

Using the discussion tool: threaded discussion, blogs and journals

Step-by-step guide for students

For Blackboard Vista 4.x

Discussions refer to a number of forms of online communication. The most common is a bulletin board that allows participants to post messages and responses to form a threaded discussion. The term 'threaded' indicates that a message and all of its related replies are displayed together. This has long been as an essential communication tool.

The discussion tool gives you the opportunity to have a discussion with your instructor and other students electronically – at a time and place that suits you.



Types of discussions


The type of discussion available for you to access will depend on those chosen by your lecturer. There are three types of discussions:

- **Threaded discussions** – Users post and reply to messages. Replies that are associated with the same post are grouped together, creating message threads that can be expanded and collapsed.
- **Blogs** - A blog allows you to post a chronological series of entries on a particular topic. Other students can then add comments to any blog entry.
- **Journals** – A journal topic is a place for your own writing. Journals can be kept private between the student and the instructor or shared with the class.

Access a discussion

Access a Discussion by clicking on:

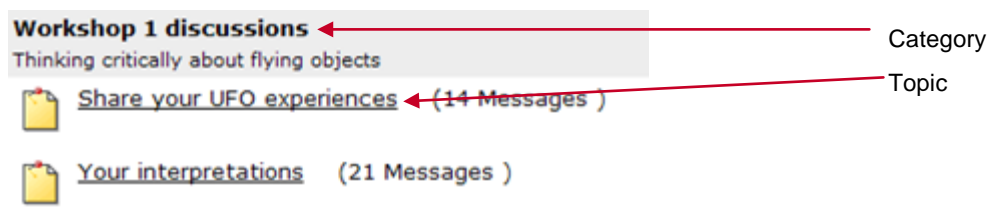
- **Discussions** under **Course Tools**  (to access all discussions for this course)
- a discussion icon on a page within your course (to access a particular discussion topic)  [Library discussion](#)
- or a link within a learning module (to access a particular discussion topic)




Module 1
 1. [Introduction](#)
 2. [UFO discussion](#) ←

Categories, topics, messages

1. When you access Discussions under Course Tools, you will see the discussion messages are organized into categories and topics.



Workshop 1 discussions ← Category
 Thinking critically about flying objects
 [Share your UFO experiences](#) ← (14 Messages) Topic
 [Your interpretations](#) (21 Messages)

- Click on the topic to view the related messages.

Click to expand or collapse message thread

Click to display all messages in this thread

<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject	Messages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Welcome to the science of UFOlogy! (New)	11 (11 Unread)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attached: your UFOlogist's access pass	4 (3 Unread)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hello from Bernadina	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encounters of a rainbow kind (New)	

Mark as Read
 Mark as Unread
 Create Printable View

Controlling what is displayed

Pages

If there are too many messages in a discussion topic, the messages will be displayed on separate pages. The page controls are in the bottom right corner of the discussion window.

Page: 1 (1-5) next page edit paging

drop down to choose page next page edit paging

Click on the *Edit Paging* icon to change the number of messages that display on a page.

All and Unread

All Unread

These two options are available at the top right of the discussion window. You can control whether you view all messages or only those you haven't read. This option is useful when there are several messages to scroll through. Click on the appropriate option to select it.

Threaded and Unthreaded

Threaded Unthreaded

Like **All** and **Unread** these options are located at the top right of the **Discussion** window. They allow you to view the discussion messages either in order of posting (unthreaded) or by grouping related messages according to the history of replies (threaded).


Open a discussion message

- Click on the *subject link* to open a discussion message.

Subject

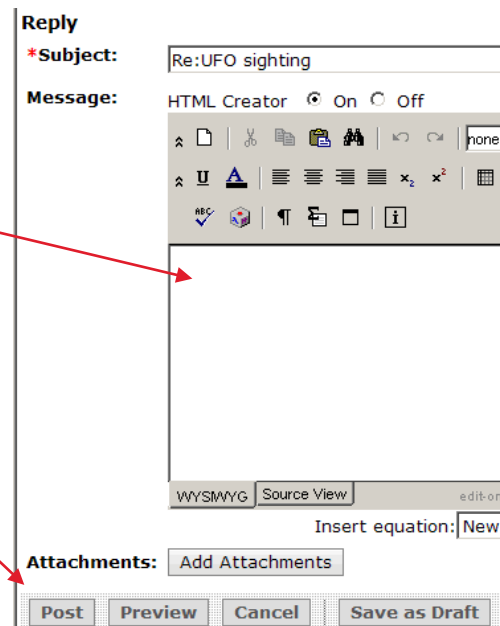
Welcome to the science of UFOlogy! (New)

- Click on the *Expand* icon to view replies to this message (the thread).
or

- Click on the *Display Complete Thread*  icon to see a printable version of all messages in the thread.

Reply to a discussion message

- Follow step 1 above to open a message
- Click **Reply**
- Type your reply
- Click **Post**.



Reply

***Subject:** Re:UFO sighting

Message: HTML Creator On Off

WYSIWYG Source View edit-on

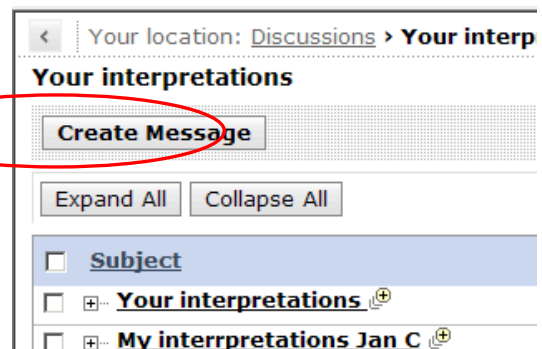
Insert equation: New

Attachments: Add Attachments

Post Preview Cancel Save as Draft

Create a new discussion message

- From within a discussion topic, click on **Create Message**.




< Your location: Discussions > Your interp


Your interpretations

Create Message

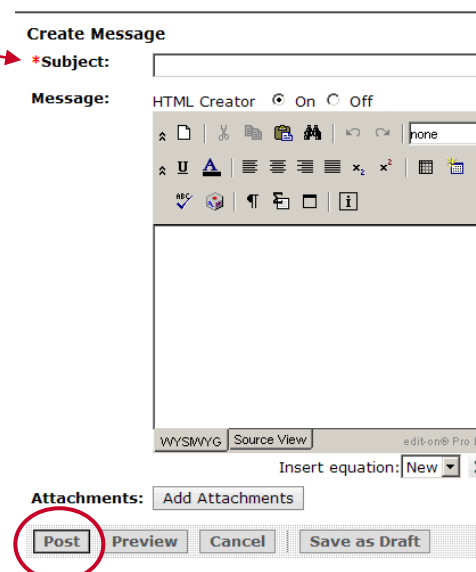
Expand All Collapse All

Subject

+... Your interpretations 

+... My interpretations Jan C 

- Type a **Subject** for your discussion
- Type your message
- Click on **Post**



Create Message

***Subject:**

Message: HTML Creator On Off

WYSIWYG Source View edit-on Pro 1

Insert equation: New

Attachments: Add Attachments

Post Preview Cancel Save as Draft

Note: if you are writing a long message, it is recommended that you type the message into a word processor and then copy the text and paste into the message box. Using this method makes it easier for you to read through your document and check the spelling before posting.

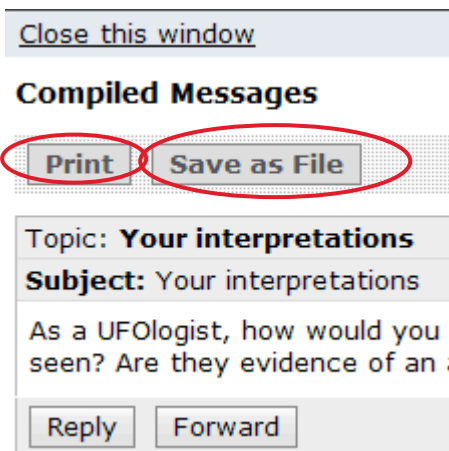
Create a printable view of discussion messages

Create Printable View allows you to put your discussion messages together into a file that is easy to read, can be saved and printed.

- Put a tick beside the messages you want to compile and click **Create Printable View**.



- The messages will be displayed in a list, with the option to **Print** or **Save**.



References:

Designer and Instructor Reference: Application Pack 2 for Blackboard Learning System – Vista Enterprise License (Release 4) 2006 Blackboard Inc

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