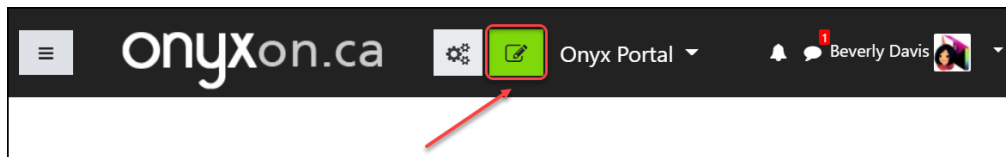# The Forum Activity

The *Forum* activity allows the users to discuss topics with other members of a course asynchronously. These topics can range from teachers adding course announcements to learners introducing themselves, discussing their study materials, continuing a discussion from an online class, giving study tips or learning advice to each other, and having private discussions.

There are several types of Forums. A *Standard Forum* is one that anyone can start at any time. A *Question and Answer Forum* allows users to view a thread only after they have posted their own response to the *Forum*. In another type of *Forum*, the user can only respond to one discussion.

Instructors can choose to add files or images to a *Forum* to make it more informative and interesting. They can also set the *Forum* activity so one user's post can be rated by others.
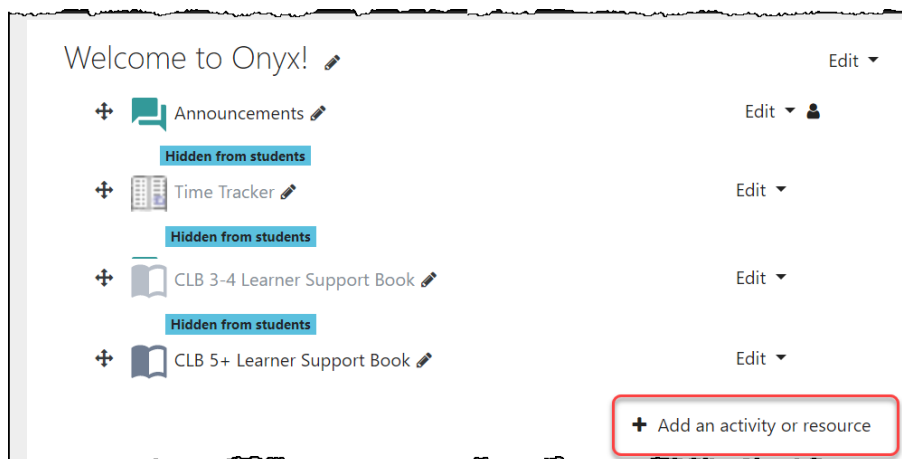
Adding a Forum to a Course

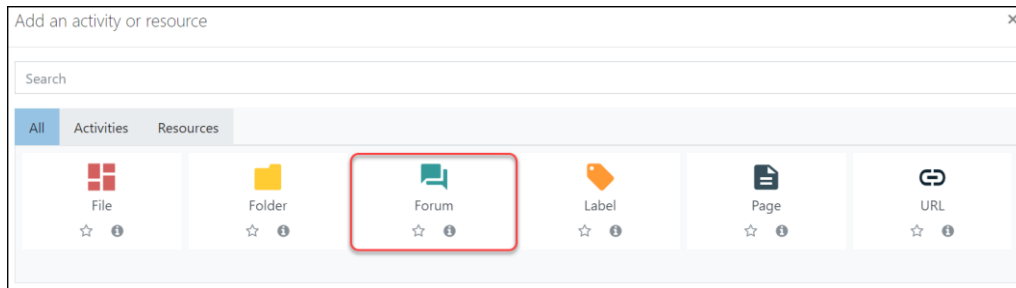1. Navigate to the top of the page and click on the *Turn edit on* button.

Note that the *Turn edit on* button turns red.

2. Locate the *Topic* or *Unit* where you want to add the *Forum*. For this example, the *Zero Topic* is chosen.

3. Click on the +*Add an activity or resource* link at the bottom of that topic.
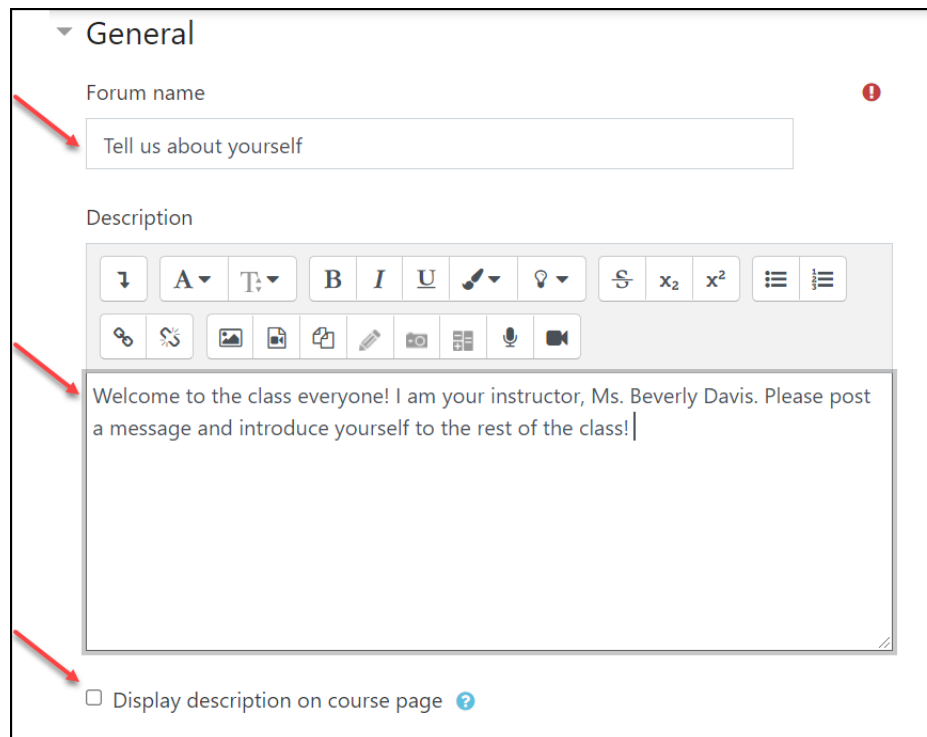
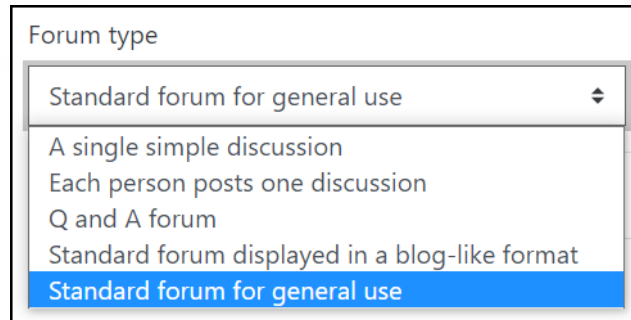The *Add an activity or resource* panel appears.

4. Select *Forum*

5. In the *General* section, input a descriptive *Forum name*.
6. Type a *Forum Description*.
7. Choose whether to show the description on the course main page.

8. From the *Forum Type* menu, choose one of the options. There are five types.
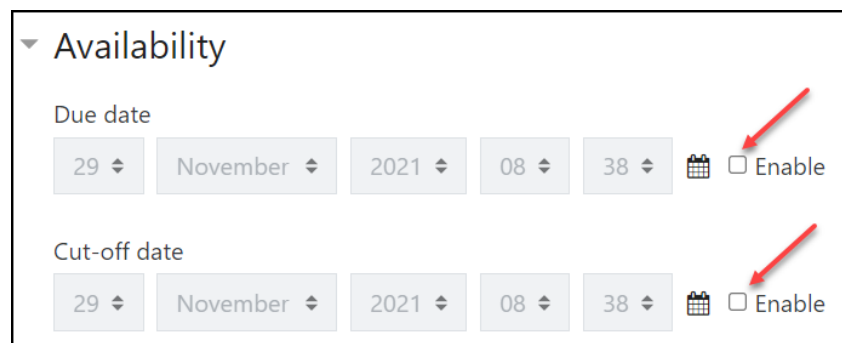
- *A single simple discussion* – all users can reply to a discussion topic
- *Each person posts one discussion* – each user can post exactly one new topic that everyone can reply to
- *Q and A forum* – each user should post their opinion about a question before being able to see posts from others
- *Standard forum displayed in a blog-like format* – any user is able to start a new discussion at anytime
- *Standard forum for general use* - all users can add a post at any time

9. Use the availability settings to set a *Due date* and *Cut-off* date. Note that the *Enable* boxes must be ticked before dates and times can be set.

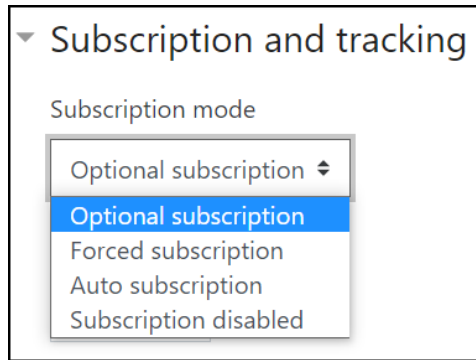10. Configure the *Attachments and word count* setting by choosing the *Maximum attachment size*, *Maximum number of attachments* and whether to *Display the word count* or not.
11. Configure the *Subscription and tracking* setting to set whether learners receive notifications of new posts or not. There are four settings.
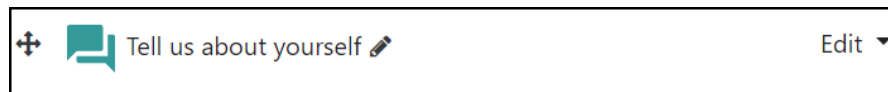
- *Optional subscription* allows users to choose whether they want to receive notifications or not.
- *Forced subscription* sends notifications to users, and users cannot unsubscribe from receiving notifications.
- *Auto subscription* sends notifications to users by default, but they can choose to opt out and unsubscribe if they wish.
- *Subscription disabled* does not allow users to subscribe.

12. If you need to lock a discussion after a specific time so learners can no longer respond to the post, choose one of the *Discussion locking* settings.
13. To prevent learners from posting more than a certain number of responses to a post during a specific period, configure the *Post threshold for blocking* setting.
14. *Whole forum grading* allows instructors to choose a grading system for learner posts. Choose to allocate no grades, or grade learner posts using a *Scale* or *Point* system.
15. Each *Forum* post can be rated by the learners. The *Aggregate type* menu allows you to choose how the ratings will be calculated for the gradebook. There are six options.

- If *No ratings* is selected, no grades will be sent to the gradebook.
- If *Average of ratings* is selected, the mean of all ratings will be calculated and sent to the gradebook.
- If *Count of ratings* is chosen, the number of rated posts would be sent to the gradebook.
- If *Maximum rating* is selected, the highest rate will be considered as the final grade.
- If *Minimum rating* is selected, the lowest rating will be considered as the final grade.
- If *Sum of ratings* is chosen, all ratings will be added up and the total will be sent to the gradebook.

16. The remaining settings are common to other Onyx activities. When all options are set, click on the *Save and return to the course* button.

The new *Forum* appears at the bottom of the topic.

17. Drag the *Forum* to its desired location on the course main page using the *Move* icon.

18. Click on the *Turn edit off* button.