

Discussions

General Information:

Each week, there will be one or more discussion topics. To make the most of it, you should visit the discussion board as frequently as you can. This way, you'll be able to keep up with the postings and with how the discussion is developing.

You are expected to post at least TWICE during any given week: one response during the first part of the week, and another message during the second part of the week. Especially in the second posting, you should be sure to comment on another person's posting (synthesizing ideas, building new ideas, etc). This will naturally move the discussion forward. Of course, you are welcome to post more than twice during the week.

Each discussion should include at least two posts, worth up to 5 points each. The weekly discussion overall will be worth a total of 10 points.

Sample discussion responses. Please study these carefully so you know what is expected:

5 points = entirely clear, relevant, tied in with other's comments, sufficiently detailed, and contributing additional information to further discussion. A citation is included for information coming from a source.

Ex: As Ahmed and Nargas have said, the four-skills approach is an excellent way to teach language. However, I think depending on your field, some skills are more important than others. For example, if you are a researcher, you probably need more reading and writing skills. However, if you are a salesperson for an international company, you probably need to do negotiations and meet clients face to face, so speaking and listening skills are important. Some people say you cannot separate the skills, which is true, but I think certain skills are more important than others depending on the situation. For more on this topic, I recommend the article:

<http://www.cal.org/resources/Digest/0105oxford.html>, Integrated Skills in the ESL/EFL Classroom (2001) from Rebecca Oxford, University of Maryland.

3 - 4 points = mostly clear, relevant, and tied in with others' comments. It may be much longer than necessary to make the point or have lengthy quotations rather than summaries.

Ex: Yes, I agree with Ahmed and Nargas. The four-skills approach is an excellent way to teach language. However, I think that depending on your field, some skills are more important than other skills. Also, it depends on the purpose you have for studying English.

1 – 2 points = too short, unclear, off-topic, not connected with others' responses

Ex. 1: *Dear _____, I agree with you. Thanks.*

Ex. 2: *Yes, I am in favor of using a four-skills approach in language teaching. This is a good idea because it gives students a chance to practice listening, writing, speaking and listening.* (post continues with no reference to the reading and no connection to what others have said).

0 points = no posting before the deadline or the use of material from another source that is not cited.

Common problems that will result in point deductions:

1) The response is minimal, not addressing the original prompt

2) There is no connection or minimal connection to another colleague's ideas

Ex: "I agree with Susan" is insufficient. You should be able to elaborate on what exactly you agree with or disagree with (paraphrase) in another person's message

3) The response is hard to understand, wordy, or too lengthy

Keep in mind that posts should be succinct and clear. If you include too many ideas in a message, the chances of it being read by others drop. We will have plenty of reading each week, so keep your messages relatively brief and to the point. This also resembles a real discussion in which people exchange ideas in manageable chunks.

4) The language used is unprofessional. There may be spelling and punctuation errors that interfere with meaning.

Please use the spell check and follow academic writing conventions. Though we want to build a friendly and collegial atmosphere, we also want to maintain a certain level of formality and professionalism. Please avoid using phone texting language/spelling.

5) A large portion of the response is quoted material (copied & pasted), which is not or is only loosely tied to the rest of the submission.

Quote judiciously. Try to paraphrase as much as possible, include your sources, and be sure that you go on to explain the significance or relevance of ideas.

6) Quoted or copied/pasted material has not been cited.