

# Preparing a discussion post

In this video, you'll learn about how to prepare a post for a course discussion board.

## Objectives

By the end of it, you'll be able to:

- Recognize characteristics of the discussion board venue to be strategic about how you participate, as well as
- Use tactics to work with ideas from weekly readings and develop a clear focus for your discussion post.

## What is a venue?

Let's start by asking: what is a venue?

A venue is a place where scholars share ideas. There are many different venues out there, including academic journals, social media, and magazines, to name a few. These venues all have their own characteristics and when you break them down you can make them work to your advantage.

So, what are the characteristics of a course discussion board? There are some key questions to consider.

Who is the audience? It's important to write with your readers in mind. For example, if your classmates are your audience, you can assume they'll be familiar with a required reading and don't need a summary.

What is the tone? Your discussion post should sound like you, conversing respectfully with your peers and instructor. So use the first person and remember that, as the APA style guide puts it, you should aim to present your ideas in a non-combative manner.

How long does it take to contribute? The answer depends on specific assignment requirements. For a 500 word post, you might spend an hour or two planning and editing before posting.

What kind of knowledge is shared? Posts for course discussion boards should engage with ideas from different sources, which can include research literature, textbooks, newspapers, videos, and more. These are usually assigned materials, but you might decide to include additional sources on your own. Of course, you always need to include in-text citations and a list of references.

## Where do you fit into the conversation?

If you're familiar with some of the conversations going on about a topic you'll be able to synthesize ideas from different sources and respond with ideas of your own.

When you're considering what you want to write about in your discussion post, remember that it's better to have a central focus and address a few ideas in depth than to address many ideas at a surface level.

## Tactics for preparing your post

Tactics to help you synthesize ideas and find a central focus to structure your post around include:

- Active reading: Take notes, re-read, and write down any questions that come up.
- Compare and contrast: Consider how different researchers approach a similar theme or topic from different angles.
- Respond to quotes: Organize your thoughts by choosing specific quotes from readings and responding to them.
- Apply to practice: How can you relate a professional experience to ideas you encounter in readings?
- Plan and draft: Start with an outline. Then, prepare a first draft and edit to make sure ideas flow well.

Try using one of these tactics the next time you work on a discussion post!

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