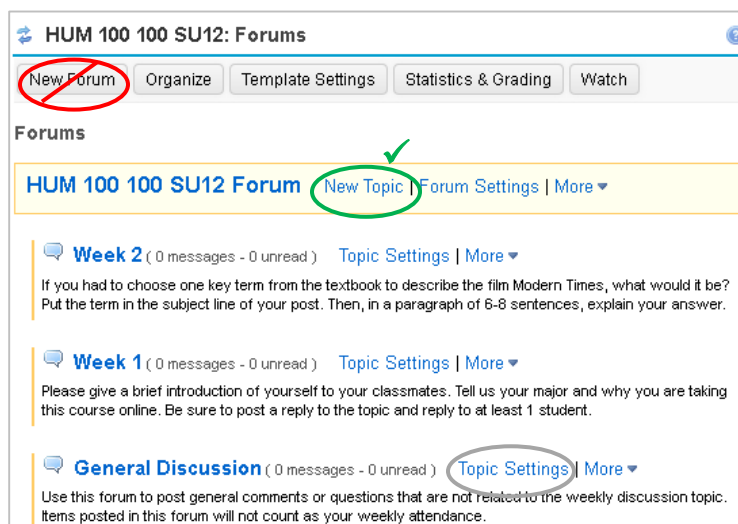


## One Sakai Forum, Many Topics

Instructors (especially those who teach online) are accustomed to creating a new discussion area for each week of the course. To accomplish this in Sakai, we recommend that you create a new **“TOPIC”** for each week. Why?

Save time! After you add the Forum tool, a Forum will be generated for your course. Plus, a generic Topic will be created. After you add Topics, you and your students will post in your topics; as no one can post in a Forum. Why create forums you don’t need?



### Add a Forum to Sakai:

1. To enable the Forums tool:  
Go to **Site Info > Edit Tools**, select the **Forums** tool, click **Continue**, then **Finish**.
2. On the main course menu, click the **Forums** button to go into the Forums area.
3. In the *Forums* area, you’ll see that Sakai has created an initial course forum based on your course name (such as “*ENG 111 190 SU12 Forum*”).
4. The initial course forum already has one **TOPIC** in it called *General Discussion*. This is a place for students to ask general questions about the course or engage in discussion not related to specific course content. Instructors can delete or hide the General Discussion topic if you don’t want students to use it.
5. Within the initial course forum, we recommend that you add a new **TOPIC** for each week (or for each major class discussion).

### Add Topics to your course forum:

Beside your Course Forum, click on **New Topic**. These are the recommended Topic settings:

1. **Topic Title (required)**
2. **Short Description (optional)**  
The short description must be 255 characters or less and is shown under the topic title.
3. **(Full) Description (recommended)**  
The (full) description can be very long and the text can be *formatted*. This is a good location for your topic questions; it replaces the need to create an instructor post. **Note:** Your students must click on the **View Full Description** link to see the (full) description.
4. **Add attachments (optional)**. You could attach your discussion grading rubric, but your students must click on the **View Full Description** link to see your attachments.

5. **Topic Posting settings** (optional):

- **Lock Topic** (*Students can't post, but students can view topic postings*)
  - Select this option *after* the due date has passed if you would like to allow students to *read posts* after the due date. Students will not be able to post when the topic is locked.
  - **Note:** You must also change the **Availability to Show Immediately**, or students will only be able to see the posts between the open and close dates.
- **Moderate Topic** (not recommended)  
Posts must be approved by a moderator before they will display.
- **Require user to post before reading** (new)
  - Students must post to the topic first before viewing any other posts.
  - As shown below: In the Topic, students are only provided a *Start a Conversation* link, and are given an informational message to post to the topic.
  - **Note:** If you use this feature, you must post your questions in the (Full) description, or provide the student questions in Lessons or Resources.



6. **Availability**

- **Show immediately**
- **Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide).**

7. **Mark All Messages in Conversation Read** (not recommended)

8. **Grading settings**

- **Gradebook Item** (select a gradebook item from the drop down list)
  - Select this option if you would like to record your forum topic grades in the Gradebook. Be sure to set up your manual forum topic Gradebook items first, but they can be added after you've created your Topic.
  - For more info about setting up your Gradebook, see the Gradebook handout <http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/images/4/45/Gradebook.pdf>

9. Click **Save Draft** or **Save** when you are ready to post your topic.

## Add Posts and Replies in your Topic:

After you click on a *Topic link*, above the name of the Topic, click on the **Start a New Conversation** button to create a new post.

1. After starting a post, students can see the short description the instructor has provided. Students need to click on the *View Full Description* link, to see questions or instructions in the (Full) Description.
2. **Conversation Title (required).** The title is really the subject line that will be shown in the Topic area. Encourage students to create descriptive titles, to make it easy to find their posts.
3. **Message (recommended).** Students can use the Text Editor to format text, select text and add a link, add images and tables, and proofread their spelling.
4. **Add Attachments (optional).** If students have problems posting (due to computer issues), recommend students create a Word document to store their posts in.
  - To add their document to their post, students click on the *Add Attachments* button.
  - Beside Upload local file, students then click on *Browse* or *Choose File* to find their file.
  - After selecting their file, and clicking open, the students will see a list of “Items to Attach” at the top. Students can select more files. Students must click the *Continue* button to attach their files and return to the post.
  - Back in the post, under “Attachments”, students will see the name of their document and can click on “Add more attachments” if needed.
5. Click **Post**.
6. Students will be returned to the Topic area and will see under *Conversation*, their post title (subject); under *Author*, their name; and under *Date*; the submission date/time.

**Note:** If the content of your posts are displayed and not just their subjects, at the top, beside “Start a New Conversation”, click on the button **Display Subject Only**.

7. **To reply to another post:** *Don’t use the Browser back button at any time-students will experience errors when replying!* In the **Topic**, under *Conversation*, click on the *post title (subject)*.
8. To the right of the student name/date, click on the **Reply** link. Add a Message and/or add Attachments. Click **Post**.
9. Students will see the initial post they replied to, as well as their own reply.
10. **To return to the Topic:** *Don’t use the Browser back button at any time-students will experience errors when replying!* Students should look above the top post, and click on their Topic name. To find the Topic name, it is displayed beside the word Forums / Forum name / *Topic name*.

**Tip:** By default, both students and instructors can get a lot of emails about conversations they contribute to. Follow these steps, to [turn off the flood of emails](#).

## Sakai Forum Grading

### Grade your Student Topic postings

After the Discussion Topic due date and time, you can grade your student Topic postings and replies.

The screenshot shows the 'Forums' section of a course site. The main heading is 'My Practice Course-1-31 Forum' with links for 'New Topic', 'Forum Settings', and 'More'. Below this, there are three topic entries: 'Week 3', 'Week 2 Topic', and 'Week 1 Topic'. Each entry shows message counts and unread status. The 'Week 1 Topic' entry is selected, and its 'More' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Duplicate Topic', 'Grade', and 'Delete Topic'. A red circle highlights the 'Grade' option. A red box with the text 'Not Available due to Open date setting' is overlaid on the 'Week 3' topic.

**Step 1:** In your course site, click on **Forums**.

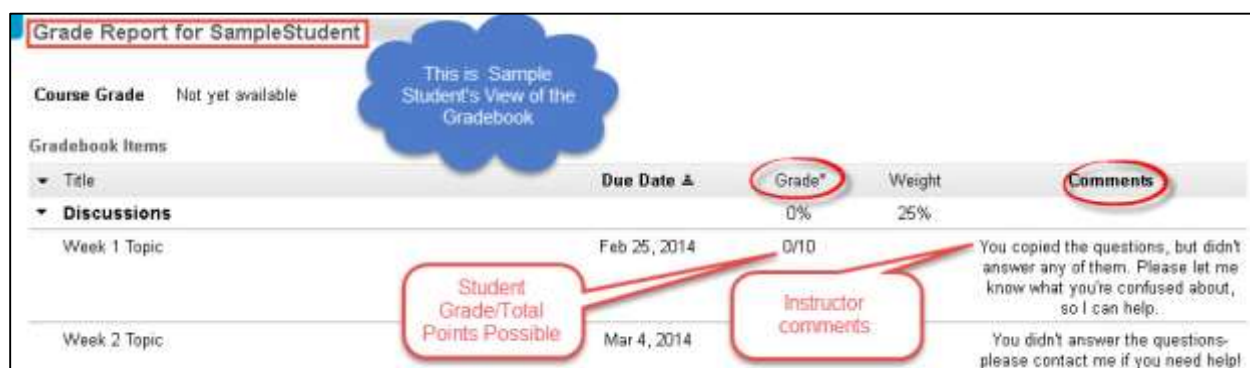
**Step 2:** To the right of your Topic title, click on the **More** link, then click on **Grade**

**Step 3:** You'll see the Topic Grading area, such as the sample below.

- 1) Click on a **Student Name** that has authored (submitted) a posting. **A pop-up box will display** the student's postings and replies, with dates and time stamps.
- 2) You'll also see the number of posts the student Read and didn't read (Unread), and the Percent of the Topic postings the student read.
- 3) You'll see a box for adding your **grades** for each student. Note: You'll see N/A beside the instructors or TAs names.
- 4) To add comments, click on the column title **Show Comments**. Text boxes will appear to type instructor comments into.
- 5) Click on **Submit Grades** regularly-they are not saved automatically!

Name	Authored	Read	Unread	Percent Read	Week 1 Topic (10.0 points possible)	Show Comments
Durham, SampleStudent (dtccstudent_s)	Details	0	0	2	0%	--Hidden--
	Details	1	1	1	50%	N/A
SampleStudent	Details	1	2	0	100%	--Hidden--
	Details	0	0	2	0%	N/A
						Submit Grades Cancel Changes

After students click on the **Gradebook** link on the course site main menu, they can see their Discussion posting grade and instructor comments.



Title	Due Date	Grade	Weight	Comments
<b>Discussions</b>				
Week 1 Topic	Feb 25, 2014	0/10	25%	You copied the questions, but didn't answer any of them. Please let me know what you're confused about, so I can help.
Week 2 Topic	Mar 4, 2014			You didn't answer the questions- please contact me if you need help!

### After Forum/Topic Grading

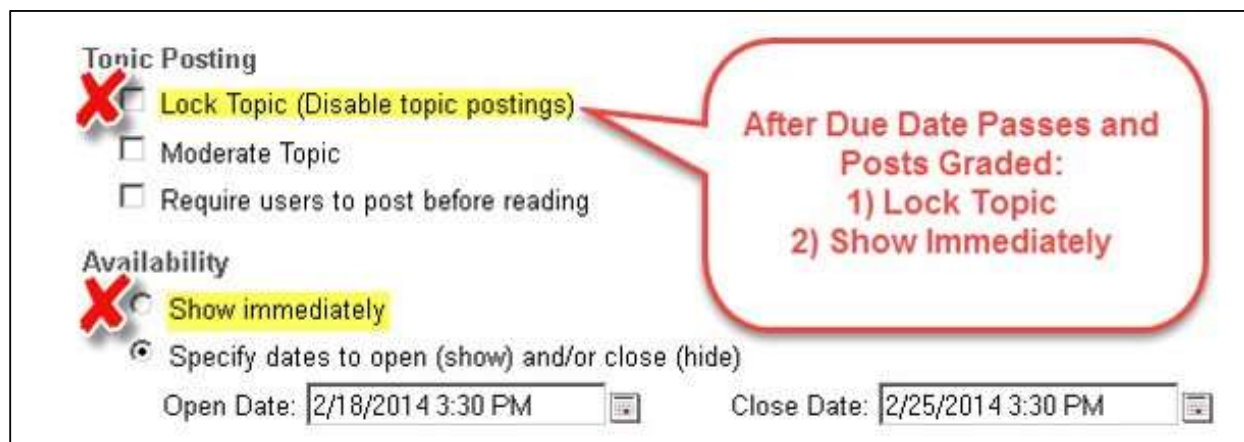
How to Show a Topic, but disable student posting

**Step 1:** After grading posts, for the Topic, click on **Settings**

**Step 2:** For Topic Posting, click beside **Lock Topic** to **DISABLE** student posting, and

**Step 3:** Change availability to: **Show Immediately**: it allows students to VIEW posts, otherwise, the open and close dates will still apply, and students won't be able to view the posts

**Step 4:** Click **Save** to update settings.



**Topic Posting**

☒ Lock Topic (Disable topic postings)

☐ Moderate Topic

☐ Require users to post before reading

**Availability**

☒ Show immediately

☐ Specify dates to open (show) and/or close (hide)

Open Date: 2/18/2014 3:30 PM

Close Date: 2/25/2014 3:30 PM

### Discussion Forum Resources

**How do you create effective discussion questions? Where are good examples?**

Be sure to check out page 5 of the University of Oregon's Discussion Board handout, titled "[Generating and Facilitating Engaging and Effective Online Discussions](#)" which provides a handy chart for coming up with questions and example questions instructor have used.