

# Forums Tool

At the end of this tutorial, you will be able to answer the following questions:

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**Note:**

- The terms **Instructor**, **Maintainer**, and **Owner** refer to the same role in Coursar. They are used interchangeably in this document.
- The terms **Student**, **Participant**, and **Member** refer to the same role in Coursar. They are used interchangeably in this document.
- **Course & Project** sites both refer to a **worksite** or a **site** in Coursar's terminology. They are used interchangeably in this document. Anything that is used in a Course site can be used in a Project site, and vice versa.

## What is the Forums tool?

The Forums tool allows instructors or site leaders to create an unlimited number of discussion forums, and is integrated closely with other tools such as Resources and Gradebook.

A **Forum** is a mandatory category or grouping for topics. **Topics**, which are created within forums, are where participants can post conversations. A **Conversation** is the thread of messages in which participants post their contributions. A conversation can be created by instructors or students inside of a topic.

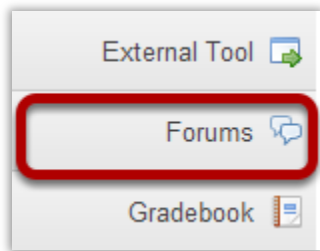
Some the features in the Forums tool include:

- **Grading:** Interactions can be assigned a point value and sent to the Gradebook with comments.
- **Availability dates:** Forums and topics can be released according to specified dates.
- **Moderation:** Instructors can choose to moderate messages posted to topics.
- **Counts of unread posts at a glance:** On your site's Home page (select Home on the site's menubar), you can see how many unread messages or posts you have in both Messages and Forums. From My Workspace, you can see these totals for all sites in which you are enrolled.
- **Email notifications:** Site members can elect to receive no email notification, notification for all new postings in a site, or notification for responses to conversations they've posted in. The default is to receive notifications about new postings in conversations to which you have contributed.
- **Statistics:** Forum statistics are available for site owners to determine the participation level of individual participants. You can also read all of a particular participant's posts using this feature.
- **Post before reading option:** The site owner (or another participant with the appropriate role) can enable participants to submit their posts to a topic before they have permission to read the responses of others.
- **Group awareness:** Site leaders can change forum and topic settings in combination with predefined groups to allow or deny access to specific discussions per group.
- **Direct link to individual messages:** Site leaders can copy a direct link to individual messages to use elsewhere.
- **Composing messages:** A rich-text editor allows rich text, plain text, and HTML editing. You can add attachments to any message by linking to files or web links in Resources.

- **Quoted text:** Use the Insert Original Text option to insert the previous post into your response.
- **Email the author of a message:** Site leaders can directly email the author of a posting from within the Forums tool.

*Note: A forum with the name of the site and a topic titled "General Discussion" are created by default.*

To access this tool, select **Forums** from the Tool Menu in your site.



## How do I post to a forum?

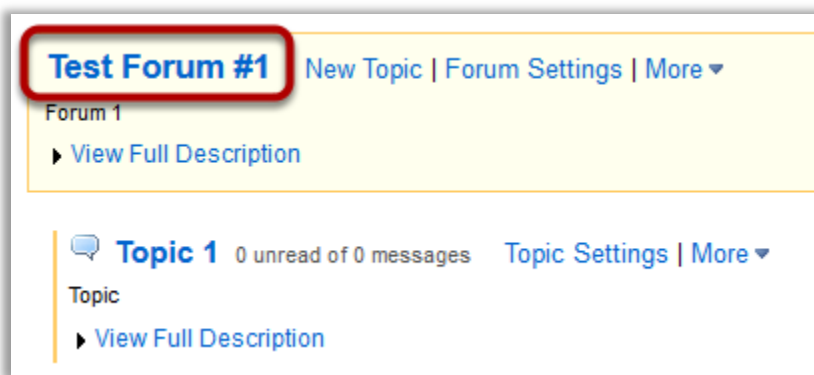
Forums are organizational units that group topics within the site. You cannot post directly to a forum, you must first enter a topic and post your message there.

In order to post to a forum topic, you will **Start a New Conversation** or thread.

### Go to Forums.

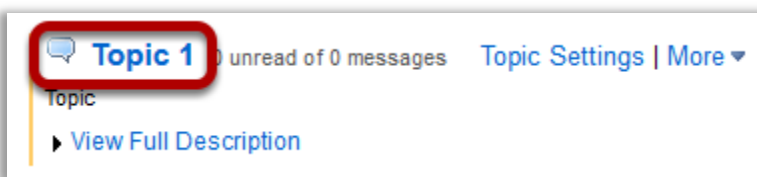
Select the **Forums** tool from Tool Menu in your site.

### Choose a forum.



This is an example of a forum. The forum title will appear in bold and in a larger font than the topic titles indented beneath it. If you would like to view more information about the forum, you may click **View Full Description** to view any additional information provided by the site owner.

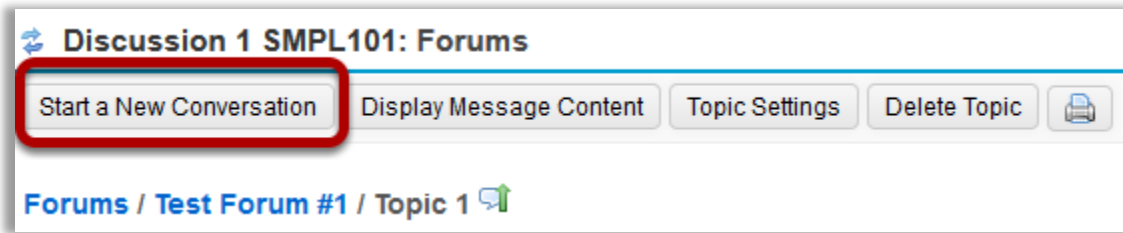
### Select a topic within the forum.



This is an example of a forum topic. If you would like to view more information about the topic, you may click **View Full Description** to view any additional information provided by the site owner.

Click on the title of the topic to enter that topic.

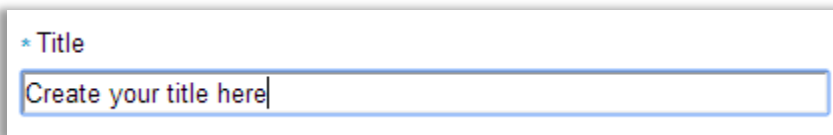
## Click Start a New Conversation.



This button is located at the top of the page, below the title of the course. Starting a new conversation is the same thing as starting a new thread.

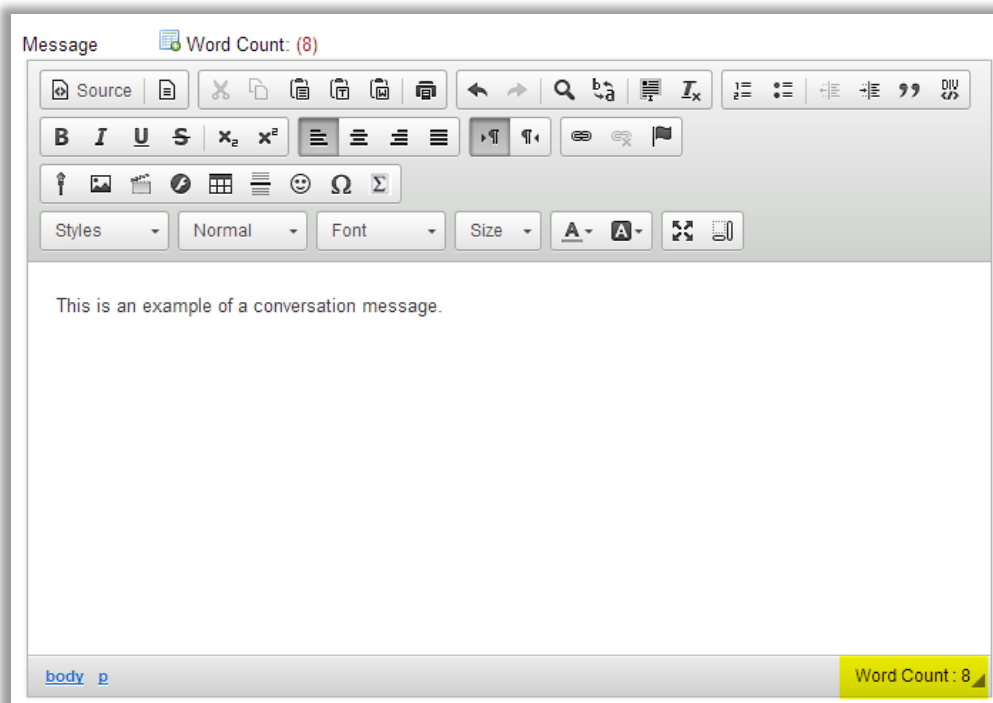
After you click the **Start a New Conversation** button, the message composition window will appear.

## Enter a title.



The screenshot shows the "Message" composition window. At the top, it says "Word Count: (8)". Below this is a text input field for the title, labeled "\* Title". The input field contains the placeholder text "Create your title here".

## Enter a message.

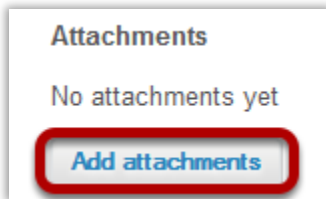


The screenshot shows the "Message" composition window with a rich text editor. The toolbar includes options for Source, Undo, Copy, Paste, Bold, Italic, Underline, Strikethrough, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Indent, Outdent, Link, Unlink, and Flag. Below the toolbar are icons for Insert Link, Image, Video, Table, Table of Contents, Smiley, Omega, and Sum. The message body contains the text "This is an example of a conversation message." At the bottom right, a yellow box displays "Word Count : 8".

This description box allows the use of **Rich Text Editor**.

*Note: The message box will keep track of word count in the lower right corner.*

**Add any attachments. (Optional)**



If desired, there is an option to upload attachments to the conversation. Click **Add attachments** to browse for and select your file.

**Click Post.**



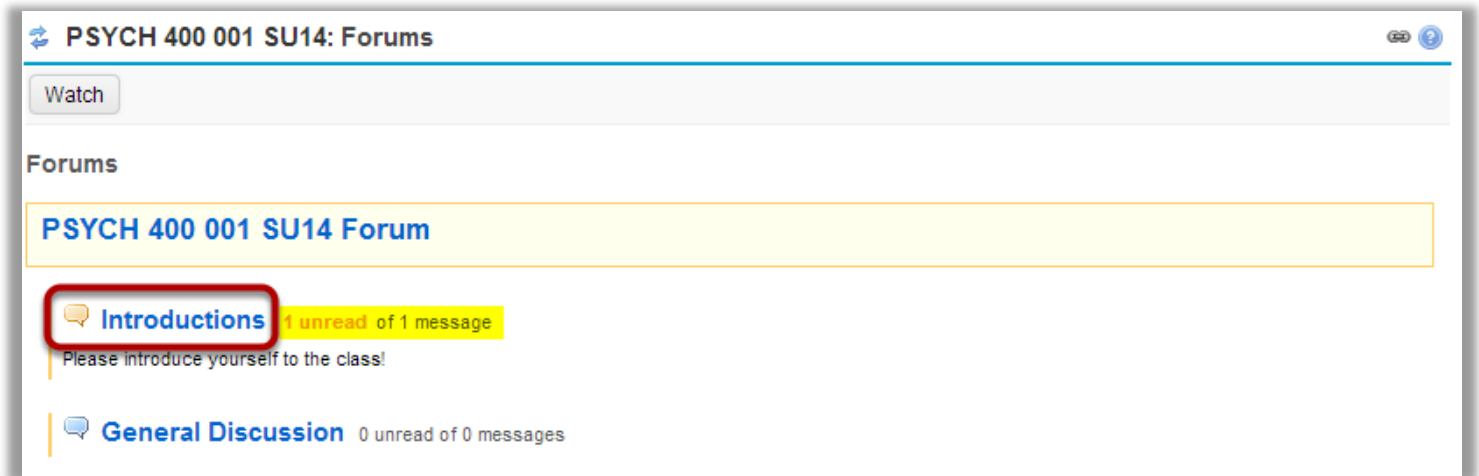
After completing the conversation, click **Post** to make the conversation viewable.

## How do I reply to a forum post (i.e. conversation)?

### Go to Forums.

Select the **Forums** tool from Tool Menu in your site.

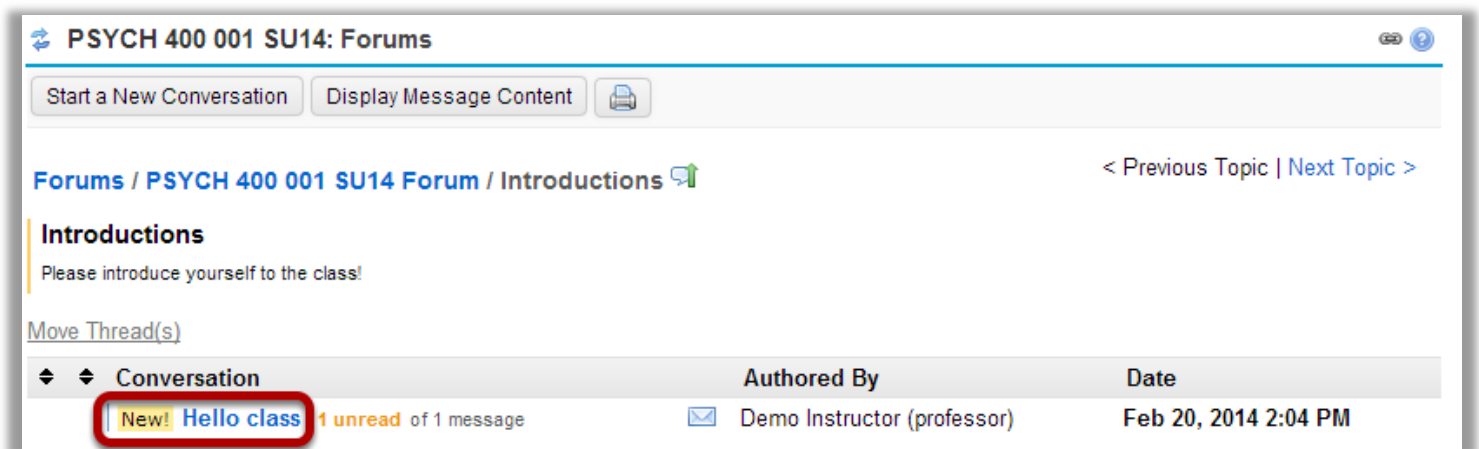
### Choose a topic within a forum.



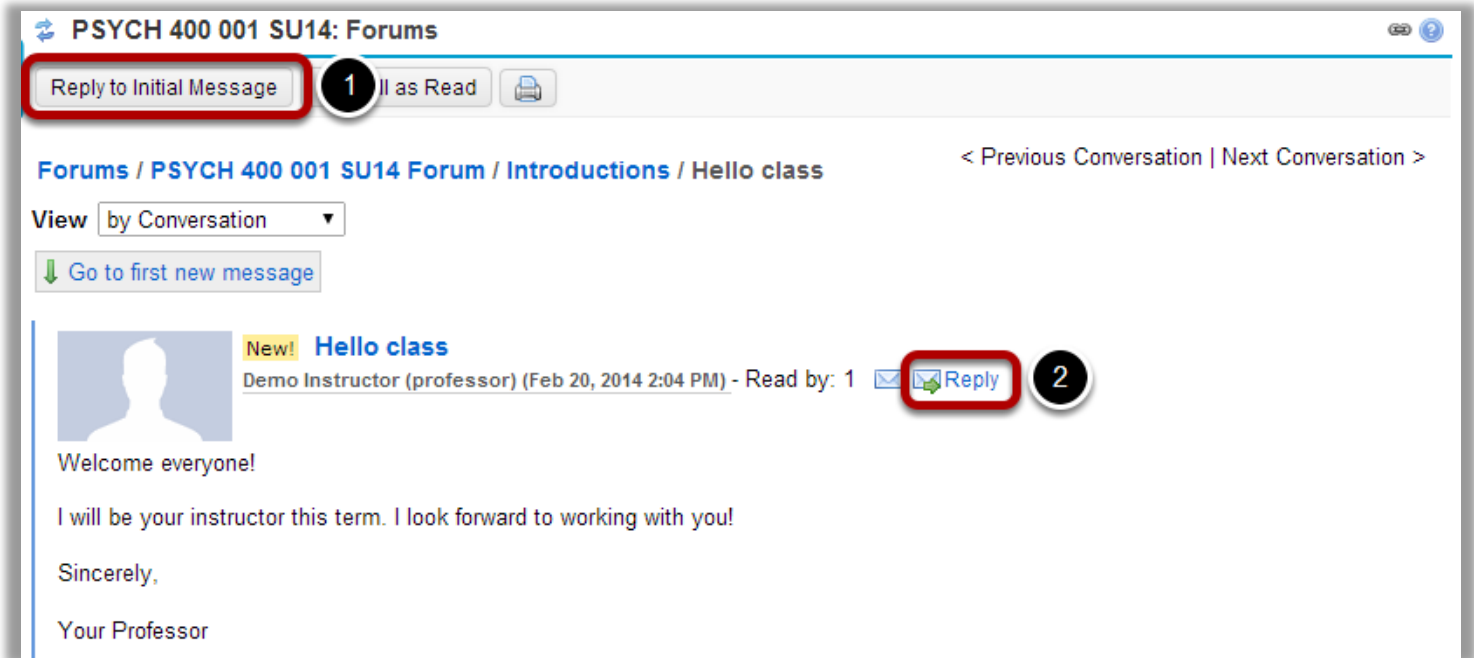
Click on the title of the topic to enter the topic.

*Note: The message indicator text next to the topic title will tell you how many messages have been posted within that topic, and how many of them are new or unread.*

### Click on the title of an existing post to view the conversation.



Click reply.

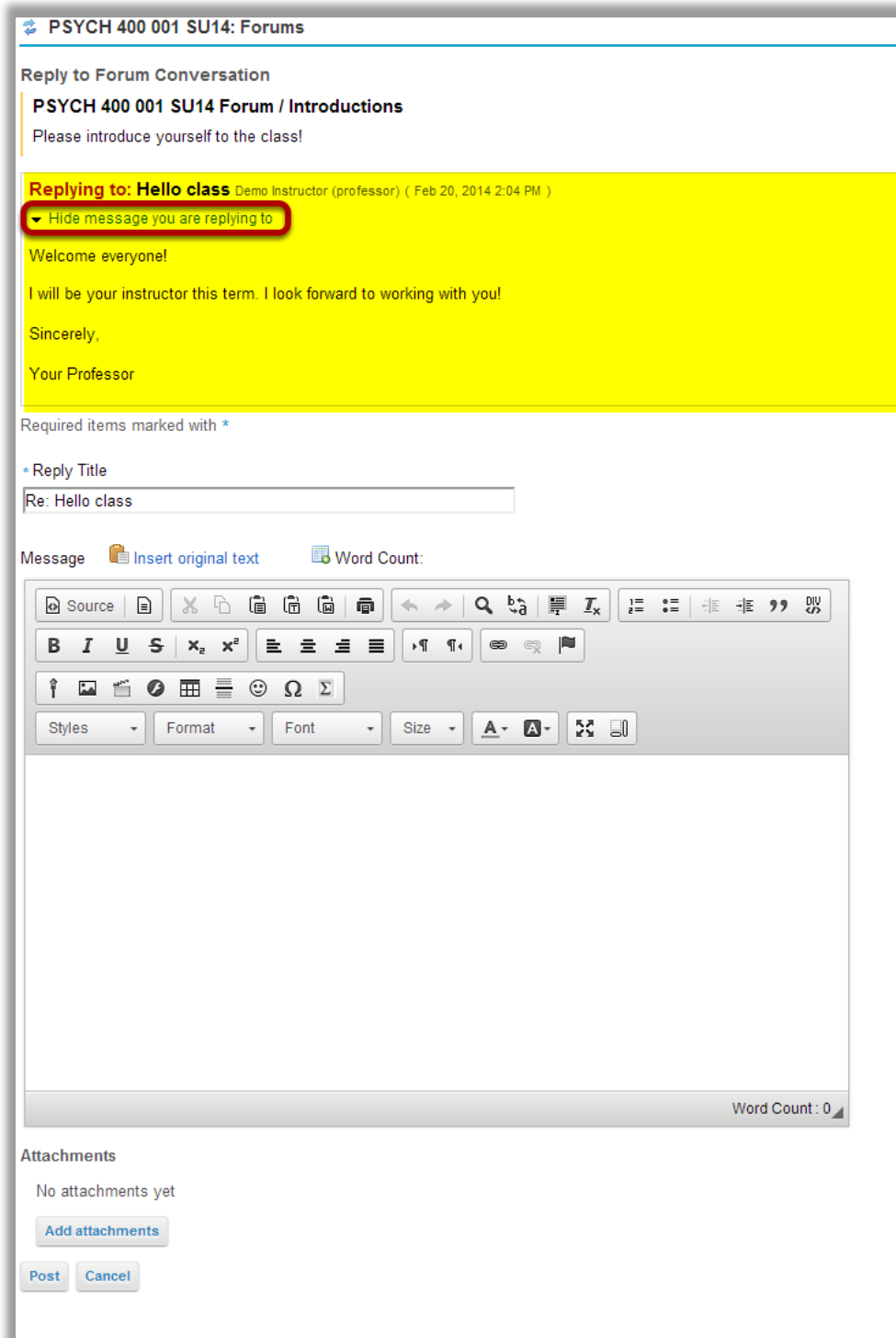


You have two different options for replying to the post within the Forums tool.

1. Click **Reply to Initial Message** at the top of the conversation to reply to the first message in the conversation or thread.
2. Click the **Reply** link within the message itself to reply to the item you are currently viewing. This is the option you want to use if you would like to reply to someone else's reply.



## Compose your message.



PSYCH 400 001 SU14: Forums

Reply to Forum Conversation

**PSYCH 400 001 SU14 Forum / Introductions**

Please introduce yourself to the class!

**Replying to: Hello class** Demo Instructor (professor) ( Feb 20, 2014 2:04 PM )

▼ Hide message you are replying to

Welcome everyone!

I will be your instructor this term. I look forward to working with you!



Sincerely,











































Your Professor

Required items marked with \*

\* Reply Title

Re: Hello class

Message  Insert original text  Word Count:

Source                                            <

Edit the reply title. (Optional)

\* Reply Title  
 Re: Hello class

The title will be taken from the initial message and prefilled for you, but you may modify it if you wish.

Enter your message.

Message [Insert original text](#) Word Count: (46)

Source | [Rich Text Editor Icons]

Body text: Hello professor! I'm excited to be taking this class.

*Original Message: From Demo Instructor (professor) (Feb 20, 2014 2:04 PM EST)*

*Subject Hello class*

*Welcome everyone!*

*I will be your instructor this term. I look forward to working with you!*

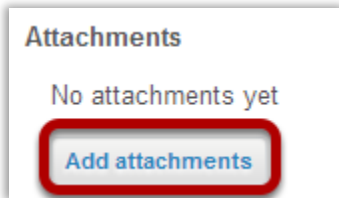
*Sincerely,*

body p Word Count: 46

Use the Rich Text Editor to compose your response.

*Note: You may optionally click on the **Insert original text** link above the editor area to include the original message along with your reply.*

## Add attachment. (Optional)



Click the **Add attachments** button if you would like to browse for and attach a file.

## Click Post.



After you have finished your reply, click **Post** to add your message to the conversation.

## How do I email a forum post author?

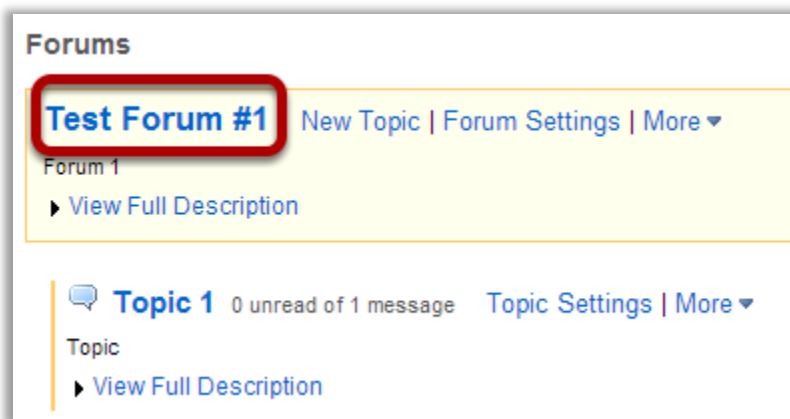
This outlines the process of contacting an author of a Forum post by email.

*Note: This email reply option sends a message to the author's external email address. It does not use the internal Messages tool to send the message.*

### Go to Forums.

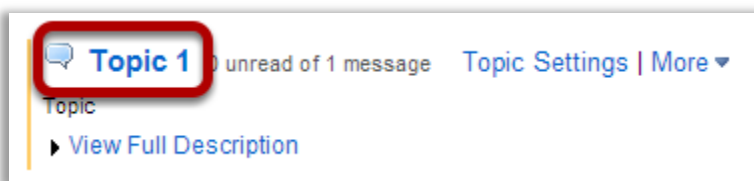
Select the **Forums** tool from Tool Menu in your site.

### Choose a Forum



This is an example of a **Forum**, bolded and in the largest comparative font. Click **View Full Description** to view more information about the **Forum**.

### Select the Topic within the Forum



This is an example of a **Forum** topic. Click **View Full Description** to view more information about the **Topic**. Otherwise, select the Topic.

## Select the Conversation

Move Thread(s)

Conversation	Authored By	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Test Conversation</a> 0 unread of 1 message	<a href="#">Anna Durkin (anna_admin)</a>	Feb 7, 2014 12:00 PM


Select a **conversation**, or thread by the particular Forum post author.

## Click Email

Forums / [Test Site Forum](#) / [General Discussion](#) / [Test Conversation](#) < Previous Conversation | Next Conversation >

View

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**Test Conversation**

[Anna Durkin \(anna\\_admin\)](#) (Feb 7, 2014 12:00 PM) - Read by: 1 [Reply](#) [Email](#) [Grade](#) | [Edit](#) | [Delete Message](#)

Click **Email** in order to email the Forum post author.

## How do I watch or subscribe to forums?

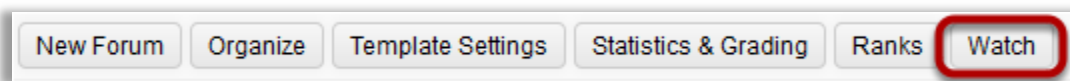
In order to stay notified of recent posts on a forum, the Watch option is helpful in doing so.

*Note: New post notifications will be sent to the user's external email address, not via the Messages tool.*

### Go to Forums.

Select the **Forums** tool from the Tool Menu of your site.

### Click Watch.



### Choose your notification preference.

**Watch Forums Options**

Use the settings below to change what notifications **you** receive when activity in the forums of **this** site take place.

- Send me an email whenever a new message is posted
- Send me an email when a conversation that I have contributed to receives a new message
- No notification

Select whether an email is desired for **every new message posted on the Forum**, **every new message posted on a Forum that the user has contributed to**, or **turn off all notifications**.

### Click Save.

