

How to assess Discussions submissions

Use the Discussions tool in your courses to encourage users to share thoughts and reflect on course material with their peers. You can assess discussion posts and have those assessments reflected in the grade book.

How do I access Discussions?

Click  **Discussions** on the navbar.

Selecting your assessment method

You can evaluate users' discussion posts in one of two ways: individually or per topic. When you evaluate posts individually, you assign a score to each post, and Learning Environment calculates the final score based on the calculation option you select. When you evaluate on a per topic basis, you review all posts in the topic and assign one overarching score.

Understanding calculation methods

If you decide to evaluate posts individually, you can select from the following 5 calculation methods:

- Average post score
- Maximum post score
- Minimum post score
- Mode post score – Highest on multiple
- Mode post score – Lowest on multiple

Choosing a calculation method

The calculation method you choose for evaluating your topic's posts can depend on various factors, including:

- Quality of posts – Reward thoughtful posters by calculating their topic score using **Mode post score – Highest on multiple**
- Quantity of posts – Penalize users who post low quality responses or "I agree" responses by calculating their topic score using **Mode post score – Lowest on multiple**
- Bell curving – Select **Maximum post score** or **Average post score** over **Minimum post score** if you want to improve your users' scores

How do I configure a discussion topic for assessment?

1. Click  **Edit Topic** from the context menu of the topic you want to configure assessments for.
2. In the Assessments tab, do one of the following:
 - Select **Allow assessment of individual posts**, and then select a **Calculation** method from the drop-down list if you want to assess discussion posts individually.
 - Clear **Allow assessment of individual posts** if you want to assess the discussion topic as a whole.
3. Click **Save**.

Assessing discussion posts individually

1. Click  **Assess Topic** from the context menu of the topic you want to assess.
2. Click the **Topic Score** link for a user. This opens a Contributing Posts dialog for the topic. Inside this dialog, you can review the user's posts for the topic and assign each post a score. The user's final topic score will be determined using the Calculation method you selected when setting up the topic.

Assessing a discussion topic

1. Click  **Assess Topic** from the context menu of the topic you want to assess.
2. Click the **Topic Score** link for a user. This opens a Contributing Posts dialog for the topic. Inside this dialog, you can review the user's posts for the topic and assign them a score for the entire topic.

Associating your discussion topic with a grade item

In order for graded discussion topics to display in the grade book, the topic must be associated with a grade item.

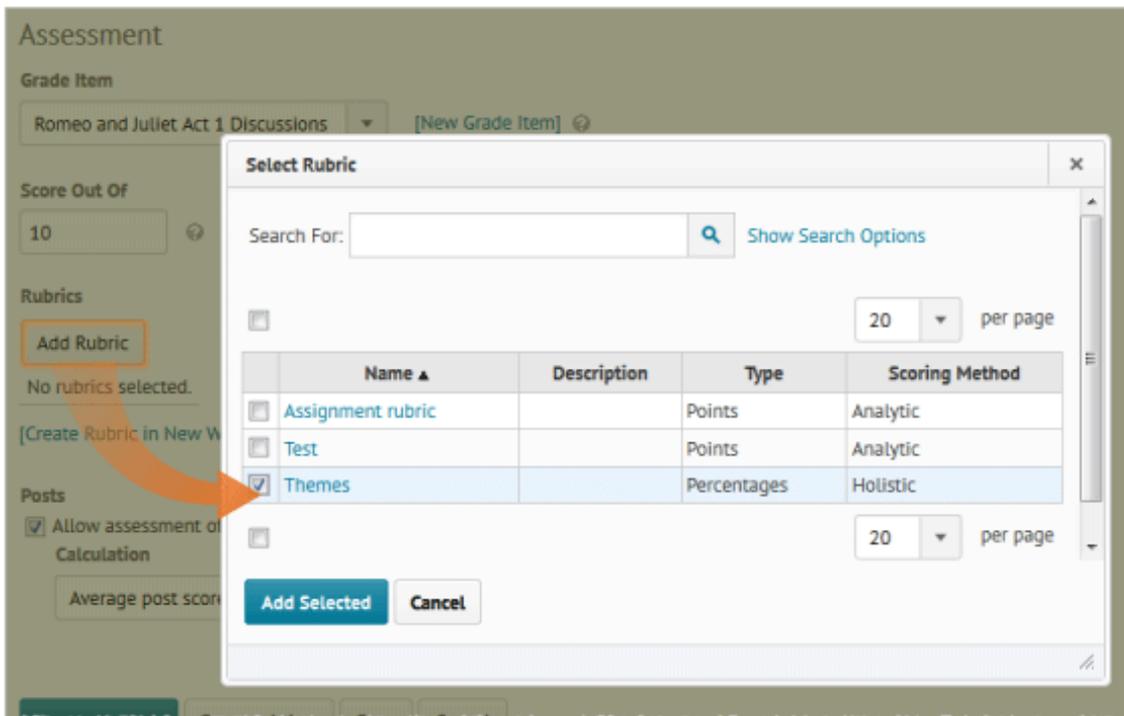
1. Click  **Edit Topic** from the context menu of the topic you want to associate with a grade item.
2. In the Assessment tab, do one of the following:
 - a. Select an existing grade item from the Grade Item drop-down list and assign it a **Score Out Of**. Click **Save**.
 - a. Click the **New Grade Item** link to create a grade item in place. Fill out the grade item requirements in the dialog that displays and click **Save**.

Note You can only link numeric grade items to discussion topics.

Associating your discussion topic with a rubric

Rubrics make grading easier because they provide consistent standards for evaluation. Rubrics are not required with discussion topics.

1. Click  **Edit Topic** from the context menu of the topic you want to add a rubric to.
2. In the Assessment tab, click **Add Rubric**, and then select your rubric(s) from the dialog that displays. Click **Add Selected**.
3. Click **Save**.



Adding a rubric to a discussion topic

How do I publish discussion scores to the grade book?

1. Click  **Assess Topic** from the context menu of the topic you want to assess.
2. Click **Publish All Scores to Grades** to publish all scores for the topic, or select the **Publish to Grades** check box for each individual user you want to publish discussion grades for and click **Save**.