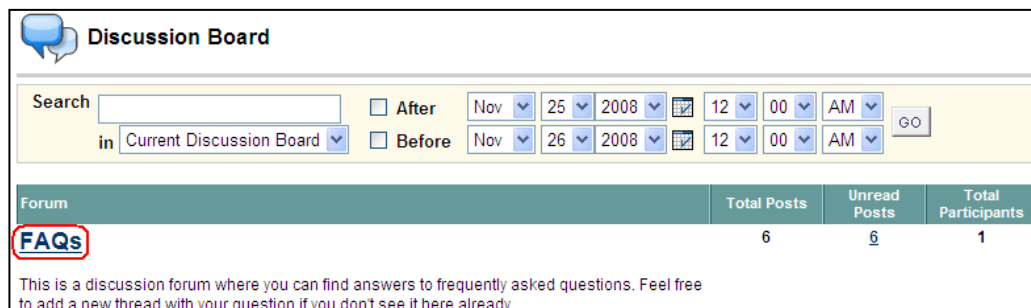
2. Type your reply in the message box.



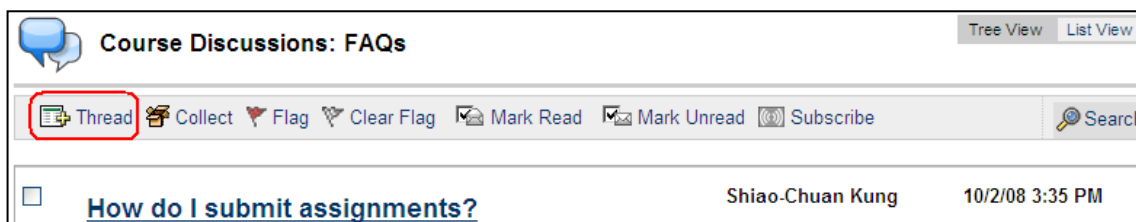
3. Click on the **Submit** button.

To start a new thread, follow the instructions below:

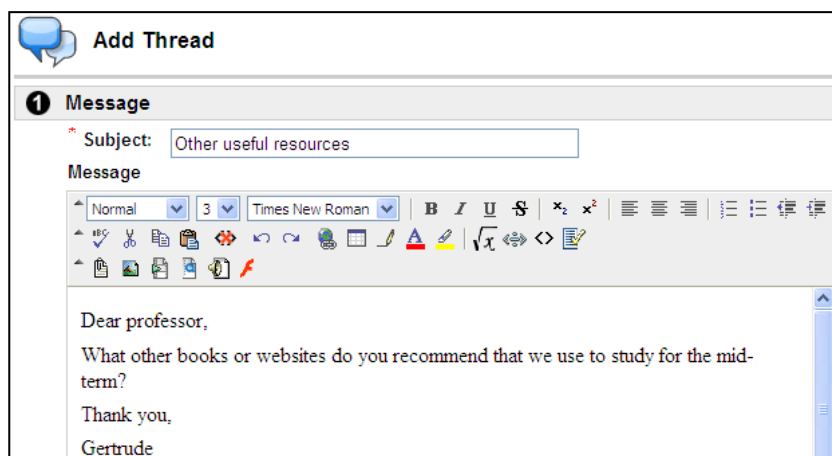
1. Click on the name of the forum in which you wish to start a thread.



2. Click on the **+Thread** button to create a new thread.



3. Type the content of your new thread in the message box



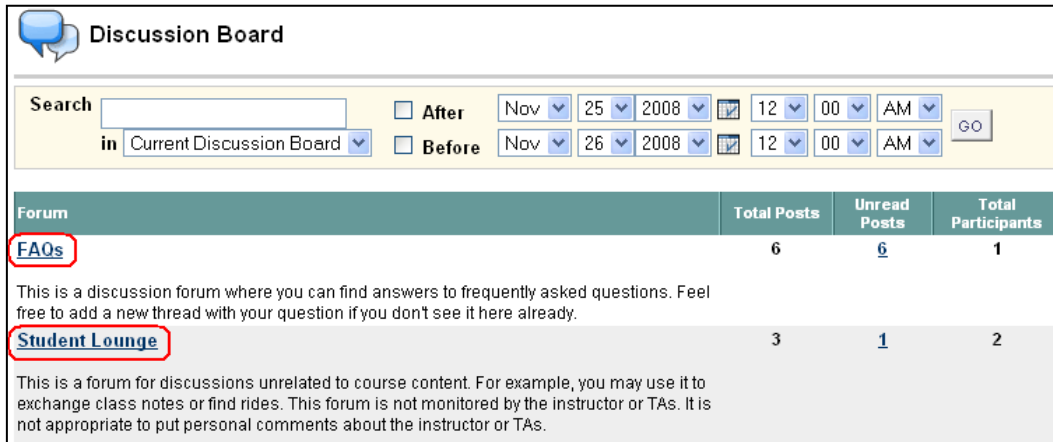
4. Click on the **Submit** button.

## Subscribing to a Forum

One way to help you stay abreast of new posts in discussion boards is by subscribing to a forum. If your instructor has enabled the subscription feature, then you may subscribe to a forum to receive email notifications when a new post has been added. Depending on the setting that your instructor has chosen, the email message can contain either the complete text of the new post or only a link to it. If the email only includes a link, clicking on it will direct you to the **CUNY Portal** so that you can log into Blackboard and view the post in its context. If you are already logged in to Blackboard, the link will lead directly to the actual post in the **Discussion Board**.

To **subscribe to a forum**, follow the instructions below:

1. Click on the name of the forum you wish to subscribe to.



The screenshot shows the 'Discussion Board' interface. At the top, there is a search bar with a 'GO' button. Below the search bar, there are two date and time selection boxes: 'After' (Nov 25, 2008, 12:00 AM) and 'Before' (Nov 26, 2008, 12:00 AM). Below these is a table with the following data:

Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
<a href="#">FAQs</a>	6	6	1
<a href="#">Student Lounge</a>	3	1	2

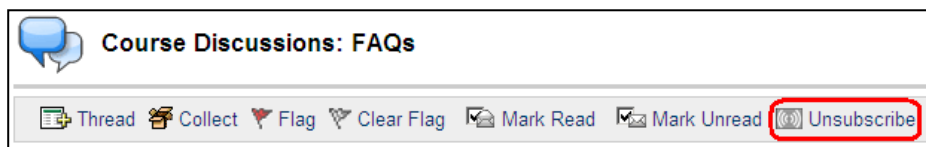
Below the table, there are two paragraphs of text. The first paragraph is for the 'FAQs' forum: 'This is a discussion forum where you can find answers to frequently asked questions. Feel free to add a new thread with your question if you don't see it here already.' The second paragraph is for the 'Student Lounge' forum: 'This is a forum for discussions unrelated to course content. For example, you may use it to exchange class notes or find rides. This forum is not monitored by the instructor or TAs. It is not appropriate to put personal comments about the instructor or TAs.'

2. Click on the **Subscribe** button on the tool bar. From now on, you will receive an email every time a new post is added to this forum.



The screenshot shows the 'Course Discussions: FAQs' interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with the following buttons: 'Thread', 'Remove', 'Collect', 'Mark Read', 'Mark Unread', 'Subscribe', and 'Change Status'. The 'Subscribe' button is highlighted with a red box.

If you no longer wish to receive email messages when new discussion board posts are added, you can **Unsubscribe** from the forum at a later time.



The screenshot shows the 'Course Discussions: FAQs' interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with the following buttons: 'Thread', 'Collect', 'Flag', 'Clear Flag', 'Mark Read', 'Mark Unread', and 'Unsubscribe'. The 'Unsubscribe' button is highlighted with a red box.

3. Repeat this process for every forum you wish to subscribe to.

If you have further questions or need technical assistance, please contact the Student Help Desk at (212) 650-EMAIL (3624) or [studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:studenthelpdesk@hunter.cuny.edu).