Why Use It?
The Discussion tool is a collaboration area to post, read and reply to threads on different topics, share thoughts about course materials, ask questions, share files, and work with your peers on assignments and homework.

Guidance
Discussion boards are still one of the primary tools used for student interaction within online courses. But many faculty and students find them frustrating, arguing discussion boards don’t deliver on the promise to mimic traditional conversations in a classroom. It doesn’t have to be that way, though, especially if you have the right prompt and a few facilitation skills. When creating a prompt, ask yourself two questions:

- If I were a student, would I find it meaningful to have a conversation around this topic?
- Is this a conversation I’d be interested in facilitating and grading, or will it just feel like I’m going through the motions?

Posing Divergent Questions - A Best Practice
When you pose divergent questions, you will not get just one specific right answer. Instead you may get many different responses in which students assert and justify a position, add new information to the topic, or relate the topic to a personal experience or real-world event. Divergent questions invite authentic inquiry and conversation.

Facilitating Discussions
You can make the online discussions in your courses more productive by guiding them. Faculty can support meaningful discussions by:

1) Identifying areas of agreement and disagreement
2) Seeking to reach consensus or understanding
3) Encouraging, acknowledging, and reinforcing student contributions
4) Setting a climate for learning
5) Drawing in participants and prompting discussion
6) Assessing the efficacy of the process.

Grading & Time Management
Participating in, debriefing, and grading discussion activities can be time consuming. Therefore, you might limit the number of discussions to a meaningful few. You may find it helpful to distribute discussions over a two-week period, where students make an original post during Week 1 and respond to peers during Week 2. Using rubrics helps you save time on grading in addition to clearly communicating to your students what constitutes good work and how they can succeed. Here are examples of discussion rubrics that can get you started.

GS Folio Template
The GS Folio Template incorporates an ADA-compliant “Start Here” module with nine pre-built pages that you can populate with your content and get started faster.

Technology
- Create Forum
- Create Topic
- More …