

5 WAYS TO ACE DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENTS IN AN ONLINE CLASS

Adapted from article written by: Devon Haynie

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01

READ DIRECTIONS

The biggest key to doing well on a discussion board is simply reading the teacher's instructions, says Noam Ebner, who leads the online graduate program in negotiation and conflict resolution at Creighton University's law school. "Read the syllabus," he says. "In the syllabus teachers often say straight out, 'This is what we want.'"

02

SAY SOMETHING SUBSTANTIVE

While online instructors want to hear student opinions on discussion boards, they want those opinions to be backed up by facts. Citing sources from inside and out of class can cut back on plagiarism and make a student's argument seem more legitimate, Reese says.

03

DON'T PROCRASTINATE

"Participate early and not at the deadline," says Brian Redmond, a senior lecturer within the psychology department at Penn State. "If everybody participates at the deadline, the quality of the conversation is very, very surface level and doesn't delve anywhere close to where it should be for a thoughtful and informative discussion."

04

ASK A QUESTION IF YOU'RE CONFUSED

"Contact your instructor if you don't understand what you are supposed to be doing," says Reese, with Daytona State. "Don't be influenced by others, they might not know what they are doing."

05

REVIEW WORDS FOR CLARITY AND TONE

Use text speak in a discussion post, and your instructor will not be LOL, experts say. Students should write in clear, complete sentences. Swear words, writing in all capital letters and using multiple exclamation points are off limits.