

Using an online discussion board

A discussion board can be a great tool for allowing each of us to express our ideas and thoughts about a topic.

Using the board itself will take a little getting used to.

There are two basic functions: start a new topic, or reply. The “start a new topic” function allows you to start your own discussion “thread.” (A thread is a list of messages posted in response to a “new topic.”) When you begin your own topic, others will read your topic and post a reply... you, or others can then respond to that reply by placing another reply. The idea is that you will be carrying on a conversation with your classmates in a non-synchronized fashion (asynchronous).

It sounds more complicated than it really is.

Once everyone has signed into the discussion boards, you will only be able to view the discussion boards associated with your class periods and the boards in the “general” category.

You will begin by going to the board associated with your class period and looking for the orange topic title “Winter Break.” You will then click the small “Start New Topic” button and fill in the subject and message blanks. Tell us about your break. What did you do? Did you go somewhere? Did you see a good movie? Read a good book?

When you finish click “post.” This will put your topic on to the discussion board.

The second thing you need to do is to read through your classmate’s posts and post a reply to their topic. You will do this by clicking the small “reply” button below their topic post. Reply to them about their topic. Remember, you are carrying on a conversation – at a distance.

REMEMBER, people will be reading these message threads. Keep your posts short and to the point. It is always a good idea to write your posts out in a word processing program (like Word) and then cut and paste your topic or reply into the board. This will allow you to use the spell checker, etc.

ALSO remember to use classroom behavior. It is easy to slip with a rude or disrespectful comment online since you are not looking the poster in the face. Please carefully consider your words BEFORE you put them in print for everyone to see.

Have fun with this. I hope you enjoy it.