

# Discussions in Canvas

## A Guide for Educators

Created by the Academic Commons at Thomas Jefferson University

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Discussions in Canvas provide a forum for communication between participants in a course. They can be used for general discussion or Q&A over a term or can be structured as graded assignments in response to particular prompts. For an overview of Discussions, check out the [Discussions Overview Video](#).

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### Creating a Discussion

- To create a new Discussion, click the **Discussions** link in the Course Navigation menu.
  - ❖ Select the **+ Discussion** button, then give your Discussion a title and add content using the Rich Content Editor.
    - The Rich Content Editor is the box where you enter and format text, videos, images, and links. For more information, see the [Rich Content Editor](#) video.
- Control Discussion Options below the Rich Content Editor
  - ❖ **New Feature:** Anonymous Discussions allow you to select whether students are completely anonymous (**full**), can choose if they want to be anonymous (**partial**), or not anonymous at all (**off**).
  - ❖ By default, Discussions allow two levels of participation in new posts and replies to existing posts. You can create a threaded discussion with the option for nested replies in **Options**.
  - ❖ One useful option is the ability to prevent students from seeing other replies until they have made their own post.
  - ❖ In the **Options** section, you can choose to make the discussion a graded assignment. **Please note:** you cannot mark anonymous discussions as graded.
- Be sure to save your work!
  - ❖ To save and publish your Discussion, making it visible to course participants, use the **Save & Publish** button.

For a walk-through with step-by-step screenshots, see the [How do I create a discussion as an instructor?](#) guide.

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### Creating a Graded Discussion

- Discussions can be used as graded assignments in a course.
  - ❖ Make a Discussion graded in the **Options** section when you add it to your course.

- Once you select the graded option, you'll be able to add details like points possible, who the Discussion is assigned to, and the due date.
  - Graded Discussions can be assigned to individual students or groups by using the 'this is a group discussion' option.

For a walkthrough with step-by-step screenshots, see the [How do I assign a graded discussion to everyone in a course?](#) guide.

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## Using Multimedia in Discussions

- Canvas Discussions offers multimedia opportunities to further engage learners in the discussions.
  - ❖ Using the Rich Content Editor, students and instructors can upload already recorded audio and video files into Discussion posts or record directly into the Rich Content Editor if your computer has a microphone and/or webcam.
  - ❖ We recommend that students and instructors consider using [Canvas Studio](#) to record and upload multimedia files because files created and stored in Studio do not contribute to a course's file storage limit.

For a walkthrough with step-by-step screenshots, see the [How do I record media using the Rich Content Editor as an instructor?](#) guide. (These instructions are comparable to recording video and also show where a pre-recorded video could be uploaded.)

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## New Features in Discussions

- **Split Screen View:** Selecting this feature at the top of your discussion post will split your screen and allow you to view replies and their threads while also being able to view the original discussion post.
- **Quote:** Users can quote other replies as part of their discussion replies.
- **Mention:** Users can be mentioned directly in a reply by using the **@ symbol** and selecting the name of another member of the course in the drop-down menu that appears.

For more information on these changes check out the [Discussion Redesign Video](#), [Discussion Redesign: Additional Functionality](#), and step-by-step walkthroughs in the [Canvas Redesign Instructor Guides](#)

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## Canvas Help

- **Jefferson contracted for 24/7 live agent support for all Jefferson community members**
  - ❖ Call the Canvas Support Hotline: (267) 666-6253
  - ❖ Chat with live with Canvas support: [cases.canvaslms.com/liveagentchat](https://cases.canvaslms.com/liveagentchat)
- Visit Jefferson's Canvas website: [canvas.jefferson.edu](https://canvas.jefferson.edu)

Email: [EdTech.Support@lists.jefferson.edu](mailto:EdTech.Support@lists.jefferson.edu) | Phone: 215-503-2830 | Website: [academiccommons.jefferson.edu](https://academiccommons.jefferson.edu)

- Campus Specific Support: Available Monday – Friday 8AM – 6PM
  - ❖ Center City: Contact the Academic Commons' Educational Technology Support team at [EdTech.Support@lists.jefferson.edu](mailto:EdTech.Support@lists.jefferson.edu) or call (215) 503-2830.
  - ❖ East Falls: Contact the East Falls Help Desk at [EFHelpdesk@jefferson.edu](mailto:EFHelpdesk@jefferson.edu) or call (215) 951-4648.