

# Mastering Online Discussions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction to Online Discussions

**Online Discussion Boards** are the most commonly used tools to promote online learning. Traditionally only University level courses used these online learning platforms to promote student learning; however these technologies are now being adopted by high schools to provide new and exciting ways for students to learn both inside and outside of the classroom. **Online Discussion Boards**, which are also known as **Forms**, now provide students ways to learn **asynchronously** (at different times) outside of the classroom. But you might ask yourself how can learning happen at different times.

The answer to the question “*how can learning happen at different times*” is actually very simple. Learning does not have to happen in the classroom when digital technologies are used for learning. Online Discussion can occur over a period of time even if you are not in a classroom. You can respond to an article that was posted the day before, ask a classmate for clarification on something you did not understand, or share new resources you found online at anytime. All of these things can happen outside of the classroom. You might even be on a train going home for a school holiday and find something interesting online while you are on the train and decide to share it with your classmates. Learning never stops when **Online Discussion Boards** are used for **asynchronously** learning.

The ability to learn outside of the classroom is one of the primary benefits of online learning. The ability to learn **asynchronously** allows you to learn at your own rate. If you need to take extra time on a subject you find difficult, you can review material online more often taking the time you need to learn it properly. You are also able to reflect on your ideas before sharing them with the class. This extra time allows you to **reflect critically** on your own ideas so you can make insightful comments on the discussion board.

## Appropriate Writing Styles for Online Discussion Boards

Keep in mind that **Online Discussion Boards**, or **Forms**, are not **Social Media**. You may be used to many platforms such as **Personal Blogs** or **Social Media Apps** such as **WeChat**, but an **Online Discussion Board** require you to be more responsible with what, and how you **post** information.

For example, you may talk about what you are going to do on the weekend or after school on a **Social Media**, and you might also use abbreviations such as “BRT” (Be Right There); however these kinds of **posts** are inappropriate on an **Online Discussion Board**. Think about what you post online carefully. If people start **posting** irrelevant information, then it will be very hard for everyone to find important information. Your **participation** can have either a positive or negative effect on others learning.

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Always think about the following three points before making a post:

- You need to be responsible for what you **post**.
- You need to think about how your **posts** will affect others.
- Your **posts** needs to promote learning.

It is also important to use proper writing conventions when making a **post** on an **Online Discussion Board**. It is important to use complete sentence and avoid using **abbreviations**. If people cannot understand your **post** then it becomes meaningless and will negatively affect the learning of others.

- Do not use **abbreviations**. Type out the entire word unless the **abbreviation** is given to you by the teacher as part of the course vocabulary.
- Proofread your **posts** to ensure you have good spelling, grammar & punctuation.
- **Reflect critically** on what you are about to **post**. Only **post** information if it will promote in-depth learning.

## The Benefits of an Online Discussion Board

Online discussions have many benefits for learning both inside and outside of the classroom. Discussions can:

- Help build a classroom community by promoting discussions related to course topics.
- Allow students to reflect on their ideas before **posting** to the **Online Discussion Board**.
- Allow English Language Learners more time to compose their thoughts before **participating** in the discussion.
- Help students respectfully **debate** a point of view to develop a deeper understanding of a particular topic.
- Help students develop their critical thinking skills and English writing skills.

Can you think of any other reasons that an **Online Discussion Board** could be beneficial to your own learning or the learning of others? Compose your comments and, review them, and then share them on the **Online Discussion Board** for this class.

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## Online Discussion Board Problems

While online **Discussion Boards** can be a great tool for building a supportive classroom community by allowing students a way to share their ideas with their classmates; however there are some common problems that we need to avoid.

- Sometimes you may misunderstand the directions for a task, project, or discussion topic. If you are not sure what you need to do you should ask for clarification. Asking questions is always a good thing.
- Sometimes a **post** can get off topic. Always review your comments before making a **post**. If you think the **post** does not benefit the learning of others then it will not be appropriate for the **online discussion board**.
- Sometimes students do not **participate** or wait until the very last minute to make a **post** their ideas. **Posting** allows you to share ideas with your peers, and develops your English reading and writing skills.
- Sometimes you may not feel a sense of connection with your classmates. Keep in mind that the more you **participate** the more inclusive the class will become. **Online Discussions Boards** are great if you are shy because you can take your time to compose your **post** so you can say exactly what you want to say.
- Sometimes students make inappropriate **posts**, or respond negatively to others' ideas. Disrespectful comments, or **flaming**, discourage others from **participating** and negatively impact the learning of everyone. Always be respectful of others.

# Mastering Online Discussions

## Key Terms - Mastering Online Discussion

English	Pinyin	Chinese
Abbreviation (s)	Suōxiě	缩写
Apps	yìngyòng chéngxù	应用程序
Asynchronous Learning	yìbù xuéxí	异步学习
Debate (ing)	biànlùn	辩论
Forms (Online Discussions)	lùntán	论坛
Online Discussion Board	zàixiàn tāolùn qū	在线讨论区
Participation	cānyù	参与
Personal Blogs	gèrén bókè	个人博客
Post (s)	lùntán yánlùn	论坛言论
Reflect Critically	pīpàn xìng fǎnsī	批判性反思
Repost (ing)	chóngxīn fābù	重新发布
Response	xiǎngyìng	响应
Responding	xiǎngyìng	响应
Social Media	shèjiāo méitǐ	社交媒体
WeChat	wēixìn	微信
Flaming	biǎnyì pínglùn	贬义评论

## Additional Vocabulary - Other Important Words

English	Pinyin	Chinese
Compose (ing)	Gòusī	构思
Ideas	xiǎngfǎ	想法
Irrelevant	wúguān	无关
Learning	xuéxí	学习
A Negative Effect	xiāojí xiàoguǒ	消极效果
Opinions	guāndiǎn	观点
Learning Platform	xuéxí píngtái	学习平台
A Positive Effect	jījí xiàoguǒ	积极效果
Respectful	zūnzhòng de	尊重的