

# CANVAS: How to make a graded discussion activity

## STEP 1: Create a new discussion activity

Click the Discussions link in the Course menu, then click the red + Discussion button.

An empty template appears. Enter:

1. **Name** of discussion (this will be the label of the grade column).
2. Provide clear submission instructions to student either at the top or bottom of your post.
3. Enter the assignment description.
4. Select “**Allow thread replies**” to keep a student’s reply grouped under the post they are replying to.
5. OPTION: To help ensure students develop their initial post independently, require that they **post before** they can see other students’ posts.
6. In order to create a grade book column, you must select “**Graded**”.

The screenshot shows the 'Details' tab for a new discussion titled 'Mastery Paths'. It is marked as 'Published'. The interface includes a title field (1), a rich text editor for instructions (2), a text area for the assignment description (3), and an 'Options' section. In the 'Options' section, 'Allow threaded replies' is checked (4), 'Users must post before seeing replies' is checked (5), and 'Graded' is selected (6). There is also an 'Attachment' section with a 'Browse...' button and a 'No file selected' message.

Continue down the settings screen.

If this to be a **group discussion activity**, it is recommended that you create go to People and create Group Set(s), the groups within them, beforehand setting up the discussion.

In groups, discussions, students only see, and can only reply to, their own group member’s posts.

Specify the discussion activity **point value**, which **assignment group** (i.e. which gradebook subtotal) the activity should be contained in, and the **availability period**.

- Ungraded discussions have Available from (start) and Until (end) dates.
- Graded discussions also have Due dates.

What do the availability dates control?

- Before the “**Available from**” date, students can view (read) the discussion instructions but cannot post to it.
- Any post made after the “**Due**” date is marked late.
- After the “**Until**” date, students can read the discussion and comments but can no longer contribute to it.

The screenshot shows the 'Group Discussion' settings. A checkbox labeled 'This is a Group Discussion' is checked. Below it, there is a 'Group Set' dropdown menu currently showing 'Discussion Group Set'. A 'New Group Category' button is at the bottom. A purple arrow points to the 'This is a Group Discussion' checkbox. A purple text box on the right says: 'TIP: Set up class group sets BEFORE trying to assign them work!'. A purple circle highlights the dropdown arrow in the 'Group Set' menu.

Either **SAVE**, or **SAVE AND PUBLISH** the activity.

*Example of an unpublished,  
class discussion activity:  
(Instructor view)*



*Example of a published,  
group discussion activity:  
(Instructor view)*



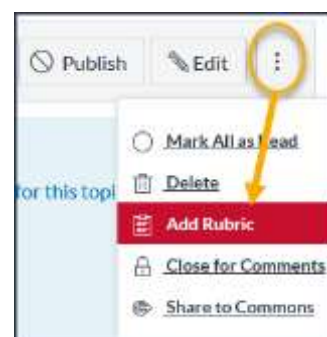
Shaded blue area at top indicates  
which groups are assigned the  
activity – verify it is correct!

## STEP 2: Optional – Add a grading rubric to the discussion

A rubric is added after the discussion activity is saved, and can be added regardless of publish status.

Click the 3 vertical dots after the Edit button then select Add Rubric.

You can **Find** a rubric that is stored in your course Outcome OR make a new rubric (which will get stored in Outcomes).



**IMPORTANT** - Scroll to the bottom of the rubric and checkmark the “Use this rubric for assignment grading”. If you don’t do this, then the score generated from the rubric will not automatically transfer to the gradebook.

For more information, see:

- [Canvas Rubrics Guides](#)
- [ODL Rubric Tip Sheets](#)

Criteria	Ratings	Pts
Description of criterion Range <input type="checkbox"/>	5 pts Full Marks 0 pts No Marks	5 pts

+ Criterion Find Outcome Total Points: 5

☐ I'll write free-form comments when assessing students  
☐ Remove points from rubric  
☐ Don't post Outcomes results to Learning Mastery Gradebook  
☐ Use this rubric for assignment grading  
☐ Hide score total for assessment results

Cancel Create Rubric