Discussions: Finding and Reading Messages

Once a discussion begins, new messages can come in very quickly. To help you keep on top of things, new messages are identified in a number of places. On your course homepage, the Updates widget lists the total number of unread messages for all discussion topics in your course.

On the main Discussions page, the number of unread messages appears beneath each topic. To see only topics with new messages, select Topics with Unread from the Display drop-down list.

If you have the Discussions List pane visible you can see topics with unread messages in bold.

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Searching for Messages in Discussions

1. Enter the topic you want to search.
2. If the Search For field is not visible at the top of the message list, click Show Search at the top of the page.
3. Enter the terms you want to find in the Search For field and click Search.
4. To perform an advanced search:
   - Click the Show Search Options link to the right of the Search button.
   - Specify additional search criteria from the options displayed beneath the Search For field.
   - Click the Search button.

To see all messages again, click Clear Search at the top or bottom of the message list.

Reading Messages in Discussions

There are two ways of viewing the messages inside a topic using the Grid Style message list or the Reading Style message list. See Changing your settings to learn how to change your view.

In the Grid Style message list, a list of messages appears at the top of the page, showing the subject, author, and date for each message. Click a message’s subject to read the message; the full message appears either at the bottom of the screen or in a new window, depending on your personal settings.
In the **Reading Style** message list, the full text of every message is always displayed. Click the **Mark Read** link below a message’s header to tell the system when you’ve read a message.

In either style, use the **View** drop-down list at the top right of the page to switch between **Threaded** view, where messages are grouped with their replies, and one of the **Unthreaded views (All Messages, Unread Only, Flagged Only)** where you can sort messages any way you like.

**Marking a Discussion Message as Read or Unread**

If you are using the **Grid Style** message list, messages are automatically marked as read when you open them (depending on your site’s configuration), but if you are using the **Reading Style** message list or you print messages to read them you will need to manually mark messages as read to indicate to the system that the message is no longer new. In some cases you might also want to manually mark a message as unread (for example, if you open the message from the **Grid Style** message list but do not finish reading it.)

**Mark a Message Read or Unread**

Do one of the following:

- In the **Grid Style** message list, select one or more messages from the list and click the **Mark Read** or **Mark Unread** icon at the top of the list.

- In the **Reading Style** message list, click the **Mark Read** or **Mark Unread** link below the message header.

- In either view, to mark all messages in the topic read click **Mark All Read** on the action bar.

**Flagging a Message in Discussions**

Flagging messages is a good way to mark a message if you want to read it again later or monitor replies.

To flag or un-flag a message, click the **Not Flagged - Click to Flag** this item or **Flagged - Click to Unflag** this item icon next to the message’s subject. You can quickly find your flagged messages by selecting “**Flagged Only**” from the **View** drop-down list at the top right of the message list.

**Printing Messages in Discussions**

If you are using the **Grid Style** message list, you can view messages in a printable format and send the messages to your printer.

1. In the **Grid Style** message list, select the messages you want to print.
2. Click the **View Selected Messages as Printable** icon at the top or bottom of the list.
3. Click the Print button.