

# Discussion rubrics

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

Examples of discussion rubrics for onground and online instruction.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

These discussion rubric examples are meant to be adapted by each faculty member who chooses to grade discussions. Edit these examples of discussion rubrics to create a new rubric or revise an existing rubric. Review the rubric with students prior to grading any discussion. More resources on rubric development can be found on the CET website.

### Can I use rubrics to grade work submitted online?

Both Blackboard and Turnitin allow for creating or importing rubrics, attaching them to assignments, and grading with them online. The resulting grade is then directly populated in the Blackboard gradebook.

### Examples of rubrics

Table 1 Onground discussion rubric example 1

| Criteria | Excellent  (4 points) | Meets Expectations  (3 points) | Approaches Expectations  (1 point) | Needs Improvement  (0 points) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Engagement | Contributes to class discussions by offering quality ideas and asking appropriate questions consistently.  Actively engages others in class discussions by inviting their comments.  Constructively challenges the accuracy and relevance of statements made. | Contributes to class discussions by offering ideas and asking questions consistently.  Often engages others in class discussions by inviting their comments.  Challenges the accuracy and relevance of statements made. | Occasionally contributes to class discussion by offering ideas and asking questions consistently.  Sometimes engages others in class discussions.  Challenges the accuracy or relevance of main points, but has limited understanding of main points. | Fails to contribute to class discussions.  Fails to invite comments from other students.  Demonstrates little understanding of main points or challenges inappropriately. |
| Preparedness | Accurately expresses foundational knowledge pertaining to issues raised during class discussions. | Expresses basic foundational knowledge pertaining to class discussion. | Expresses limited foundational knowledge pertaining to class discussion. | Expresses no relevant foundational knowledge. |
| Attitude | Consistently positive, cooperative attitude during class discussions  Always supportive of other students’ ideas. | Usually positive and cooperative with classroom discussions  Often supportive of others students’ ideas. | Seldom actively participates in classroom discussions  Sometimes supportive of other students’ ideas. | Rarely if ever participates in classroom discussions  Occasional Disruptive behavior. |

Adapted from [The Texas Education Agency](https://www.northwestern.edu/searle/docs/Discussion%20Rubric%20Examples.pdf), 2006.

Table 2 Onground discussion rubric example 2

| Criteria | Excellent  (4 points) | Meets Expectations  (3 points) | Approaches Expectations  (1 point) | Needs Improvement  (0 points) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Invites contributions from others | Consistently engages others in discussion by inviting their comments. | Invites comments from others. | Sometimes invites comments from others | Does not invite comments from others |
| Acknowledges the statements of others | Consistently engages others in the discussion by acknowledging their contributions | Often acknowledges the contribution of others | Sometimes acknowledges the contribution of others | Does not acknowledge the contribution of others |
| Challenges the accuracy, logic, relevance, or clarity of statements | Constructively challenges the accuracy, clarity, relevance or logic of statements made | Responds in a civil manner to a statement made by someone else by challenging its accuracy, clarity, relevance or logic. | Attempts to challenge the accuracy, clarity, relevance of logic of statements | Does not challenge the accuracy, clarity, relevance, or logic of statements |
| Summarizes point of agreement and disagreement | Clearly summarizes points of agreement and disagreement | Summarizes points of agreement but does not clearly summarize points of disagreement | Attempts to summarize points of agreement or disagreement | Does not summarize points of agreement or disagreement |

Adapted from Harris, D. (1996). Assessing discussion of public issues: A scoring guide. *Handbook on teaching social issues*, 289-297.

Table 3 Onground discussion rubric example 3

| Criteria | Excellent  (4 points) | Meets Expectations  (3 points) | Approaches Expectations  (1 point) | Needs Improvement  (0 points) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Engagement and Participation | Proactively and regularly contributes to class discussion; initiates discussion on issues related to class topic. | Proactively and regularly contributes to class discussion; asks questions and responds to direct questions. | Few contributions to class discussions; seldom volunteers but responds to direct questions. | Never participates in class discussion; fails to respond to direct questions. |
| Listening skills | Listens without interrupting and incorporates and expands on the comments of other students. | Listens and appropriately responds to the contributions of others. | Does not listen carefully; comments are often not relevant to the discussion. | Does not listen when others talk; interrupts or makes inappropriate comments. |
| Relevance of contribution to topic | Contributions are relevant and promote deeper analysis of the topic. | Contributions are always relevant. | Contributions are sometimes off-topic or distract from discussion. | Contributions are off-topic or distract from discussion. |
| Preparation | Student is consistently well prepared; sometimes adds relevant information beyond the assigned reading/material. | Student has read the materials before class and refers to them during class discussion. | Student has read the material but not closely, or has read only some of the material before class. | Student is not adequately prepared; has not read the assigned material prior to class. |

Adapted from [Southern Methodist University](https://www.smu.edu/-/media/Site/Law/faculty/teaching-resources/Class-Participation-Rubric.pdf).

Table 4 Online discussion rubric example 1

| Criteria | Excellent  (4 points) | Meets Expectations  (3 points) | Approaches Expectations  (1 point) | Needs Improvement  (0 points) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Timeliness and quantity of discussion responses | 3-4 postings; well distributed throughout the week. | 2-3 postings distributed throughout the week. | 2-3 postings not distributed throughout the week. | 1-2 postings not distributed throughout the week. |
| Responsiveness to discussion topics | Readings were consistently incorporated into discussion as it related to the topic. | Readings were often incorporated into discussion as it related to the topic. | Readings were sometimes incorporated into discussion as it related to the topic. | Readings were not incorporated into discussion. |
| Contributes to the quality of the discussion | Two or more posts add significantly to the discussion by using evidence to support perspective and/or identifying important relationships. | At least one post adds significantly to the discussion. | At least two postings supplement or add moderately to the discussion. | Postings do little to move the discussion forward. |
| Etiquette in dialogue with peers | Written interactions show respect and sensitivity to peers’ gender, cultural and linguistic background, sexual orientation, political and religious beliefs. | Written interaction show respect and interest in the viewpoints of others. | Some of the written interactions show respect and interest in the viewpoints of others. | Written interactions show disrespect for the viewpoints of others. |

Adapted from [Purdue Repository of Online Teaching And Learning](https://www.purdue.edu/innovativelearning/supporting-instruction/portal/files/8.2_Sample_Discussion_Board_Rubric_LDT.pdf) and [University of Wisconsin - Stout](https://www2.uwstout.edu/content/profdev/rubrics/discussionrubric.html)

Table 5 Online discussion rubric example 2

| Criteria | Excellent  (4 points) | Meets Expectations  (3 points) | Approaches Expectations  (1 point) | Needs Improvement  (0 points) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relevance | Posting thoroughly answers discussion prompts and understanding of material with well-developed ideas. | Posting addresses most components of the prompt and demonstrates an understanding of the material. | Posting addresses some components of the prompt. Marks short or irrelevant remarks. | No posting. |
| Quality of the post | Appropriate comments; thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of other postings. | Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to other postings. | Responds, but with minimal effort. | No posting. |
| Contributes to the quality of the discussion | Consistently posts meaningful questions to the group and attempts to motivate the group discussion. | Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration. | Minimum effort is made to participate in discussion as it develops. | No feedback provided to members of the discussion. |

Adapted from [University of Iowa](https://teach.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/sample_online_discussions_rubric.pdf)