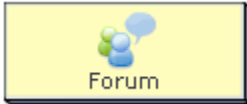


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Forum

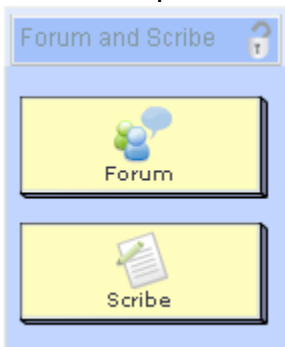


The **Forum Activity** provides an asynchronous discussion environment for learners, with discussion threads initially created by the teacher.

Forums can be 'locked' as an activity which is only available for the period of the specific activity (ie: no more contributions can be made once the learner clicks 'Finish', or they can be 'unlocked', in that learners can add to the Forum throughout the life of the whole sequence.

A small, dark, rectangular icon with a film strip border, representing an animated tutorial.	<p>Animated Tutorial This animation explains how to create and use the Forum Activity</p>
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Forum in Split-Screen Activities



Forum and Scribe

The **Forum and Scribe Activity** combines a *Forum Activity* with a *Scribe Activity* for collating Forum Postings into a written report. When used in small group mode, the tool creates parallel Forum and Scribe areas for each small group, and then shows the outcome of each group collated on a whole class page.



Forum and Share Resources

The **Share Resources and Forum Activity** combines a *Forum Activity* with a *Share Resources Activity* which allows Learners to create Forum postings based on resources provided by the sequence author, or from resources that they add to the activity themselves. When used in small group mode, the tool creates parallel Forum and Scribe areas for each small group, and then shows the outcome of each group collated on a whole class page.

Forum Activity Authoring

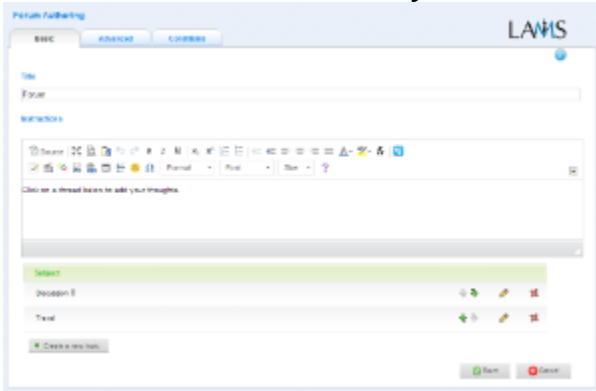
| [Basic Tab](#) | [Advanced Tab](#) | [Conditions](#)

All properties sheets contain three tabs:

- The **Basic** tab controls the content of the activity.
- The **Advanced** tab controls how the activity behaves.

- An additional **Conditions** tab is visible where the activity allows Authors to customise the activity outputs for branching or grouping operations.

Basic tab for the Forum Activity



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There are two features on the basic tab common to all activities:

- **Title:** All Activities have a web page title which is presented at the top of the activity page when displayed in the Learning Environment. This is *NOT* the same title as the Title that can be set using the [Properties Inspector](#).
- **Instructions:** All Activities have a text area that is presented beneath the title. This is where the main activity text to be displayed to learners is entered. The text can be formatted using the Rich-Text Editor. Image, Video, Audio and URL content can also be displayed in the Instructions area.

Specific Feature for the Forum Activity

- **Forum Topics**
 - To create a new Forum Topic, click "+ Create a New Topic". A new text box will open on the properties sheet where you can create the new topic.
 - **Subject:** This is the title of the Forum Topic, and is displayed on the main Forum Screen in the Learning Environment.
 - **Body:** This is where the content of the Forum Topic is created. To view the topic body, learners click on the Forum Title in the Learning Environment.
 - **Attachment:** Files such as documents, pictures or audiovisuals can be added to a forum topic for viewing/downloading.
 - To change the order in which topics are displayed, use the Green up and down arrows.
 - To edit a topic, click the Yellow pencil.
 - To delete a topic, click the Red cross.

Advanced tab for the Forum Activity



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- **Lock When Finished:**
 - Enabling this option in Forum means that learner's will only be able to contribute and/or edit postings until they click the "Finish" button. If afterwards they return to the Forum, they will only see a history record of the Forum session, and will not be able to create new posts or topics.
 - If this option is disabled, the Forum session will be available for contribution and editing until the sequence is stopped by a monitor.
- **Add Notebook...** : This option is available on all Activities. Enabling this option on Forum prevents learners from adding more files to the activity. Once Learners click 'Finish', the activity is marked as Read Only for that learner. Learners can still return to the activity using the progress bar to view their uploaded files.

Advanced Features Specific to the Forum Activity

- **Allow Learners to Change their own postings:** When enabled, this option allows learners to edit postings once they are part of the forum. The default is 'on.'
- **Allow Learners to rate each other's postings:** This option specify the number of messages that learners are able to rate.
- **Allow Learners to Upload Files:** This feature allows learners to add attachments to their forum postings. The default setting is 'off.'
- **Allow Learners to use Rich Text Editor:** This feature allows learners to add formatting effects to their postings. The default is 'off.'
- **Maximum number of characters per posting:** The length of each individual post to the forum can be limited by using this setting. The default is enabled with 5000 characters.
- **On new postings send email to learners and instructors:** This feature sends an e-mail message to learners or instructors and both as well.
- **Notify learners when marks are released:** Sends an email message to learners when Monitors release marks for the activity.
 - ⚠ This feature requires an SMTP server to be configured in [System Administration]LAMS
- **Posting Limits:** Only one of these options can be enabled for each specific forum.
 - Allow Learners to Create New Topics: This allows learners to add new forum topics to the activity. This setting is enabled by default.
 - Number of Posts per Learner per Topic: This specifies how many postings Learners are permitted to add before they can progress to the next activity. This setting is disabled by default.

Branching Conditions for Forum

Learner's Number of Postings in the forum.

This condition is based on the total number of posts that a learner/participant had made in a forum. The condition is expressed as a number. For example, if Sally has added two messages to one thread, and one message to another thread in the SAME forum activity, the total number of posts is 3.

So for branching, an author could set up conditions so that all users who have 0 to 5 postings go to one branch, whereas the users who have 6 or more postings go to another branch. The number of postings is checked when the user reaches the branching point so if they go back to the forum later and add more postings, then they will NOT change branches.



This condition is available automatically to Branching and Grouping objects. No additional setup is required.

Internationalisation key (for translators): output.desc.learner.number.of.posts

Adding Text-Based Conditions to a Forum

Most activities now support text-based conditions. This means that learners can be assigned to [groups](#) or streamed to different [branches](#) according to their responses to an Activity.

- To add a new condition to an activity, first click the **Conditions Tab** at the top of the screen, then click **Add Condition**.
 - A unique name must be given to each condition created for the activity. It's best practice to relate the name to what the condition is testing for, such as: *"Answered Blue"* or *"Mentioned Oxygen"*.
- For each condition, there are several options for how to search the Learners responses:
 - **Have all of these words:** will separate the learners who have entered each of the given words as part of their response.
 - **Have this exact wording:** will separate the learners who have entered the exact phrase as part their response.
 - **Have none of these words:** will separate the learners who have mentioned **at least one** of the given words as part of their response.
 - **Have none of these unwanted words:** separates the learners who **have not** mentioned any of the given words.
- These rules can be used simultaneously, and also can be applied to one or more separate questions.

Text-based conditions are **not** case sensitive. That is, searching for 'Sheep' will return both 'sheep' and 'Sheep'

Examples:

Conditions can be very specific:

To separate the learners who have replied with **Foo** and **Bar** in their response:

have all these words:	foo bar
have this exact wording or phrasing:	
have one or more of these words:	
have none of these unwanted words:	

... *less specific*...

To separate the learners who have replied with either **Foo** or **Bar**:

have all these words:	
have this exact wording or phrasing:	
have one or more of these words:	foo bar
have none of these unwanted words:	

... *and very complex!*

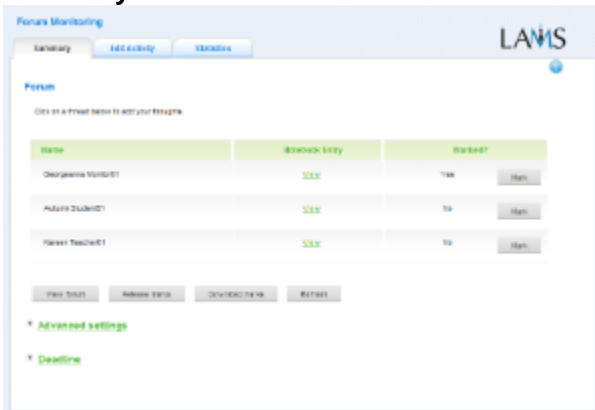
To separate the learners who have:

- replied **Foo**
- replied **Bat** or **Bar**
- but not replied with **Foo**bar

have all these words:	bat
have this exact wording or phrasing:	
have one or more of these words:	bat bar
have none of these unwanted words:	foobar

Monitoring Forum

Summary Tab



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The **Forum Summary** screen presents marking features, much like [Submit Files](#). If the activity has been modified by a [Grouping activity](#), the Screen will be separated into different areas for each group (in the figure, the groups shown are *Group 2* and *Group 4*.)

Monitors can assign a numerical mark to Learner postings either by viewing the Forum (click *View Forum*) which will allow a mark to be assigned to each individual Learner posting, or by assigning a mark for the entire forum, by clicking *Mark*.

In order for Learners to be able to view their marks through LAMS, the Monitor must click the *_Release Marks*" button. Learners will then be able to re-enter the sequence through their own LAMS accounts and view their marks.

Edit Activity

Clicking the **Edit Activity** button opens a new screen identical to the *_Basic_* tab in the authoring environment. In the current version of LAMS (2.5), Editing can only be performed on activities that students have not yet reached.

Unlike **Live Edit**, this form of Editing can only modify the content of an activity, as opposed to the structure of a sequence.

Statistics

Forum Monitoring

Summary | Log Activity | **Statistics**

Select table action buttons

Subject	# of Msg	Avg mark
Discussion	4	4.5
Total	4	6

of total messages: 5

Average message mark: 2.5

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The **Forum Statistics** tab displays statistics about the number of messages posted in each Forum, and the Average marks that have been assigned by the Monitor.
