


How Do I Start a New Topic?

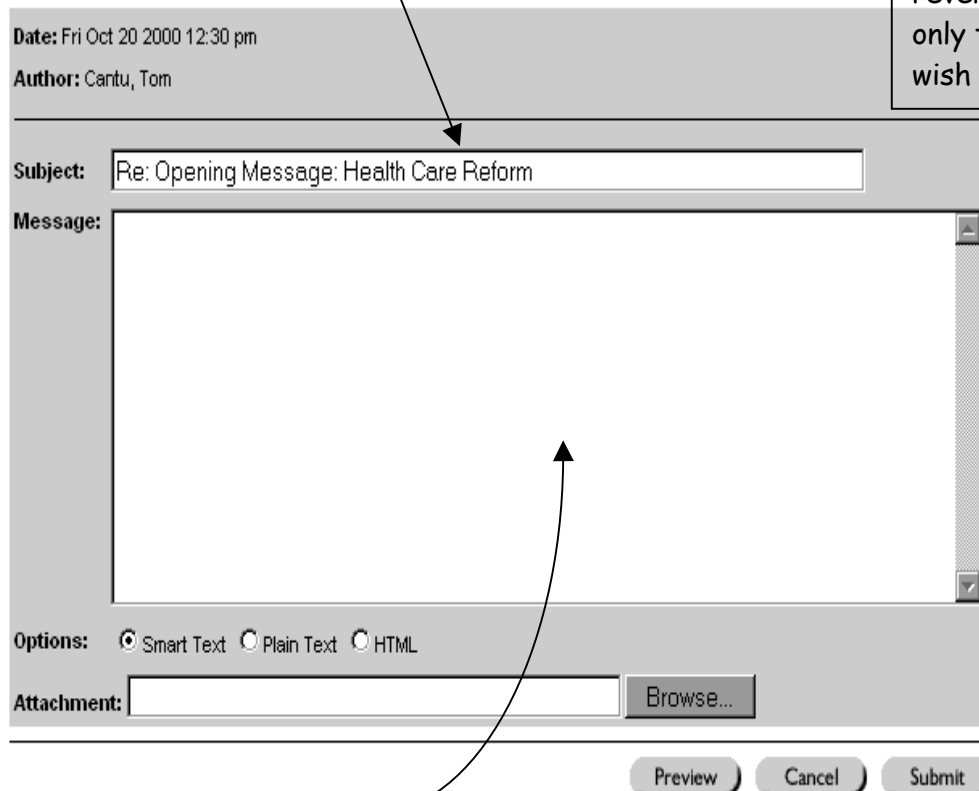
“I had a really good idea to post in the discussion board, but the Add New Thread button is turned off and I couldn’t figure out how to post my idea without it getting lost. How do I start a new topic?”

Your instructor may have turned the Add New Thread button off as means of keeping the discussion forum organized, because a well-organized discussion forum can become a valuable resource for the course.

To Start a New Topic

1. Open the first message in the thread. Often, this will be the instructor’s opening message for that discussion thread. (This step is critical to placing your message at the bottom of the list of posted messages)
2. Click Reply to get the reply message field.  The Reply window should look like the one below.
3. Change the subject line.

Note: If there are several threads in the forum, use the directions on the reverse side to open only the thread you wish to view.



The screenshot shows a web-based reply form. At the top, it displays the date and author of the original message: "Date: Fri Oct 20 2000 12:30 pm" and "Author: Cantu, Tom". Below this is a "Subject:" field containing the text "Re: Opening Message: Health Care Reform". The main part of the form is a large, empty "Message:" text area with a vertical scrollbar on the right. At the bottom of the form, there are "Options:" with three radio buttons: "Smart Text" (selected), "Plain Text", and "HTML". Below the options is an "Attachment:" field with a "Browse..." button. At the very bottom of the form are three buttons: "Preview", "Cancel", and "Submit".

4. Type your message.
5. Click Submit.

How can I tell if I have done it correctly?

You will know that you have correctly started a new topic when two things occur:

- First, your message should appear at the bottom of the current list of posted messages.
- Second, your message should have a subject line that describes the topic you are introducing.

There are so many messages, I can't find the thread I want.

If there are several threads in the forum you may need to rearrange the view.

Here's how:

- First, click on Collapse All to view a list of all of the threads in the forum.
- Second, open the thread you wish to read by clicking on the + sign next to that thread (topic).

| VIEW UNREAD MESSAGES ▼ | | | EXPAND ALL + | COLLAPSE ALL - | SEARCH ? |
|--|---------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------|
| SHOW OPTIONS | | | | | |
| + First Thread: Bird by Bird | Pippen, Carol | Fri Sep 15 2000 10:57 am | | | |
| + Montaigne's Definition of an Essay | Pippen, Carol | Thu Sep 28 2000 1:37 pm | | | |
| + Essays and Memories | Pippen, Carol | Sat Sep 30 2000 11:00 am | | | |
| + "Why I Write" and "On Keeping a Not... | Pippen, Carol | Sun Oct 1 2000 9:44 pm | | | |
| + "A Drugstore in Winter" | Pippen, Carol | Sun Oct 1 2000 9:52 pm | | | |

Some Tips:

Keep your subject line to a maximum of about 35 characters, including spaces. Anything beyond 35 characters may be cut off. See the example above.

It is a good practice to compose your message in a word processor. When you are confident that your message says what you want it to say, copy and paste your message into the discussion board. This will save you from the experience of losing a well-crafted thought when your browser crashes or you resize the browser window.