

Discussion boards

The purpose of a discussion board is to facilitate student-to-student discussion outside the class. Your tutor might set you a specific task or topic each week, or it might be there simply for you to continue and extend discussions from class. But the point is that you are talking to each other, not to the tutor.

So with that in mind, here are some tips:

- When the tutor sets a specific question or task, make sure you **answer it**. Read it fully and understand what's expected of you.
- **Respond** to other students' comments. Don't be afraid to disagree - do so politely, for example by asking a question, or to clarify their point, before explaining your position. If you think they've said something good, agree, and add something else, like an example or a reference. Be constructive.
- Include information from your **reading**. Mention the books, articles, and websites that you have read to back up your point. Refer to lectures too, or link to other resources not on the reading list that you think are relevant. Remember that you will still be expected to paraphrase, summarise and reference - copying from Wikipedia isn't going to convince anyone.
- If you don't know what to say, **ask a question**, or explain why you have nothing add. It might be that the reason the topic isn't interesting for you is actually itself an interesting contribution. Reflect on why it isn't grabbing your attention or what it is that's confusing you.
- **Elaborate** and explain. Avoid one word or one line posts. This is a chance to say what you actually think, your own personal idea or take on the module or topic.

This is a guide to help you understand what to write in these tasks. If you are having technical difficulties with NILE, please refer to the [Learning Technology Team](#).

Below is an example of a discussion board conversation where the tutor has set a particular question. Notice that the students are giving full answers, references to where they got their information and examples, and responding to previous comments in the discussion rather than repeating.

Tutor

2. To what extent does social media give fans and organizations the power to make or break sport celebrities?

8 months ago

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Please discuss...

Reply
Quote
Edit
Delete

Joe Bloggs

RE: 2. To what extent does social media give fans and organizations the power to make or break sport celebrities?

7 months ago

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Social media can dramatically affect the images of sports celebrities and they can use it to take control of this themselves. Athletes can be thought of as a personal brand, and can use charity events or awareness raising to create a positive media image (Howes, *et al.*, 2010). They can also use social media to manage releasing important information about themselves. Tom Daley, for example, came out to the public over social media in order to communicate directly with his fans (Sanderson, 2013).

Howes L., Howes, L. and Howes, L. (2010). How Athletes Can Build Their Personal Brand | Sports NetworkerSports Networker Available at: <http://www.sportsnetworker.com/2010/02/18/how-athletes-can-build-their-person-brand/>

Sanderson, J. (2013) From Loving the Hero to Despising the Villain: Sports Fans, Facebook, and Social Identity Threats. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16 (4), pp. 491-508.

Jamila Biggs

RE: 2. To what extent does social media give fans and organizations the power to make or break sport celebrities?

7 months ago

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

I agree with you that social media can have a significant impact on sport celebrities. But I don't think this always works in their favour. For example, Rio Ferdinand was recently banned from 3 games for misconduct on Twitter, which has negatively affected both his team's brand, and his own personal brand (Rumsby, 2014). Similarly, in the USA, NFL star Rashard Mendenhall lost a sponsorship deal after some controversial tweets about 9/11 (NBC, 2011). So while social media can be used to advance the career and image of sport celebrities, it can also damage them.

NBC (2011) Rashard Mendenhall loses endorsement deal with Champion. *NBC* [online] Available from: <http://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2011/05/05/rashard-mendenhall-loses-endorsement-deal-with-champion/> [Accessed 11 November, 2014]

Rumsby, B. (2014). Rio Ferdinand will not appeal against 'sket' ban because he believes FA disciplinary system is flawed. *The Telegraph* [online] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/football/teams/queens-park-rangers/11207820/Rio-Ferdinand-will-not-appeal-against-sket-ban-because-he-believes-FA-disciplinary-system-is-flawed.html> [Accessed 11 November, 2014]

Reply
Quote
Edit
Delete
Email Author

Chris Tee

RE: 2. To what extent does social media give fans and organizations the power to make or break sport celebrities?

7 months ago

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

However, there are cases when social media doesn't impact a player's career so much. Luis Suarez, for example, was widely ridiculed in the press after numerous incidents including biting other players (Cowley, 2014). Yet he continued to be employed by football clubs, despite his behaviour, and maintained his performance on the pitch. This suggests that in this case, social media did not have the power to 'make or break' his career.

Cowley, M. (2014) FIFA Charges Luis Suárez in Biting Incident. *The Wall Street Journal*, Available from <http://online.wsj.com/articles/fifa-charges-luis-suarez-in-biting-incident-1403670784>. [Accessed 11 November, 2014]

▲ Hide 2 replies (2 unread)

These examples illustrate an informal academic writing style. You can see that while the students are not using slang, they are writing in the first person (using 'I'), using contractions ('don't'), and intensifying language ('dramatically'). In formal academic style, these would be avoided in favour of impersonal, objective, cautious language. But in the context of a discussion board, this type of writing style is appropriate.

Student Comment - Discussion boards

Some courses use discussion boards more than others. For instance, my course only officially used them once over three years. I say officially because we only had a single discussion board assignment, but we were able to use them the whole time we were studying.

On every Nile site, the lectures can opt to enable a group discussion board. If you haven't got one, ask for one; they're a perfect environment to ask and get questions answered. Think of a discussion board as a virtual, twenty-four hour seminar; every time you post, your peers and tutors are notified and are able to reply and interact with what you've written.

Some students use the discussion boards more than others, it just depends on your preferences. I used to post in the module discussion boards fairly regularly; I'd use the platform to share journal articles, or other bits of information. By doing this, I received responses from other students and learnt a considerable amount from the discussions that were ignited. Also, in my first year I was particularly struggling with an assignment I just didn't understand. Posting in the discussion board forced me to think about the aspects I needed clarification on. Luckily for me, the lecturer responded to my SOS posting with clear examples that helped everybody who was active in the discussion thread.

Even if you don't post any questions or respond to the treads, familiarise yourself with how they work; most courses have an assignment where they are looking for 'Student Interaction'. This is where it is evident that you are responding to your peers' thinking and a discussion board tends to be the method used to show this. They do this by asking you to finishing your "posting" with a question, which others can respond to. If you're like me and your course doesn't do an assignment like this until towards the end of the year, it's likely no one would be available to show you how the postings work and you might find the layout overwhelming at first. Basically, posting on the boards works just like an email, but instead of pressing send, you press post! However, it can be difficult to distinguish relevant posts amid the apparent random organisation of "threads", so it is worth looking at how they work before you actually have an assignment where you need to use it.

NB: If you are struggling with how to use a discussion board, try the [NILE help pages](#).