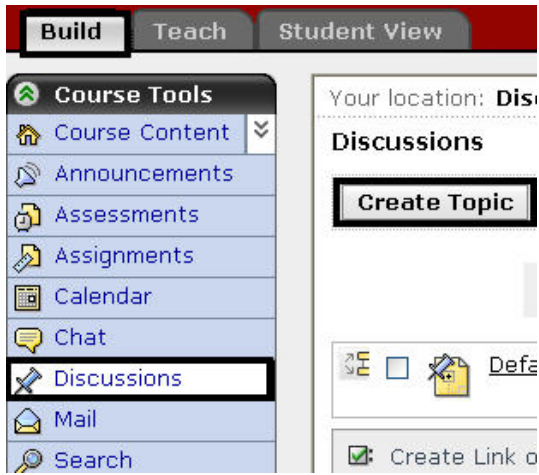


Creating a Journal Discussion Topic

When using the Discussions tool you can create a journal topic as a way for students to express their own writing. The journal topic can be kept private between the student and the instructor or shared with others in the course.

To create a journal topic, start on the Build tab, select **Discussions** under Course Tools, and click **Create Topic**.



To create a journal topic for your course, select the **Journal Topic** radio button.

Create Discussion Topic

What type of discussion topic

 **Threaded topic.**

Create a threaded topic
are associated with the :
collapsed.

 **Blog topic.**

Create a collaborative b
particular topic. Participa

 **Journal topic.**

Create a journal topic to
Student and the Section

To create a Journal Topic, you will need to decide the following:

- Title, Description, and Item Visibility
- Category
- Grading
- Peer Review
- Topic Behavior

Title, Description, and Item Visibility

Create Journal Topic

*Title:

Description:

In your own words talk about what Cognitive Psychology is.

Use HTML

Item Visibility: Show Item Hide Item

- Choose a title for the journal topic. The title should be descriptive of the journal topic so students will automatically know what it is by looking at the title. One way to do this is by including the word "Journal" in the title.
- Then you will enter a description. This description is very helpful so students will know what they are supposed to write about in the journal. This is where you can add prompts for the students.
- Select whether to show or hide the topic to the students. This will allow you to create your journal but not release it until you are ready. If you hide the topic, select the **Show Item** radio button when you want to allow students to view it.

Category

Category: Topics can be organized into categories.

Select Category:

Note: The *Category* function only appears when you create a new topic.

- To add a topic to an existing category, select the category name.
- To create a new category, select **New Category** and enter a name and description.

The *Category* option allows you to group your topics together within the discussion area, which makes it easier for you and your students to find topics. If topics are not put into a specific category, they will be filed under "Uncategorized." Alternatively, if you do not have any categories for your topics, the "Uncategorized" section will not show up.

Grading

You can also grade blog entries. To do this, decide how you want your grading set up.

Select grading options:

Grading

Topic is not gradable

Allow the topic to be graded

Numeric grade: Out of

Alphanumeric grade

Grade by Grading Form:

A column is automatically created for this topic in Grade Book

Grade Book column title:

Release grade to Students in *My Grades*

- **Topic is not gradable** - you will not have an option to give a grade through the tool.
- **Graded** - you have the option to give a numeric (include how much it is worth) or alphanumeric grade or use a grading form. Remember, if you use alphanumeric, this grade will not be able to be included within a calculation. The grading form will be considered a numeric column and will be set up ahead of time, so you and the students are aware of what is expected within the journal.
- You can create a different *Grade Book* column title than the title of the journal. This will allow you to shorten the name of the entry to fit within the *Grade Book* column.
- The last option under *Grading* is to decide if you want to release the grade to students. This column will not be visible until there is a grade in it even if you release it when you create it. If you do not release it when you create it, you will have to manually enter the *Grade Book* and release it when you are ready.

Peer Review

Another option when creating journal topics is to decide if you want students to *peer review* each others' posts. Choose this if you want students to learn how to develop or sustain a discussion topic.

 **Peer Review** (Expand this area to see more options.)

Do not enable peer review in this topic

Allow Students to review messages using a simple rating scale

Allow Students to review messages using a grading form

If you do not want students to use peer review, select the first radio button, **Do not enable peer review in this topic**. Students will not be able to view topics posted by other students. Select this to make private entries between you and individual students.


If you decide you want the students to peer review their classmates' journal entries and replies, select from the following Peer Review Options:

- Allow students to use a rating scale and include comments when reviewing a topic. The simple rating scale includes: needs improvement, below average, average, above average, and excellent. This can be changed if you want to specify another scale.
- Allow students to review using a grading form. You must design a grading form representative of what and how you want students to review posts. The grading form must be created before selecting this option.

Topic Behavior Options

The last option is to decide how students are going to interact.

Select from the following Topic Behavior Options:

 **Topic Behavior Options** (Expand this area to see more options.)

Student Posting Rules

- Students can post messages and reply to messages
- Students can post messages but cannot reply to messages
- Students can reply to messages but cannot post messages
- Students can edit their messages after posting them

Lock this topic for Students (Section Instructors can post in a locked topic)

Author Identification

- Authors are identified by user names
- Authors are anonymous to Students

Journal Privacy

- Private: entries are visible to the author and Section Instructors only
- Public: entries are visible to all Students and Section Instructors

- **Student Posting Rules** - choose how students post and reply to messages. You can allow students to post and reply, just post new messages but not reply, or just reply but not post messages. You can also decide if they can edit their own messages. If students are

allowed to edit, you may lose a great learning experience of what the student posts first before going back and changing it.

- **Author Identification** - select this radio button if students are identified or anonymous when posting entries. Be careful with anonymity — students are already somewhat anonymous even if their names are displayed.
- **Journal Privacy** - decide what kind of journal entries you want — private or public.

Once you click **Save** you will have a journal topic under the Discussions tool that you can release to students.