


Assessing a Discussion Topic

If you would like to evaluate students' contributions to a discussion, you can configure your discussion topic to assist you in this process. You can also link your discussion to a grade item and have the score automatically transferred.



Before you start...


- Since students can't see their score directly through the Discussions tool, you'll need to set up a grade item in your grade book in order for the students to see your evaluation.
- Only numeric grade items can be linked to discussion topics.
- If you have tied your discussion to groups and have restricted group topics, you'll need to set up a grade item for each group topic. Group members will see all of the topics, but only receive scores in their group's grade item.

Configuring a topic for assessment


1. On the main discussions page, click the  **Edit** icon for the topic you want to configure.
2. Click the *Assessment* tab.
3. If you want the score to be linked to a grade item, select the item from the *Grade Item* drop-down list. If you haven't yet created an associated grade item, you can do so now by following the *New Grade Item* link.


Assessment

Grade Item:  [\[New Grade Item\]](#) 

Score Out of: 

4. Specify the number you want to *Score Out of*. You will evaluate users using a scale ranging from zero to the number entered here, e.g., if you enter 15, you will assess users on a scale from zero to fifteen.
Tip: While not required, it may be less confusing to use the same out of score that's used in the associated grade item.
5. If you want to assess individual messages rather than assigning an overall topic score directly for each user:
 - a. Select the *Assess each message and automatically calculate the topic score* checkbox.
 - b. Select the *Calculation* method you want to use to determine users' overall topic scores based on message scores.

Messages: Assess each message and automatically calculate the topic score 

Calculation: -- Select a calculation method -- 

-- Select a calculation method --


Average message score

Maximum message score

Minimum message score

Mode message score - Highest on multiple


Mode message score - Lowest on multiple

Include non-scored messages as zero 

See the [Topic Score Details](#) image later in this document for an example of message assessment using the *Average message score* calculation method.

- c. If you want the calculation to treat unassessed messages as if those messages had received a score of zero, select *Include non-scored messages in the calculated score as zero*. By default, unassessed messages are ignored when calculating the topic score and we recommend you leave that check box unselected.


6. Click *Save* to complete the process.

When you return to the *Forums & Topics List*, you will see the  **Assess Topic** icon next to the topic.

Assessing users

Once a topic is configured for assessment, you can assess users from two places: inside the topic while reading messages, or on the *Assess Topic* page. Assessing users from within the topic lets you read users' messages in context among related messages from other users. Assessing users from the *Assess Topic* page enables you to see topics scores for all users and view all of a user's messages together on one screen.

To assess users from within a topic

1. Enter the topic and click the  **Assess** button at the top of the message in the *Grid Style* message list or [[Assess](#)] link below the header in the *Reading Style* message list.
2. If the topic is set up to score by topic:

- a. Enter the score in the *Topic Score* box.
- b. Check the *Graded* box to send the score to the grade book.
- c. Click the *Save* button.

Topic Score


Forum: Message Assessment

Topic: Grade Each Post

User: Stout Student

Messages: 3 message(s) posted by this user


Topic Score: / 10

Graded 

3. If the topic is set up to score by message:

- a. Enter the score in the *Message Score* box. On this screen, you can also see the *Score Calculation* method you selected, the *Calculated Topic Score* to this point, and how many messages are included in the calculation.
- b. Check the *Graded* box if you are ready to send the score to the grade book.
Note: Users will be able to see this grade immediately, so you may want to leave this box unchecked until all of a user's messages within this topic have been assessed. You can also wait until the discussion is finished, go to the *Assess Topic* page (discussed below) and click the *Mark All Graded* button to send everything to the grade book at once.
- c. Click the *Save* button.

Message Score

Forum: Message Assessment
 Topic: Grade Each Post
 Message Author: Stout Student
 Message Score: / 10 


Calculated Topic Score

 [Hide Calculated Topic Score](#)

Score Calculation: Average message score
 Calculated Topic Score: 7.00 / 10 (average score from 3 message(s))
 Graded 

To assess users from the Assess Topic page

1. On the main discussions page, click the  **Assess Topic** icon for the topic you want to assess.

Note: If the *Score* column is empty on the *Assess Topic* page, click  Display Options on the action bar, select *Score Value* and/or *Percentage*, and click *Save*.

2. Do one of the following:
 - a. On the *Users* tab, click the *Topic Score* link beneath the name of the user you want to assess (shown below), or
 - b. Click the *Assessments* tab, then click the name of the user you want to assess.

Assess Topic by User

View By: Groups:

Search For: [Show Search Options](#)

users per page

First Name, Last Name	Score	Graded
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Stout Student		
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Topic Score		
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- / 10 (0%)





Tip: On either tab, you can search for specific users by typing all or part of a user's name or user ID in the *Search For* field and clicking *Search*. You can also filter the view to display members of a specific group or section using the *View By* drop-down list.


3. In the pop-up window, do one of the following, depending on the type of assessment:
 - a. If you are evaluating the entire topic holistically, enter the score for this user in the *Topic Score* field.
 - b. If you are evaluating individual messages, enter a score for one or more messages in the *Score* column at the bottom of the page.

Topic Score Details


Forum: Message Assessment
 Topic: Grade Each Post
 User: Stout Student
 Messages: 3 message(s) posted by this user (3 scored)
 Score Calculation: Average message score
 Calculated Topic Score: 7 / 10 (average score from 3 message(s))

Graded 

Sort By: Message Date 

20  per page

Message	Score
Message 1 - Oct 7, 2008 11:17 AM This is my first message in this category. How am I doing so far? I'm editing this to show I'll get a grade of 9.	9 /10
Message 2 - Oct 7, 2008 11:18 AM On my second post, I'll get a grade of 7.	7 /10
Message 3 - Oct 7, 2008 11:19 AM I'm getting tired. I only get 5 on this one.	5 /10

20  per page

Note: If the user's messages are displayed across multiple pages, be sure to save the page before navigating to another page of messages. Any new message scores entered will be lost if you change pages without saving.

- d. Check the *Graded* box if you are ready to send the score to the grade book, or wait until all messages have been graded and click the *Mark All Graded* button to send everything to the grade book at once.
4. Click *Save* to complete the process.
5. Click *Close* to exit the pop up window.