

DISCUSSION FORUM POST

What is it?

This task requires you to respond to questions posted in an online forum. An online Discussion Forum Post is often used as the first assessment in the unit. As an assessment, it can sometimes be referred to as a **Provocative Question, Hurdle Task, Reading Summary, or Discussion Forum.**

This task is an opportunity for you to build opinions about the unit content, find evidence to support your opinions, and respond to the opinions of your peers in written form.

You need to check your unit guide for the specific requirements of the task.

Content

To successfully complete the task, you are often required to:

1. Respond to course content
2. Submit responses to questions
3. Submit a response to a peer's post or write a personal response to the question

The question or prompt might be posted in your class space. Ask your educator for correct location to post the assessment.

Analyse the question

Good short answer responses are relevant to the question. Read each question carefully and pay attention to the instruction words like identify, explain, compare, discuss, analyse and so on. To determine exactly what the question is asking of you, it is a good idea to underline key words and phrases. This is called [unpacking](#) the question.

Brainstorm ideas

After analysing the question, brainstorm ideas for your response and look for information in your course materials to help support your ideas. You may incorporate information from your learning materials or other sources, but you must write in your response in your own words. This is called [paraphrasing](#).



Structure your responses

Your response needs to be written as a structured paragraph that includes a short summary of the topic and your analysis of the main idea. You should include at least one reference to support your argument. Check the unit guide to see if you are required to include a reference in your responses and the word count for each response. To improve the flow between sentences you should include [linking words](#).

Paragraph structure

1. Start the paragraph with a clear topic sentence that introduces the main idea of your forum post.
2. Explain your position on the topic. Include questions that remain unanswered or limitations and disagreements or counter arguments.
3. Give an example to support your answer and/or include an in-text reference to further support your position (check the assessment instructions to see if this is a requirement).
4. Explain your position on the topic developing your ideas further ([critically analyse](#)).
5. Write a concluding sentence to end the paragraph finishing off the idea.
6. Write the paragraph using a formal academic style.

Sample of student hurdle post

Response to Question

*samples of Hurdle Task in the Discipline of Counselling

The idea that positive emotions can play an active role in sustainable happiness is an interesting one to me, in particular, the idea that we have a 'happiness set point'. Sheldon and Lyubormirsky (2004, as cited in Sheldon & Lucas, 2014) state that this 'set point' is a direct result of 50% -60% of external factors, such as our hereditary or early experiences but we still have 40% of that within our control. Do we have a default level of happiness that we return to over time? This would definitely vary from individual to individual, however, I agree that it is important to remember that individuals can have control over their reactions, activities, environment, regardless of what has happened to them. I think this is an essential part of our counselling practice, assisting the client to feel in control again of some of the things that they can actually control in their lives. [148 words]

Sheldon, K. M., & Lucas, R. E. (2014). *Stability of happiness: Theories and evidence on whether happiness can change*. Elsevier Science & Technology.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Sample Student forum reply

Response to Peer

Hi Mel,

I think it also comes down to how we define happiness. I feel like it is all about how satisfied overall you feel with your life and feeling positive emotions more often than negative emotions. Personally, it has been a useful process to explore this definition. I think the main idea would be working with the client to help them to discern what happiness means to them (rather than imposing a pre-conceived definition onto the client). I think that this would be a useful conversation to have. It is also important to listen to exactly where the person is at, at that particular time of their life, as the definition could change over time. (116 words)

Steps to complete the task:

Step one

Create a word document

- Create a word document titled Discussion Forum Assessment 1 and the unit number. You need to write your answers in a word document so you can use the necessary tools to check your work (spelling, grammar, punctuation), upload your assessment to [Turnitin](#), and in some cases submit all your posts in one documents. Check with your Educator about the specified submitting requirements.

Step two

Write your response to the question

- Check with your educator to see if you need to use [third person](#) (no use of I, me, my, we).
- Write a logically developed paragraph applying the paragraph structure outlined above.
- Include a reference to support your idea.
- Check the word count, as specified in your unit guide or by your Educator.

Step Three

Write your response to your peer's forum post

Consider:

- What did you agree with in your peer's post?
- What questions did this raise for you?
- What did you disagree with in your peer's post?

- Check with your Educator to see if you can use [first person](#) (I, me, my, we).
- Write a logically developed response paragraph.
- Check the word count, as specified in your unit guide or by your Educator.

Step Four

Post both paragraphs back into the class space in the weeks stipulated in the assessment instructions.

- Proofread both paragraphs for spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Check the presentation requirements specified in the unit outline.
- Check to see if a reference list is required at the bottom of the post.
- Upload your assessment to Turnitin, if specified as a requirement.
- Copy and paste your response to the question back into the discussion forum in your class space.
- Copy and paste your response to your peer's paragraph back into the discussion forum in your class space.

Step Five (Hurdle Task only – Submitting end of trimester)

- Always check the instructions for the assessment in your unit guide at the start of the trimester as some units require you to submit all your hurdle tasks in a word document at the end of the trimester. The unit guide may also stipulate the minimum number of forum posts and responses to peers' you need to provide.
- Attach an ACAP assignment cover sheet if you are required to submit the posts in a word document.