

Your postings should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree disagree with your comment" or an "I think the same" to someone else's thoughts is not considered to be an adequate response.

- **Participate regularly in class discussions.** This is a simple tip, but a crucial one. It takes some time for discussions to build up momentum, so you'll need to return to a discussion frequently to track and channel its development.
- **Don't disappear after posting your comment.** A discussion should be more than a series of e-mail postings. Someone may reply to your comment, asking for clarification or presenting a difference of opinion. Check the discussion's progress a day or two after you've posted your comments, and address other participants' response to your initial post.
- **Stick to one topic at a time.** If you have several different ideas to bring into a discussion, start a new thread for each idea, and give each thread a clear descriptive title. This way, other classmates can engage with each idea in depth, and participants can easily find the topics that most interest them.
- **Engage directly with the ideas of other participants.** If each participant in the discussion makes a special effort to relate ideas to those voiced by other participants, the discussion will maintain a sense of coherence. Whenever possible, briefly mention which points of a previous posting you are responding to.
- **Choose provocative, informative subject lines for your posts.** Which would you be more inclined to read: a message called "Thoughts" or one called "My biased opinion on Question 2"? Which title is more informative: "Re: re: initial post" or "My disagreement with Thesis X"?
- **Take time to organize your thoughts before posting.** You want everyone to read and understand your comment, so present it in an organized, easy-to-read manner. Provide only the most essential information in your post. If people want further details, they'll ask for them in a reply. When your comment contains a lot of material, try to break up the information into short chunks.
- **Avoid discussion posts that offer little more than "I agree."** Each discussion posting should offer some new content, aimed to foster continued exploration of the topic. Stating "I agree" or "I disagree" alone will not add much to the discussion, and if a number of people post such statements, the discussion may quickly come to a halt. Raise new questions, and keep track of issues that have not been fully investigated in previous posts.
- **Remember that discussion is an exchange, not a lecture.** Solicit feedback from your classmates. You should take a clear position in your post, but it is a good idea to invite alternative perspectives. What new questions or problems arise from the position you're taking? How does your position relate to the position taken by other participants?