

## Tips for Creating Discussion Forum Prompts

When you are writing a prompt, always start with the learning outcomes you intend to assess. Make sure your prompt links to your learning outcomes so the discussion links to your course content and aligns with your assessment.

1. When you write a prompt or topic for a thread (discussion forum), make sure it is not too broad. If you are teaching a first-year course, make sure that you are extremely specific.
  - a. This will help keep the discussion forum on track.
2. Consider 'scaffolding' your prompts.
  - a. For instance, you may start with an idea you want students to define and discuss for the first prompt. Then, you can provide reading and lecture material on the same topic and ask your students to respond to another prompt that builds on the first prompt, but is more detailed.
3. When you create a prompt, you may want to provide students multiple leading questions to answer. Do you want them to respond to each question or choose which questions to answer?
4. Consider linking discussion forums to other assignments and activities in your class. You can create a space for sharing and providing feedback to other activities.
  - a. For example, you may want students to post an essay they have completed in the course, read 2 of their peers' papers, and provide specific feedback/ build connections between their work.
5. Prompts should be open-ended questions and have the potential for **different answers**.
  - a. Avoid fact-based questions and loaded, opinion questions that may cause friction between students.
  - b. Ask students to provide a rationale, description, defense, or reason for their response.
  - c. Ask students to reflect on prompts related to their personal and professional experiences.
6. Give students choice in what to answer.