

## Do's and Don'ts of Online Posts

Many students who enroll in online classes often participate in online discussion boards. Professors might ask students to respond to a question, comment on the lecture, or share their ideas about a topic. Although discussion boards tend to be informal, students' responses should be appropriate and professional. After reading this handout, you will know the do's and don'ts of online posts.

### Sample Discussion Board

Topic: What are the positive and negative effects of social media on society? Please keep your responses to a maximum of 200 words.

Below are sample student responses to this topic:

#### *Lengthy Lauren*

Hello everyone! I believe that social media has a negative effect on our society. I have read a lot of articles about this topic, and many people have said that young people are especially affected by social media because they use it every day. It can be very addicting, and research from famous studies shows that kids spend nine hours on social media every day. That is so much time! I know how addicting social media can be because I spend hours each day checking my Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. I really enjoy posting pictures and updates of my life online and seeing what my friends are up to. It makes me feel connected to the world.

I also read another article from this website called BuzzFeed about how social media is bad because excessive usage leads to poor academic performance. This makes sense because if you are spending a lot of time using social media, then you are spending less time studying for tests.

There was also another article from this website called socialmediaforkidz.com. I read about how social media can lower your self-esteem. It was saying that people who use social media tend to compare their lives to others' lives. They might get jealous if they see that one of their friends got a new car and then start thinking about how they are not as rich as other people.

#### *Unoriginal Ursula*

I agree with everything you just said, Lauren!

### ***Off-Topic Owen***

Social media has a negative effect on our society. Do you know what else does? Violent video games. Youth are more impacted by playing violent video games than by using social media. For example, the shooter who was responsible for the mass murder at Sandy Hook Elementary played *Call of Duty*.

### ***Perfect Polly***

Owen, although you brought up a good point that violent video games negatively impact our society, the topic is about social media usage. Your thoughts led me to think about how violence can be related to social media; while watching the evening news on NBC, I have heard stories about teenagers who get bullied on social media sites, such as Facebook. For example, some classmates continued to post mean, hurtful comments on her Facebook page. Sadly, some of these teenagers have committed suicide because they could not handle the harassment. Therefore, I believe that social media can have a negative effect on our society.

### ***Aggressive Andy***

Social media is so lame. It only has a negative effect on you if you're someone like Lauren who is obsessed with herself and with other people's lives...Only vain, superficial people have social media accounts. I only use the Internet for an hour each day.

### ***Excessive Emily***

OMG Andy!!! That is SO rude. Don't be so judgmental. ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺

### ***Balanced Bob***

It was interesting to read everyone's opinions about the effects of social media on our society. I can see how social media is both positive and negative. However, I think that social media is more positive than negative. Social media allows people to network with others. LinkedIn is an example of social media. A lot of people see it as a professional version of Facebook. Personally, I have connected with professors and companies on LinkedIn that I am interested in doing an internship with. They are able to view my work experience and can gain an understanding of what kind of a student and person I am. I also have my resume and cover letter available for them to view. Perhaps the effect of social media on each person depends on the way the individual is using it.

### ***Redundant Randy***

I think that social media is positive because you can connect with professionals in your field of study. If you want to get hired by a certain company, you can show off your skills and past experiences.

### **Overview of Do's and Don'ts**

Based on the discussion above, let's analyze who contributed in a professional, appropriate way to the topic and who needs to revise their comments.

<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>
Write a concise response and cite information from credible sources. <b>(Perfect Polly)</b>	Write an excessively long response and cite findings that are from unreliable sources. <b>(Lengthy Lauren)</b>
Provide support for your stance on a subject. <b>(Balanced Bob)</b>	Simply comment with "I agree" to someone's post. <b>(Unoriginal Ursula)</b>
Acknowledge and respect that people have different opinions. <b>(Balanced Bob)</b>	Be disrespectful when responding to others' opinions and comments. <b>(Aggressive Andy)</b>
Use proper grammar. <b>(Perfect Polly)</b>	Capitalize words, use text messaging language, use multiple exclamation marks, or include lots of emoticons. <b>(Excessive Emily)</b>
Provide support for your stance on a subject. <b>(Balanced Bob)</b>	Restate what someone else has already said. <b>(Redundant Randy)</b>
Respond with a comment that is on topic. <b>(Balanced Bob)</b>	Respond with a comment that is not related to the topic of the discussion board. <b>(Off-Topic Owen)</b>

### **Activity 1**

Identify the student who provided the most professional response out of the four options below.  
Topic: What is your favorite sandwich?

**Stephen:** Sandwiches are the best! Togo's has the most amazing sandwiches ever. Their ingredients are always fresh, and the employees are polite and friendly. I would recommend Togo's over Subway any day!

**Tim:** LOL. This topic is awesome. But I have to disagree with all of u guys. Peanut butter and jelly is the bomb! U all r trippin if you dont think PB&J is the best.

**Nicky:** I would have to say that my favorite sandwich is turkey with cranberry sauce on sourdough bread. The sweetness of the cranberry sauce balances out the saltiness of the turkey. Furthermore, the sourdough bread is perfect for soaking up all the delicious juice from the sauce.

**Brooke:** I agree with Nicky. She said everything that I was going to say.

### Activity 2

Create a sample discussion post response to the topic below. Review your response with your tutor or instructor.

Topic: If you won the lottery, what would you do with all the money? Please keep your responses to a maximum of 200 words.

#### ***Sensible Sally***

If I won the lottery, I would use the money to pay off my college tuition debt. Furthermore, I would upgrade to a nice apartment near campus instead of living in the dorms. Having more money would improve my life as a student, but I wouldn't spend all the money at once; I would save some of it for the future and invest in stock, so I can keep getting more money!

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert fun name for yourself)

### ***Answer Key for Activity 1***

#### ***Nicky***

Nicky addressed the topic and contributed original thoughts to the discussion. In addition, she used proper grammar and provided supporting details to bolster her argument. Stephen did not specifically address the given topic. Tim used informal, non-professional language, and Brooke simply stated her agreement with Nicky, which did not add to the discussion.

### **References**

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