

# Math 113 – Discussions

This course will incorporate discussions inside the Canvas learning management system. The discussion will usually be in a post-first format, which means that you will need to post your initial response before you can see and respond to what other students have written.

The due date in Canvas is the **date the initial post is due**. The discussion continues after this.

After posting your initial response to the discussion question, you should then participate in the follow-up discussion. There is not a required number of posts, but you should demonstrate a pattern of on-going and meaningful communication throughout the discussion.

## Discussion Rubric

### Ratings

All discussions will be graded holistically and assigned one of the following values.

Rating	Score	Description
Awesome	105%	Exceptional job that really impresses the teacher
Good	90%	Beyond what was required
Okay	75%	Satisfactory completion of requirements
Fair	60%	Almost there, but needs some development
Poor	45%	Minimal attempt at completing assignment
None	0%	Did not participate or submission nowhere close to assignment

### Criteria & Desired Results

- The student's participation is evenly spread throughout the discussion period, not concentrated on a single day or at the beginning and/or end of the discussion.
- The initial post addresses all of the major aspects of the discussion question with complete, well-reasoned, and justified answers.
- Paragraphs are used to separate thoughts. APA style citations are used.
- The conversation remains focused on the statistical or critical thinking aspect of the discussion. Your personal opinions, beliefs, and experiences will flavor the discussion and remind us that we are human, but the substance of the posts should be statistical in nature.
- Follow-up discussion contributes to the conversation in a meaningful or significant way. Explain why you agree or disagree, not just that you do.
- The quality level of discussion improves as the semester proceeds.
- Conversations are civil. Disagree with the idea, but respect the person.
- Use the 🍷 button to show your appreciation of comments.

## Purpose of Discussions

A major component of statistical thinking is critical thinking. This is difficult to measure inside the classroom because many people need time to prepare their thoughts. If you demand an immediate response, people fall back to opinion not based in evidence, and often formed by what they been told is true rather than questioning it and deciding for themselves. That is the antithesis of critical thinking and so most of the critical thinking development will occur in the discussions where people can actually take the time to think critically.

Some people may be able to write a paper that shows critical thinking, but a better approach is to engage in a discussion. This allows you the back-and-forth communication to help refine things. It also allows you to benefit from other people questioning what you've written.

You may have had some other classes that use discussions as a way to share your thoughts so that everyone can see them. I view discussions as a way for people to engage each other in a back and forth conversation. If you say your piece and walk-away (make a post but do not follow-up), then it's not a discussion. Discussions are to help students prepare or refine their critical thinking skills. If you share your opinion and never come back to see and respond to what others have written, the discussion fails to accomplish its task.

While most of the discussions will be related to critical thinking, there may be some that are related to classroom management or project development. In addition, there will be some projects with a discussion component to them that may not follow these guidelines.

## Notes

Discussions are normally an area of great confusion because there are two due dates and Canvas does not allow that for a single assignment. The best solution found is to make use the Canvas due date for the initial post and once you submit that initial post, it will disappear from the To Do list. I've added a second non-graded assignment that serves as a reminder that there is follow-up discussion due. The only way to get rid of that is to mark it as completed in the To Do list. However, remember that follow-up discussion is not a one-time thing, so don't be too quick to get rid of it.

Some instructors ask their students to make an initial post and then reply to two students. That is not a discussion, that is a correspondence. If that's all that you're doing, you won't be happy with your grade. I'm looking for a discussion where people talk back and forth with each other.

When I grade the discussions, I look at a variety of information such as: time of first post, time of last post, number of sessions, amount written, number of likes received and given, and percent of responses read. That generally narrows your grade down to one or two levels. I then go in and read the posts and make the final decision based on the quality of the posts.

The holistic approach allows your grade to be based on the entire discussion, not just one part.