

DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

A discussion board post substitutes for in-class discussion. On average, posts range between 250-400 words and respond to a prompt that reflects on the course reading or study materials for the week.

***Pro Tip:** Compose your post in a Word document rather than the Blackboard text box, so you can save a copy of your work and avoid the stress of possible Blackboard glitches.

Note: **ALWAYS** consult your course syllabus or email your professor for specific guidelines in discussion posts. Each professor likely has their own requirements for word count, formatting, and tone.

HOW TO WRITE A DISCUSSION BOARD POST

1. **Read and understand the materials for the week-** You'll need to understand what the prompt discusses. You cannot answer a question well about something you haven't read.
2. **Answer the prompt simply** – Directly answer the question that the prompt asks. If your prompt asks more than one question, make sure you cover every point! This gives you a starting place for your ideas and helps you form a thesis statement.
3. **Form your thesis** – Decide your main claim and the reasons for that idea. See our handout on “Thesis Statements” for more help. For discussion posts, your thesis can be your first or second sentence.
4. **Support your thesis** - Use source material combined with your commentary to support your points adequately. Use quotations as needed, but keep them short. See our “Guide to Paraphrasing Correctly” for help with paraphrasing.
5. **Format Your Post** - Most posts will introduce and conclude with a sentence or two instead of a formal introduction or conclusion paragraph. Additionally, you will most likely **not** need a header or a cover page, but **you should still use proper citations!**

APPLICATION EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE PROMPT: Please read pages 1-61 (end at the section break on p. 61) of *Home* by Marilyn Robinson. In 250-300 words, please answer the following questions: What does "home" mean to Robert Boughton and his children? With whom do they feel most at home?

1. **Read and understand** pages 1-61 in *Home* by Marilyn Robinson
2. **The prompt asks** students to answer two main questions based on the reading. Answer the two prompt questions in the opening sentences.

For instance, the first sentence could answer the first question: "For Robert Boughton and his children, 'home' means reconnection."

3. Next **include your thesis** for the entire post. This could be your second sentence.

Main Claim of the post: "Jack and Glory both need to reconnect with their father and with their childhood in order to feel at home."

4. **Provide supporting ideas** for your thesis from the reading.

Supporting quote that shows Glory's need to reconnect: Robinson writes, "Did she choose to be there, in that house, in Gilead? No, she certainly did not. Her father needed looking after, and she had to be somewhere, like every other human being on earth" (37).

5. You would **format this post** with MLA citations since it's for an English program. Follow the Style Guide (APA, MLA, or Turabian depending on your major).

In addition, you could organize your post by using a pattern of direct answer, support, and then commentary through the rest of the post. Your direct responses would be your topic sentences. This method allows students to meet the entire prompt and keep their posts organized.

PRACTICE NOW