**Why Do This**
Forums are one of the most powerful and versatile activities in CC. A well-run forum can stimulate a thoughtful exchange of ideas, motivate students to be involved, give the shy students a voice or act as a team workspace. In online courses, the forums may be the primary method by which you, the Instructor, build that sense of community which is so crucial to retention. Forums can be set up with groups, forum posts can be graded, and students can submit attachments to forum posts and replies.
See [Using Forums](#), for a thorough introduction to the different ways to use forums, how to write effective forum questions and a description of the 5 forum types and when to use each.

1. Log onto Cougar Courses and go to the main page of your course.
2. Click Turn editing on.
3. Go to the section where you wish to add the Forum.
4. Click the Add an activity or resource link at the bottom right of the topic.
5. Scroll down the list of Activities/Resources and click on **Forum**.
6. Click the **Add** button.

**General Section**

7. Enter a descriptive **Name** for the Forum.
8. Enter a **Description** of your forum and your forum prompts. You can use the HTML editor toolbar to format the text, add images, tables, links, etc.

*Hint: Include specific instructions for the students in this section, regarding the subject of the forum, the grading criteria and number of initial posts and replies you expect, as well as the due dates for each.*

9. Select the **Forum type**. See the how to document: **Using Forums** for a description of each type.

**Notes:**
- **If you are using groups, refer to the Using Forums document and carefully read the forum descriptions and tips. Different forum types handle groups differently.**
- **If using groups with the Q&A forum type, see pg 5 of this document for setup instructions.**
Attachments and word count

10. **Attachments**: Determines whether students can add attachments to their post, and limits size and number of these attachments.
11. **Word count**: Specifies whether the word count of each post is displayed, or not.

Subscription and tracking

12. **Subscription mode**: Determines whether participants will receive email copies of forum posts.
   a. Select **Optional** to allow participants to choose to opt in.
   b. Select **Auto subscription** to subscribe everyone initially but allow them to unsubscribe at any time.
   c. Forced subscription – everyone is subscribed and cannot unsubscribe. – Use this with caution!
13. **Read tracking**: If enabled, allows users to track read and unread forum messages.

Post threshold for blocking

This section can be used to warn and block students from posting more than a given number of posts in a given time period.
Ratings

This section allows you to determine how student posts are graded and to restrict grading to posts submitted within a date range.

Aggregate type: You can rate each post, using a dropdown just below the post. The dropdown will display all points to the maximum assigned. The aggregate type determines how the ratings for all of a student’s posts within the forum are aggregated into one score.

- **Average of ratings** - The mean of all ratings
- **Count of ratings** - The number of rated items becomes the final grade. Note that the total cannot exceed the maximum grade for the activity.
- **Maximum** - The highest rating becomes the final grade
- **Minimum** - The smallest rating becomes the final grade
- **Sum** - All ratings are added together. Note that the total cannot exceed the maximum grade for the activity.

If "No ratings" is selected, then the activity will not appear in the gradebook.

Restrict ratings to items with dates in this range: When selected, this setting prevents the instructor from assigning points to posts outside of the specified date range. Students can still view the forum and post.

Using the Q&A forum

When using this forum type, do not enter your prompt in the description field. Create the “question” (discussion prompt) using the *Add a new question* button.
Students select the discussion, read your “Question” and click reply to “Answer”.

Using the Q&A forum with groups

Unlike any other forum type, when using the Q&A forum with groups, you must create the initial “question” for every group.

1. In the forum settings, scroll to the Common module settings.
2. Set the Group mode to Separate groups or Visible groups. You must have the groups already set up set up in your course via Administration>Users>groups.
   - Separate groups - Each group member can only see their own group, others are invisible.
   - Visible groups - Each group member works in their own group, but can also see (not contribute to) other groups.
3. Select a Grouping, if you have assigned your groups to a grouping.
4. Click on Save and display at the bottom of the page.
5. Click Add a new question.
6. Enter the Subject.
7. Type your question in the Message field.
8. Scroll down and check the box Post a copy to all groups.
   
   Note: If you skip this step, you will have to create a new post, or post a question to each group separately. You won’t be able to edit the post in order to check this box.
9. Click Post to forum.