

# SacCT

## Discussion Tool: Blogs

### HOW TO GUIDE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

### WHAT IS A BLOG?

Blogs are messages posted to a forum where students, teaching assistants, designers and instructors can read and post messages, and then add comments. Blogs give students additional ways to express themselves and collaborate with peers online. Messages in blogs are displayed by date or author, and not associated by subject (as in threaded discussion topics).

This document describes tasks related to **Blog** topics. Please refer to the additional documents—*Communicating Online* or *Discussion Tool: Journals*—if you want to create and use the standard Threaded or Journal topics.



**TIP :** Click the **Teach** tab before you create, send, view and reply to messages in your SacCT courses—this is the place instructors communicate with students, teaching assistants and other designers and instructors in the course.

### CREATING BLOGS

- step 1.* Click the **Teach** tab, and then the **Discussions** button or icon.
- step 2.* From the main **Discussions** page, click **Create Topic**.
- step 3.* Select *Blog topic* and then click **Next**.



#### **Blog topic.**

Create a collaborative blog (weblog) space by allowing participants to post a chronological series of entries on a particular topic. Participants can then add comments to any blog entry.

- step 4.* Type a name for your new Blog topic and optionally enter a description for the topic.
- step 5.* Select a category or create a new category if you want to organize topics by category.

- step 6.* In the **Grading** section, select the radio button next to Numeric Grade, Alphanumeric grade, or Grade by Grading Form, if you want the new topic to be gradable. A column is automatically added to the **Grade Book**.
- When selecting a numeric grade, enter a maximum value in the box.
  - A Grading Form must already exist in order for you to select the Grade by Grading Form option.

**Grading**

Topic is not gradable

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Allow the topic to be graded

Numeric grade: Out of

Alphanumeric grade

Grade by Grading Form:


A column is automatically created for this topic in Grade Book

Grade Book column title:

Release grade to Students in *My Grades*

*step 7.* Click the **Peer Review** link to expand it.

*step 8.* In the **Peer Review** section, you can choose to allow students to review messages using a simple rating scale or a grading form, or choose to not enable this feature.

 **Peer Review** (Expand this area to see more options.)

Do not enable peer review in this topic

Allow Students to review messages using a simple rating scale

Allow Students to review messages using a grading form

*a.* If using a **rating scale**:

- Click the **Create Scale** button.
- Click the pencil icon next to the title of the rating to edit it's title.
- Click the **Remove Rating** button to delete a rating.
- Enter instructions to your students on how to complete the rating scale in the **Instructions** text box.
- Select the check box if you want to allow users to include a comment with their rating.
- Click **Save**.

**Create Simple Rating Scale**

**Add Rating**

*	Need Improvement		Remove Rating
**	Below Average		Remove Rating
***	Average		Remove Rating
****	Above Average		Remove Rating
*****	Exceptional		Remove Rating

**Instructions:**

Allow users to include a comment with their rating

**Save** **Cancel**

b. If using a **Grading Form**:

- Click the **Select Grading Form** button. *Note: Grading Forms must already exist in the **Grading Forms** tool (available from the Teach tab, Instructor Tools section of tools).*
- Select the radio button next to the grading form you want to use.
- Click **Select**.

**Select Grading Form**

Select the grading form you want to use to grade this item.  
To create a grading form, go to the Grading Forms tool.

[Web page grading form](#)

**Select** **Cancel**

*step 9.* Click the **Topic Behavior Options** link to expand it.

*step 10.* In the **Topic Behavior Options** section, select an option for Student Posting Rules: students can post and reply, students can post but cannot reply, or students can reply but not post. Optionally, select if students can edit their messages.

*step 11.* In the Author Identification area, select whether to identify postings by user name or as anonymous to students.

**Topic Behavior Options** (Expand this area to see more options.)

Student Posting Rules

- Students can post messages and reply to messages
- Students can post messages but cannot reply to messages
- Students can reply to messages but cannot post messages
- Students can edit their messages after posting them
- Lock this topic for Students (Section Instructors can post in a locked topic)

Author Identification

- Authors are identified by user names
- Authors are anonymous to Students

*step 12.* Click **Save**.

## Creating Messages

- step 1.* From the **Discussions** page, click the name of a topic.
- step 2.* Click **Create Message**.
- step 3.* Type your subject and message in the spaces provided. Optionally, you may add attachments to your message—see **Adding Attachments** in the **Mail Activities** section.
- step 4.* Click **Post**. The message is posted and the discussion topic page is updated with your most recent posting.

## Reading Messages

- step 1.* Click the **Teach** tab, and then the **Discussions** button or icon.
- step 2.* After selecting a topic from the main **Discussions** page, you have a few options in which to view messages. The following example and table illustrate these options.

**Assignment 3 - blog**

Description (click to collapse)  
Type your chapter question in this topic and respond to someone else's question about chapter 3.

Topic Type: Blog  
Graded: Yes (Numeric out of 10.0)  
Peer Review: No  
Posting Restrictions: Allow post and reply  
User Identification: User Name

**Create Message** **View Drafts**

Select All Deselect All Sort by: **Date** **Author**

**Subject:** What are the four main parts of a Web page?  
**Author:** Demo Student 1136576001 **Date:** January 2, 2007 4:31 PM

I think the four main parts of a Web page are: the header, navigation, content, and footer.

**Comments** **Forward** **Lock Message**

(1 Comments / 0 New)

**Create Printable View**  **Delete**

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## Creating Comments

*step 1.* While viewing messages in a topic, click the **Comments** button beneath a subject message to display users' comments and to create new comments for that message. Comments are displayed in a new window, as shown in the following example.

The screenshot shows a window titled "Comments" with a "Close this window" link in the top left. The subject of the message is "What are the four main parts of a Web page?". Below the subject is a "Create Comment" button. A list of comments follows, with the first one by Matthew Kay dated January 3, 2007 1:08 PM, containing the text "This is a good starting point. Can anyone else provide more details of what each part may contain?". Below the list is another "Create Comment" section. It includes an "Enable HTML Creator" button, a large text input area, a "Use HTML" checkbox, an "Insert equation:" dropdown menu set to "New", and a green arrow button. At the bottom of this section is an "Attachments:" label and an "Add Attachments" button. The window concludes with four buttons: "Post Comment", "Preview", "Cancel", and "Save as Draft".

*step 2.* After reading the existing comments click inside the **Create Comment** box and type your new comment. Optionally, you may click the **Enable HTML Creator** button to use the HTML Creator utility to create a comment with specific font colors, sizes, etc.

*step 3.* Click **Post Comment** to complete your comment and post it to this message. Optionally, you may save it as a draft without posting it.

*Note: Comments are NOT editable after they are posted.*