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## Using Forum

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3.8 New forum features

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### For all users

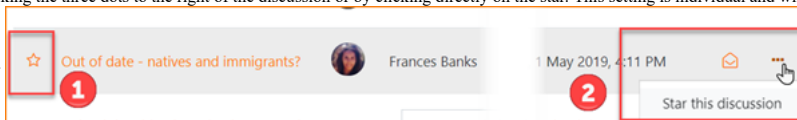
#### Replying to discussions

Similar to when starting a new discussion, the reply box appears inline, allowing the user to respond quickly. If a more detailed reply is needed, for example, needing the editing toolbar or attachment box, clicking Advanced will display the full version.

#### Star discussions

Discussions may be favoured or 'starred' either by clicking the three dots to the right of the discussion or by clicking directly on the star. This setting is individual and will move the discussion to the

top of the discussion list, under any pinned discussions.

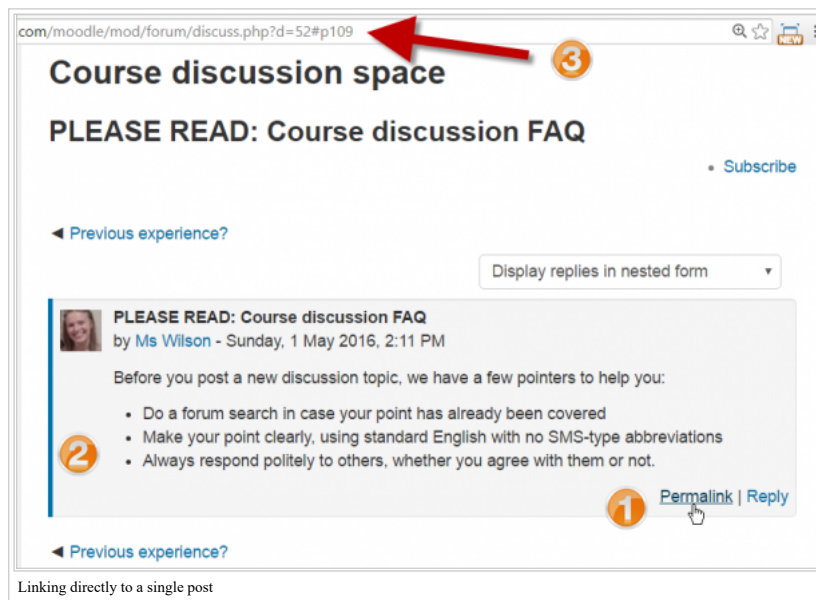


## Sort discussions

Discussions may be sorted by replies, last post or created, by clicking the linked words at the top of the discussion list.

## Permalinks

A permalink allows you to link directly to a specific forum post so you can share it easily with others. You will see the permalink option when clicking to reply to a post. If you click the permalink (1), it is highlighted to the side (2), and you will have a particular web address (3) which you can then copy and paste to use elsewhere:



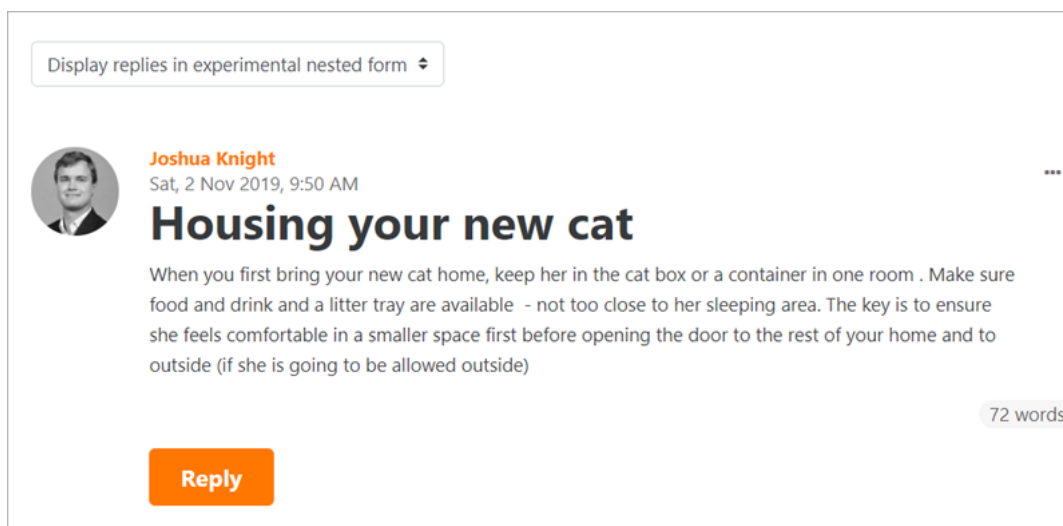
## Forum preferences

Users can set their forum preferences via Preferences in the user menu top right. (Defaults for each of these settings can be set by an administrator in *Administration > Site administration > Accounts > User default preferences*.)

### Experimental nested view

New feature  
in **Moodle 3.8!**

Enabling this will then make available a new discussion view, trialed in Moodle 3.8:




## Subscribing to forum discussions

Users can subscribe to forum discussions in several ways, to receive notification about new posts.

1. From the Preferences link in the user menu they can choose to be automatically subscribed to forum discussions when they post
2. They can click on the open envelope icon next to a forum discussion. (It will then change to a closed envelope.)
3. They can click into the forum and click the cog icon top right and subscribe to the whole forum.

## Track read and unread forum posts

- Access the Preferences page from the user menu and select 'Forum preferences'.
- For 'Forum tracking', choose *Yes: highlight new posts for me* and if the forum administrator has set the 'Read tracking for this forum?' to On or Optional then unread posts will be highlighted for you:


Class discussions
1 unread post

Unread posts alert

The posts will be highlighted in the following places:

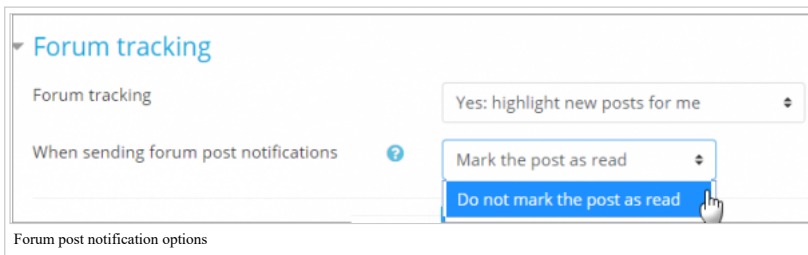
- Course page
- Within the forum itself
- In forum discussion threads



Click to mark as read

Only posts made in the last two weeks are tracked as read or unread. Older posts are all reported as read.

Note: You can also choose to have any forum post notifications automatically marked as read (so they don't appear in the Unread list.) Some people find this confusing and prefer to keep them as unread:



Forum post notification options

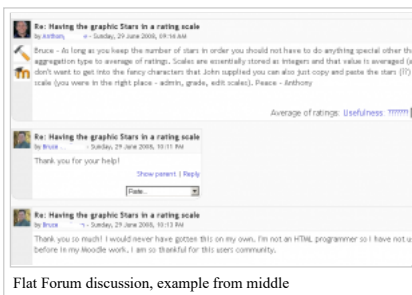
### Display options

A discussion thread may be displayed in four ways. Use the pull-down menu at the top of each forum discussion to select a display type.

- Display replies flat, with oldest first
- Display replies flat, with newest first - The discussion will be displayed in one line and the chronological order from the newest to the oldest. This view is the same as the above, just a different sort order.
- Display replies in threaded form - Only the post starting the discussion will be displayed in its full form; replies will be reduced to the headlines (including information about its author and date of release) and organised chronologically; moreover, replies will be shifted towards the right so that only replies to the same post were in the same line.
- Display replies in nested form - All posts are displayed in their full forms; replies will be reduced to the headlines (including information about its author and date of release) and organised chronologically; moreover, replies will be shifted towards the right so that only replies to the same post were in the same line.



Reply display options



Flat Forum discussion, example from middle



Posts in threaded form



"Nested reply example"

### Forum posting

The default content of **Subject** is usually 'Re: <the name of the 'parent' post>'. You can change it, though.

#### Adding images, sound and video

- When an image is "attached" as a file to a forum message, it is immediately displayed full size after the message (i.e. no need to click on an attachment). This is an excellent way of sharing images without having to go through the process of uploading them as files and linking them from within web pages.
- Images may be dragged and dropped into the box as well as uploading via the "add" link and the File picker.
- If multimedia filters are enabled, a sound file (mp3) or accepted video file can be attached, and it will be embedded into the forum post in an appropriate player.

#### Tags

Forum posts may be tagged.

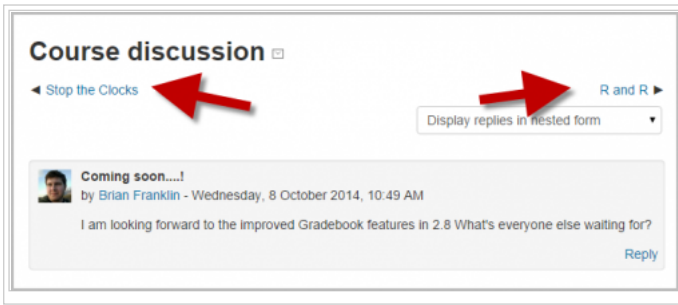
Tags can be managed by a site administrator in Manage tags in the Site administration. Forum post tags may be added to a specified tag collection, and standard tags may be suggested or forced. If desired, forum post tagging may be disabled completely.

#### Post editing time limit

Once a post has been made, students can go back and edit it within a set time limit. This limit is 30 minutes by default and is set by an administrator in Site security settings in the Site administration. Note that teachers can always edit their posts.

#### Moving between forum threads

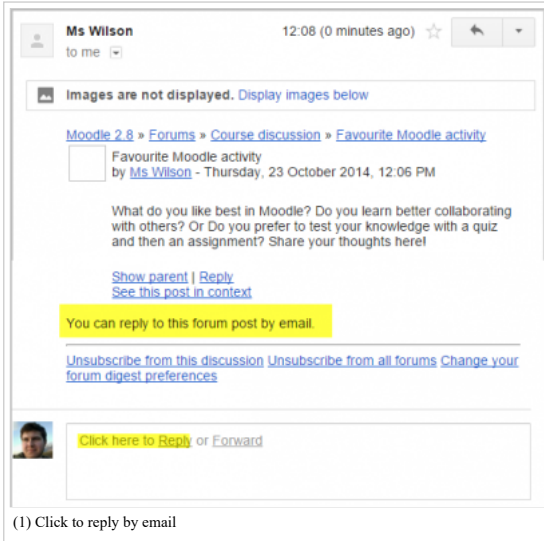
Links top and bottom, left and right (where applicable) take you to the previous and next forum discussion in a list:



## Reply to posts via email

If enabled by an administrator (in Mail configuration), you can reply to forum posts via email.

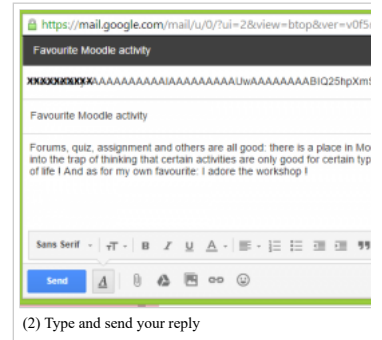
1. Click the Reply by email link in the email. You will see a special unique email address to send your reply to.
2. Reply using the email address provided. **IMPORTANT: Make sure you remove the original email content so that your forum post does not contain the quoted text.**
3. You should receive an email saying your reply has been successfully posted.
4. Your post now appears in the forum.



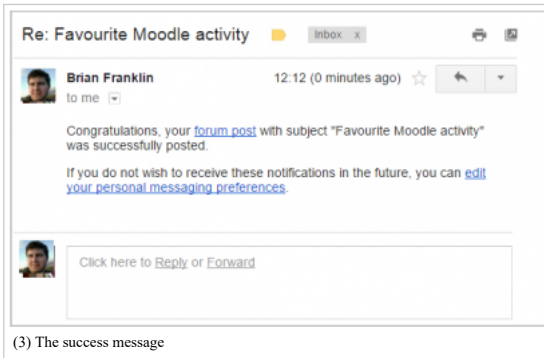
(1) Click to reply by email



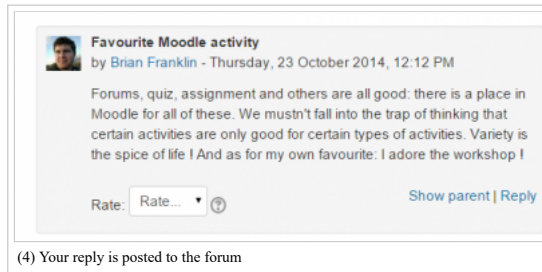
(1a) Note the special email address to reply to



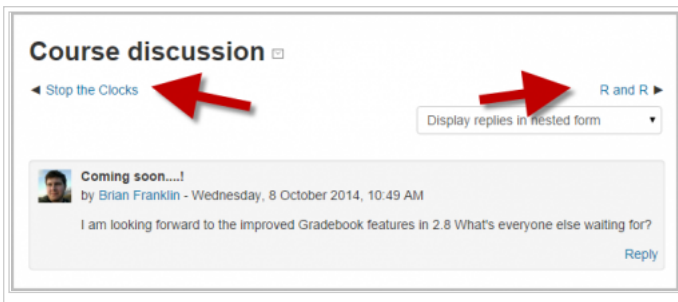
(2) Type and send your reply



(3) The success message

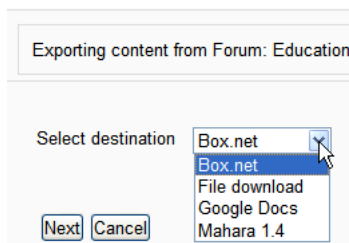


(4) Your reply is posted to the forum



## Exporting forum posts

Users with the *mod/forum:exportdiscussion* or *mod/forum:exportownpost* or *mod/forum:exportpost* permission can export forum posts to any portfolio the administrator has enabled:



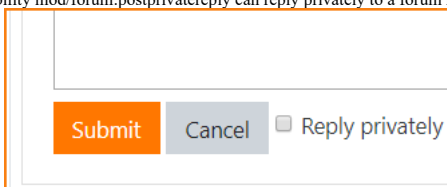
See the discussion [Printing/exporting forum discussions](#) for further details.

## For teachers

### Private replies

Teachers (or anyone with the capability `mod/forum:postprivatereply` can reply privately to a forum message. By default, the reply is only seen by the recipient and the teachers of the course, and

cannot be replied. (Details in [\[\[1\]\]](#))

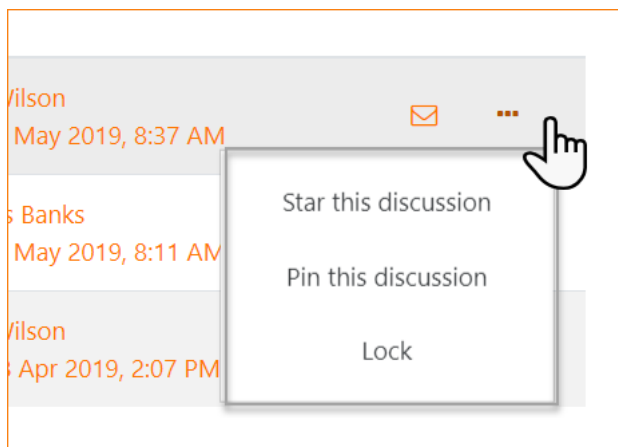


### Pinned posts

When adding a new discussion as a teacher, you can 'pin' it from the three dots to the right of the discussion. (See screenshot below.) Any forum discussions which come after that will appear underneath this pinned post. If you later click to 'unpin' it, it will display as a regular forum discussion, moving down the list when others are posted.

### Manually locking discussion threads

By clicking 'Lock' from three dots to the right of a discussion, you can manually lock a thread so that nobody can post to it anymore. A padlock icon will appear next to the locked discussion. Clicking again will unlock it if necessary:



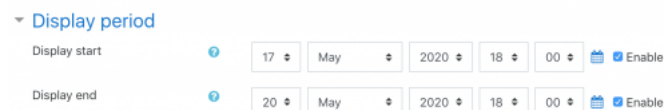
### 'Send forum post notifications with no editing time delay'

Teachers (and others with the capability `mod/forum:managecourseactivities`) will see this option when posting to a forum. Ticking this box will send a notification to everyone subscribed to that forum with no editing time delay. (Users have 30 minutes by default to edit their posts.)

Note: For users who have enabled email digests in their forum preferences, the notification is NOT sent separately from other forum post notifications.

### Display period

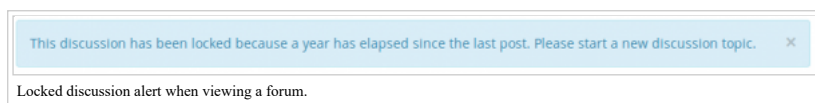
Teachers (and others with the capability `mod/forum:viewhiddentimedposts`) can set a display period of a date and time for the forum post to appear.



Note: Timed forum posts were included in previous versions of Moodle as an experimental feature. In Moodle 3.1 onwards, it is enabled by default for new installations. For sites upgrading from a previous version, it may be enabled via *Site administration > Plugins > Activity modules > Forum*.

### Locking a discussion

Forum threads may be automatically locked after a certain period of inactivity. This is done from the setting 'Discussion locking' when creating or editing a new forum.



- A period from a day to a year may be selected. The default is for discussions not to be locked.
- Watch the screencast [Discussion locking](#) to see a demonstration.
- Teachers and other users with the capability to override locked discussions can unlock discussions simply by posting a reply.

### Moving a discussion

Teachers and other users with the capability to move discussions can move a discussion to any other forum in the course for which they have appropriate rights.

1. Click on the arrow in the 'Move this discussion to...' dropdown menu in the top right corner of the page and select a destination forum.
2. Click the Move button.

Note: Moving a forum post will display incorrect results in the course participation report for the affected forums. For example, take a student who posted in forum A and had their post moved to forum B. In the course participation report, the student will still be listed as having made a post in forum A, but will not be listed as having made a post yet in forum B.

Note: Discussion subscriptions are retained when a post is moved.

### Splitting a discussion

Teachers and other users with the capability to split discussions can split a discussion thread. Splitting a discussion means that beginning with the post selected and going to the end of that sub-thread, the posts are cut from the current discussion topic and put into a newly created discussion topic. If a discussion has strayed away from the original topic, splitting the discussion can provide new attention and space for the tangent discussion while keeping the original discussion on topic.

1. Click the link 'Split' in the forum post
2. Enter a new discussion name (optional)
3. Click the Split button

Note: Discussion subscriptions are NOT retained when a post is split.

### Using groups with forums

'Group mode' available from the Common module settings has three options. (Note that you must have groups in your course to use this feature.)

If the group mode is set to separate groups:

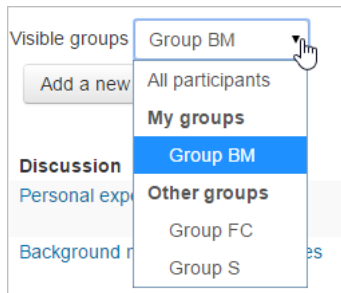
- Teachers are given the option of adding a new discussion topic for all participants or a selected group. If a teacher adds a new discussion topic for a selected group, then only group members can reply to it.
- Students can only start discussions for their group.
- Students can only reply to discussions started by other group members or discussions for their group started by a teacher.

If the group mode is set to visible groups:

- Teachers are given the option of adding a new discussion topic for all participants or a selected group. If a teacher adds a new discussion topic for a selected group, then only group members can reply to it.
- Students can only start discussions for their group.
- Students can only reply to discussions started by other group members or teachers.

Teachers, and other users with the capability moodle/site:accessallgroups set to allow, can view and post in all forum discussions, regardless of the group mode setting.

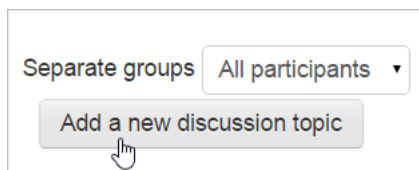
Where visible groups are used, the user's groups will be shown first in the list, followed by other groups:



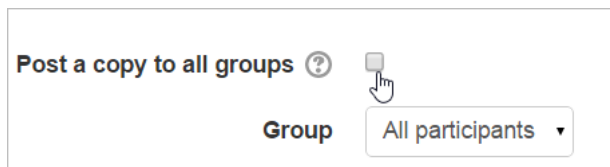
Note: Single simple discussions cannot be set to separate groups (as this feature is not implemented). Instead, a standard forum should be used. If required, a permissions override may be set to prevent students from starting new discussions. For teachers who have access to all or several groups in a forum, this setting allows them to post the same message once only to all groups.

### Post a copy to all groups

Teachers and other users with the capability to post in all groups they have access to can post the same message once for all groups by selecting 'All participants' and clicking the Add a new discussion topic button:



Alternatively, the same message can be posted once for each group by ticking the box 'Post a copy to all groups'. After the 'Post a copy' box is ticked, the 'All participants' option will be greyed out.



When saved, the post will be reproduced for each group:

Discussion	Started by	Group	Replies	Last post
First Impressions	Sam Green	Team	0	Sam Green
First Impressions	Sam Green	Lion	0	Mon, 20 Apr 2015, 2:10 PM
First Impressions	Sam Green	Panther	0	Mon, 20 Apr 2015, 2:10 PM
First Impressions	Sam Green	Tiger	0	Mon, 20 Apr 2015, 2:10 PM

### Ideas for using forums

Ask yourself

1. you wish to have involvement in the forum or if you want the students to lead and own the space
2. you want the forum to add value to the face to face environment or have a life of its own in its own right outside the lecture theatre/classroom or seminar room
3. you are prepared to make appropriate contributions to the discussion to:
  1. encourage discussion if students are quiet
  2. help shape ideas if students begin to wander off-task
  3. your role will be defined as discussions/a course progresses
  4. you will explicitly but gradually relinquish control of the discussions
  5. you will encourage and support learners to share control of discussions (for example you might ask a learner/group of learners to summarise contributions to a discussion thread/topic, or you might ask learners to initiate discussion topics)

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Categories: Forum | New features

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