Discussion Tool

Now we will cover how to create a topic.

Create a Topic

1. Once you have created your forum, you will still be in the discussion tool. If you have left, you will navigate back to the page by clicking Communication in the navbar and selecting Discussions.
2. Click New and select New Topic.
3. This will open up the settings and you begin on the Properties tab. Here you can select the forum you created in the drop down menu. If you need a new forum, you can select the option to create one. Give it a title, description, and choose your optional settings. If you set them in the forum - you do not have to set them here. If you are managing them by topic, choose the settings you'd like to enable.
4. Select the Restriction tab to manage dates. You can set an availability date for the students to access the discussion. It is important to note here that once the end date passes, the students will no longer be able to access the discussion. If they should be able to access the posts but you no longer want them posting, don't use the Availability dates and use the next option, which is Locking. It is possible to unlock a topic for a date range and it will lock on the end date. What this means: the student can access and post for the "unlocked" date range and once it "locks" the information is still viewable, but they can no longer post.

Unless there is a specific reason students should not see the discussion boards after they are due, the best practice is to use the Locking Options instead of Availability dates for discussions.
5. Just as in Quizzes and Assignments, Discussions can be assessed for grading purposes. You will click on the Assessment tab in the settings. If you have a grade item created, add it in the drop down box. If not, click New Grade Item and create in
the menu that pops up. You can add an existing rubric or create one if there is not an existing rubric. Click Save and Close.

The video [here](#) shows the process in action

**Note:** Students will be able to reply to the topic by clicking "Start a Thread." They will also be able to reply to each other's "threads." It is recommended to set clear guidelines in the syllabus for the minimum/maximum number of posts and replies you want them to complete.