

SacCT

Discussion Tool: Journals

HOW TO GUIDE

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

WHAT IS A JOURNAL?

Journals are discussion topics that contain private entries that give students space to reflect on their experiences and post reactions to lectures, discussions or assignments. Instructors can add comments to students' entries.

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

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 *Journal topic* and then click **Next**.



Journal topic.

Create a journal topic to give Students a place for their own writing. The journals can be kept private between the Student and the Section Instructor or shared with the class.

step 4. Type a name for your new Journal 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

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

- If using a **rating scale**:
 - Click the **Create Scale** button.
 - Click the pencil icon next to the title of the rating to edit its 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. By default new Journal topics are private, so that only the student and instructor can view an individual student's posts. If you wish, the last section, Journal Privacy, allows you to change the default status of private to public.

Journal Privacy

- Private: entries are visible to the author and Section Instructors only
- Public: entries are visible to all Students and Section Instructors

step 13. Click **Save**.

Creating Entries

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 Entries

step 1. Click a topic from the main **Discussions** page. A list of student names and number of entries per name appears in the left side of the screen, as shown below. The **My Journal** name is your personal journal as an instructor.

Name	Number of Entries (New)
My Journal	1
Demo Student 1136576001 	1

step 2. Click a student's name from the left side of the screen to view his/her journal or **My Journal** to view your own journal. The journal entries appear on the right side of the screen, as shown below.

Creating Comments

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

- 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.