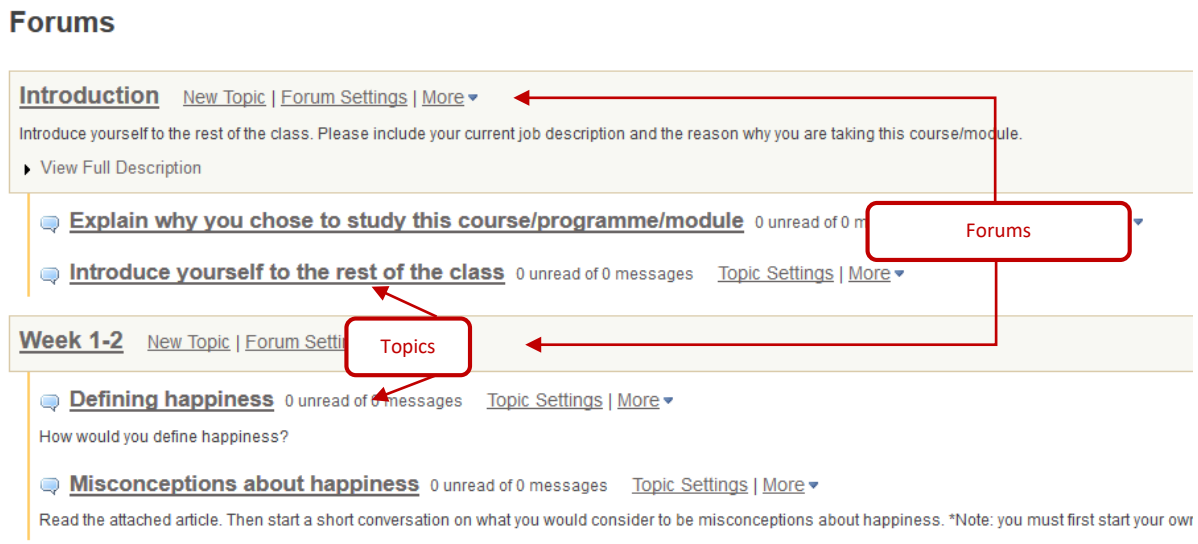
How do students use the Forums tool?

The Forums tool allow lecturers to set up a threaded discussion that can be read or contributed to by the entire class or assigned groups. Students can write inline comments and share documents. The tool records the number of posts by students, and forum posts can be linked

Discussions are organised under the hierarchy of:

Forums > Topics > Conversations > Replies

Below is an explanation of the workspace within the Forums tool:



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This tutorial will address the following topics:

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How to reply to a forum post (conversation)

What the Watch feature does in forums

Need Help?

How to access the Forums tool

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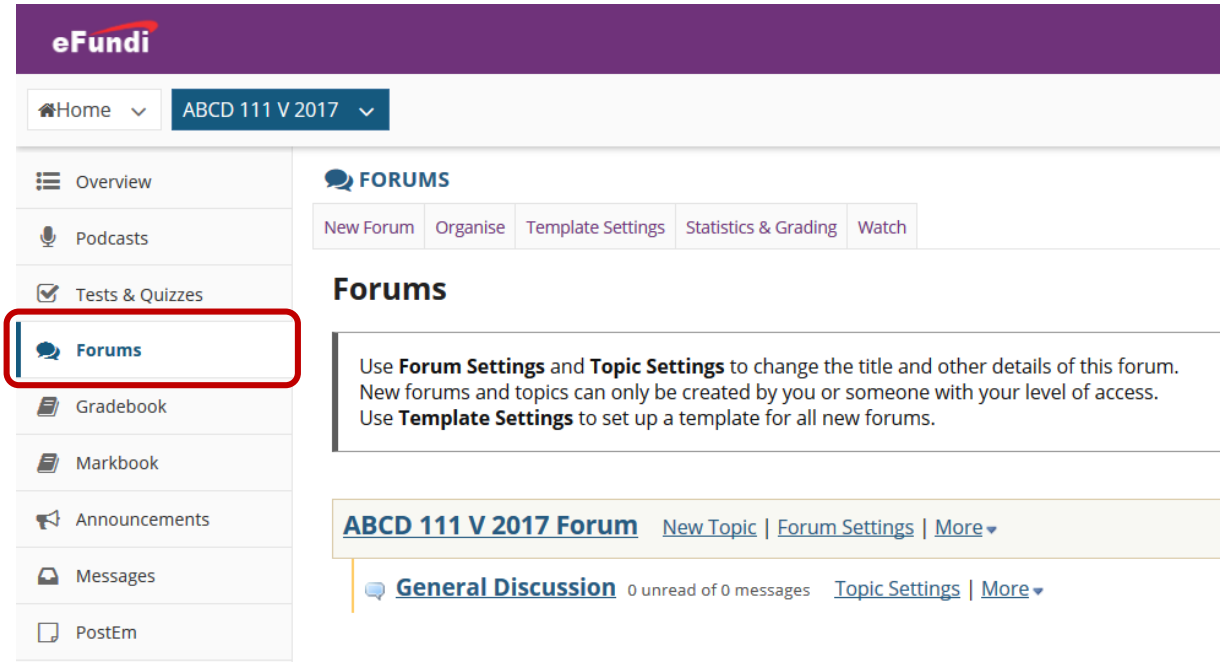
Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.



What if you cannot see the Forums tool? Contact your lecturer as the rights to see the forum may not have been set yet.

How to post to a forum topic

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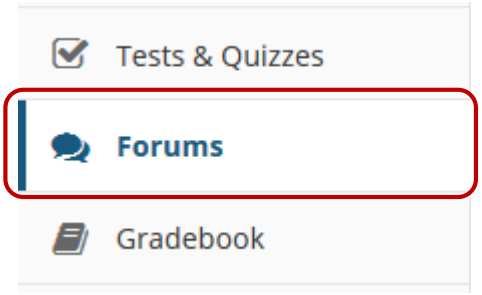
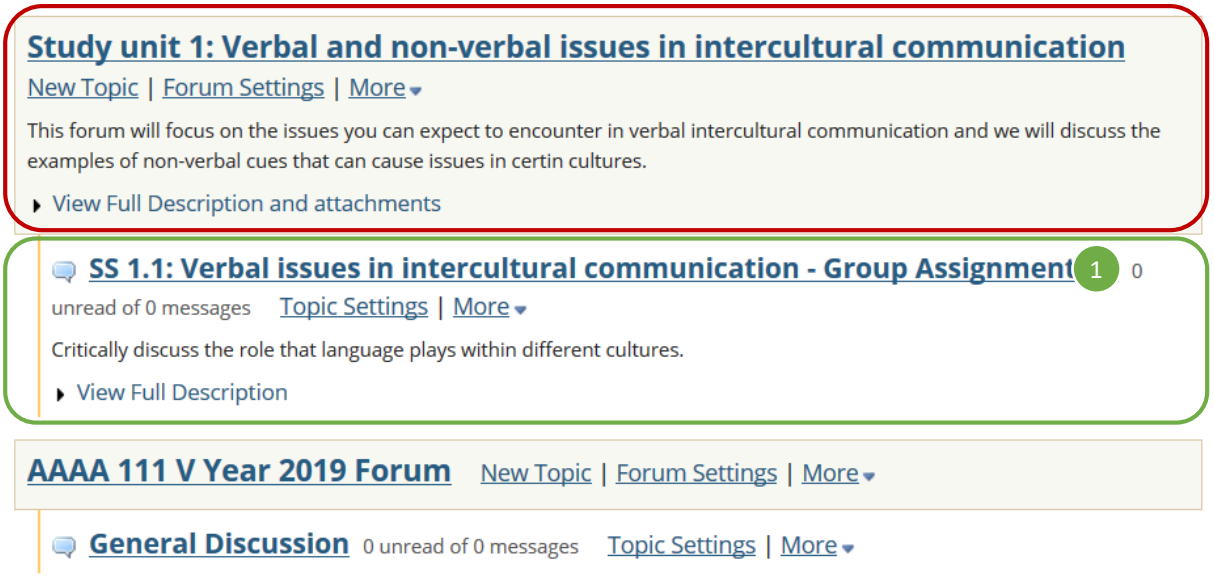
Forums are organisational units that group topics within the site. You cannot post directly to a forum, you must first enter a topic and post your message there.

In order to post to a forum topic, you will ***Start a New Conversation or thread****.*

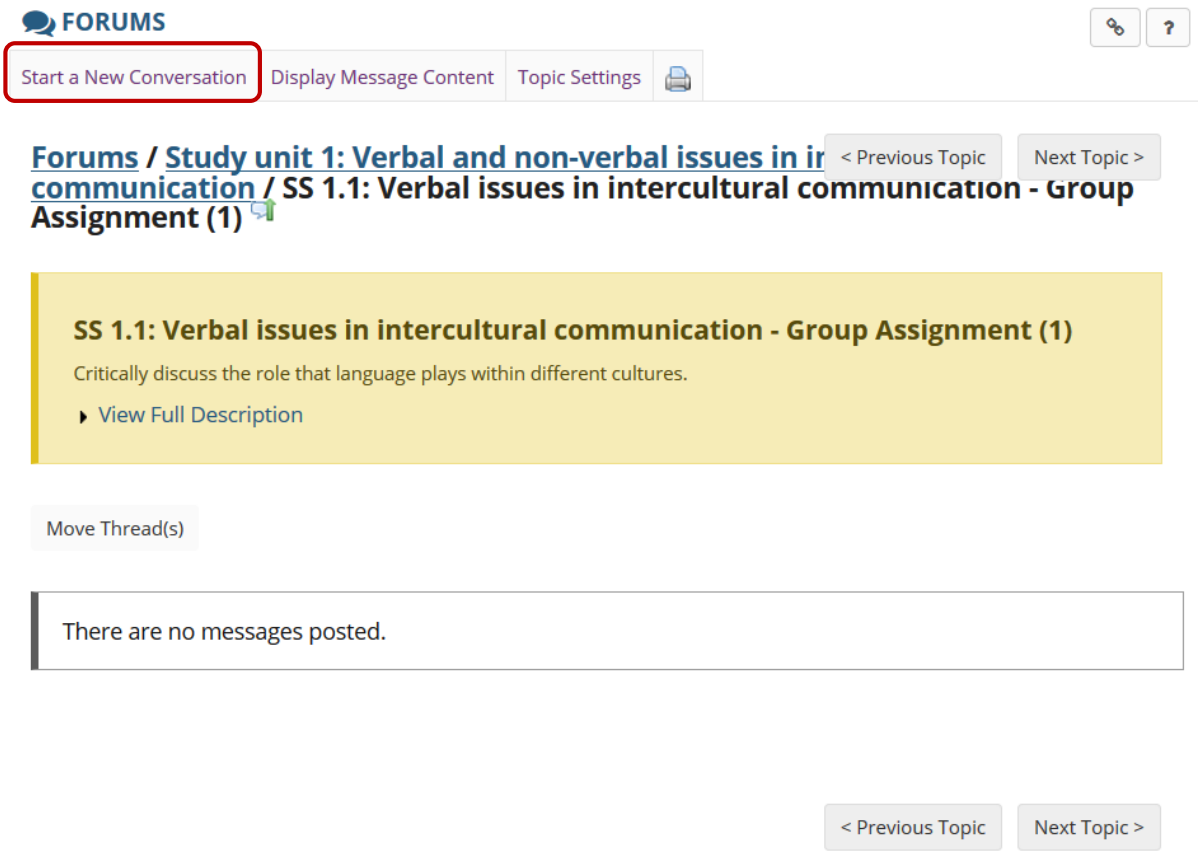
Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.



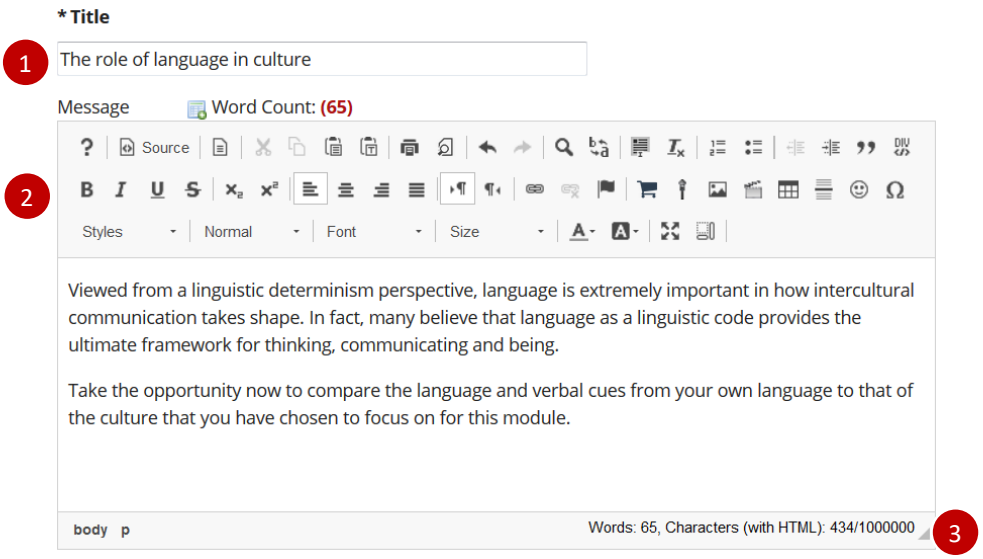
Below is an example of a forum. The forum title will appear in bold and in a larger font than the topic titles indented beneath it. If you would like to view more information about the forum, you may click ***View Full Description*** to view any additional information provided by the site owner.



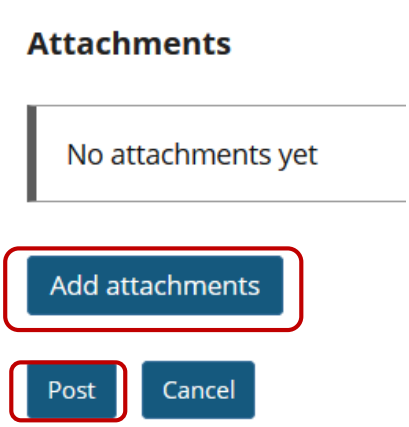
Indicated by the green block above is an example of the topic. If you would like to view more information about the topic, you may click ***View Full Description*** to view any additional information provided by the site owner. Click on the **topic title (1)** to enter that topic.



Starting a new conversation is the same thing as starting a new thread. After you click **Start a New Conversation**, the message composition window will appear.



Enter a **title (1)** and a **message (2)** for your students. The message box allows for use of the Rich Text Editor, this means you can include elements such as video and images in your messages. Take note of the **message count (3)** in the lower right corner.

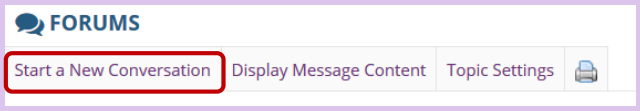


If desired, there is an option to upload attachments to the conversation. Click **Add attachments** to browse for and select your file.

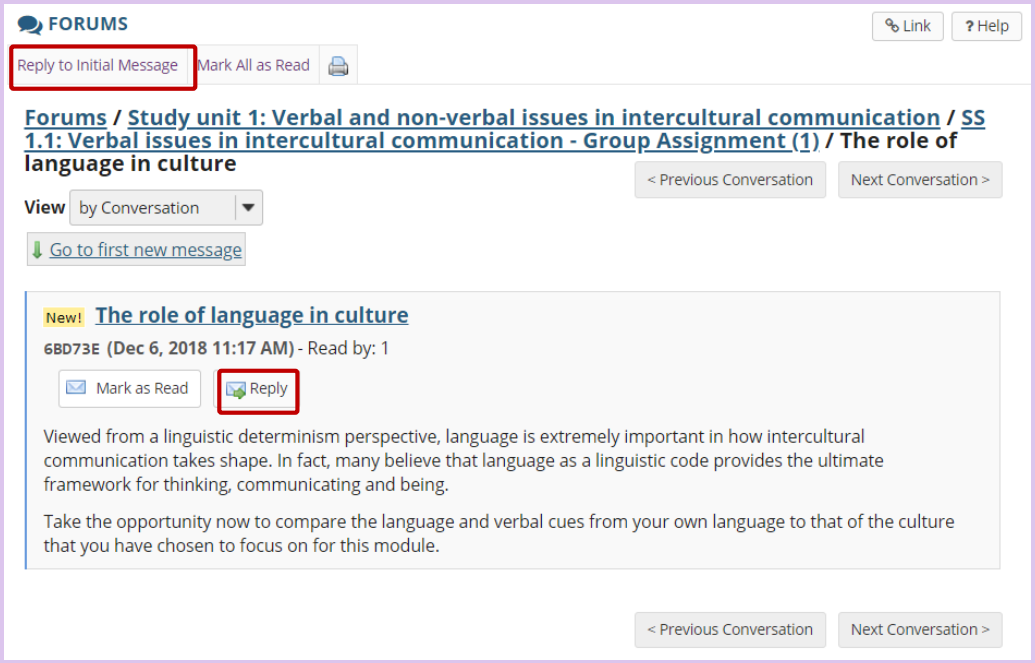
After completing the conversation, click **Post** to make the conversation viewable.

Note:

Depending on the type of forum discussion, you might not be able to start and have a separate conversation, but rather continue the entire conversation in on space. This will depend on the settings your lecturer chose. In this instance the **Start a New Conversation** option will not be available and you will only be able to reply to an existing conversation:



Vs



How to reply to a forum post (conversation)

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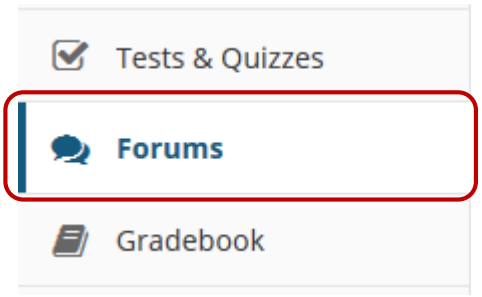
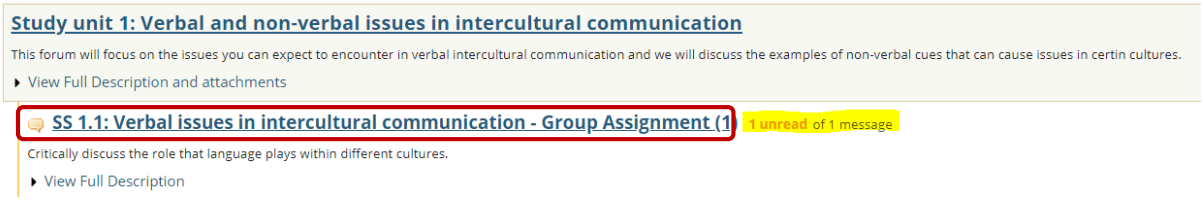
Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.

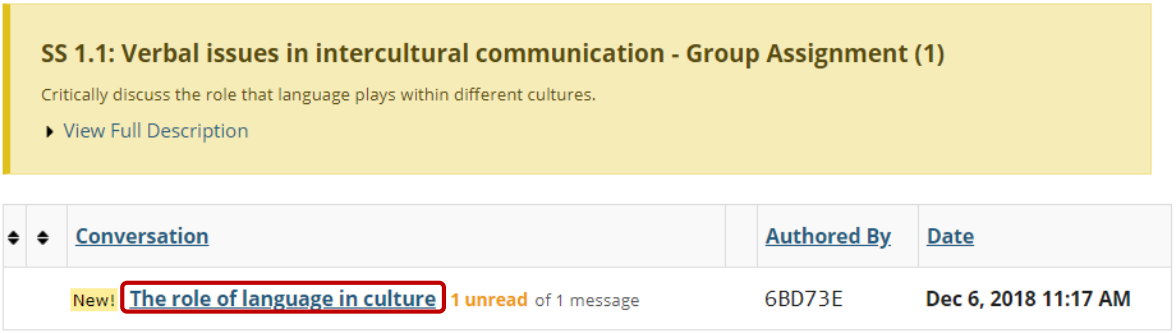


Click on the **title of the topic** to enter the topic.

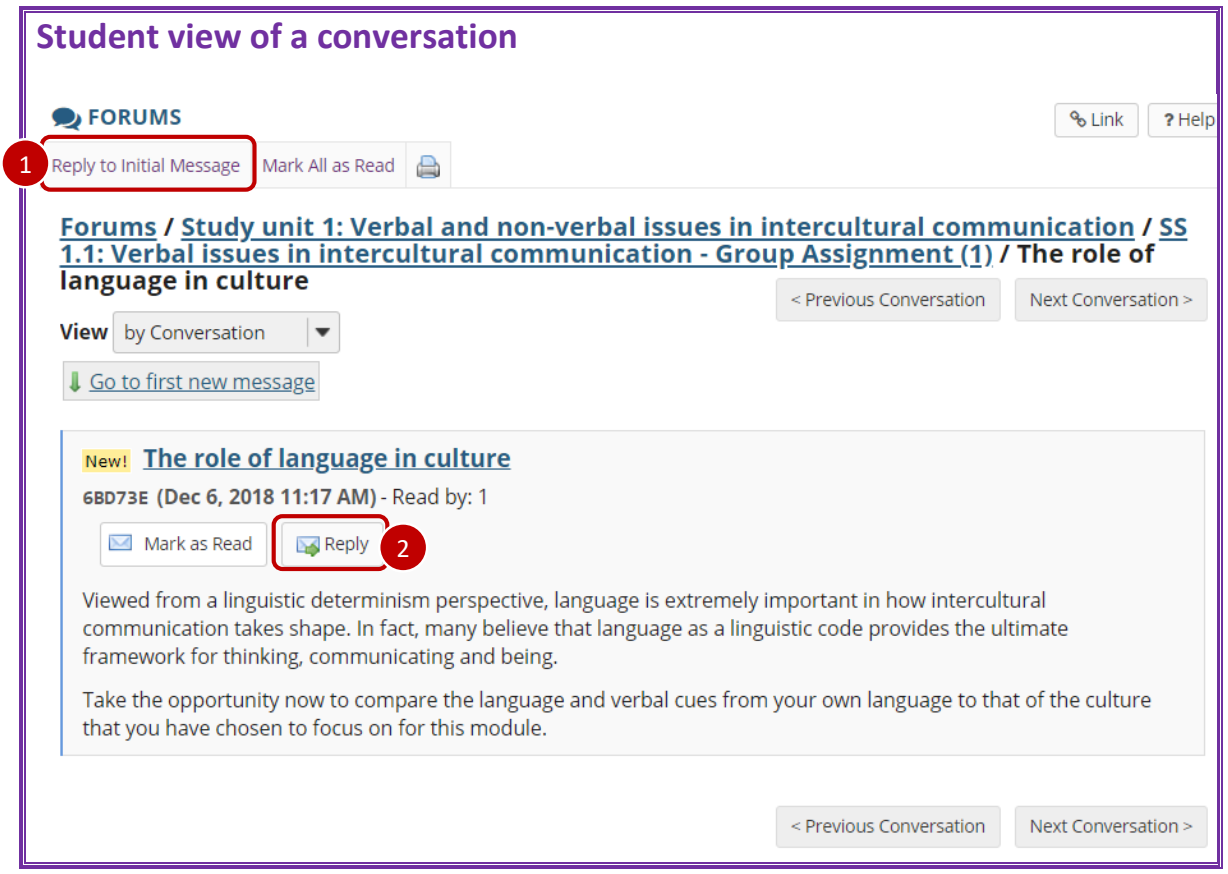


***Note:** The message indicator next to the topic title will tell you how many messages have been posted within that topic, and how many of them are new or unread.*

Click on the title of an existing post to view the conversation:

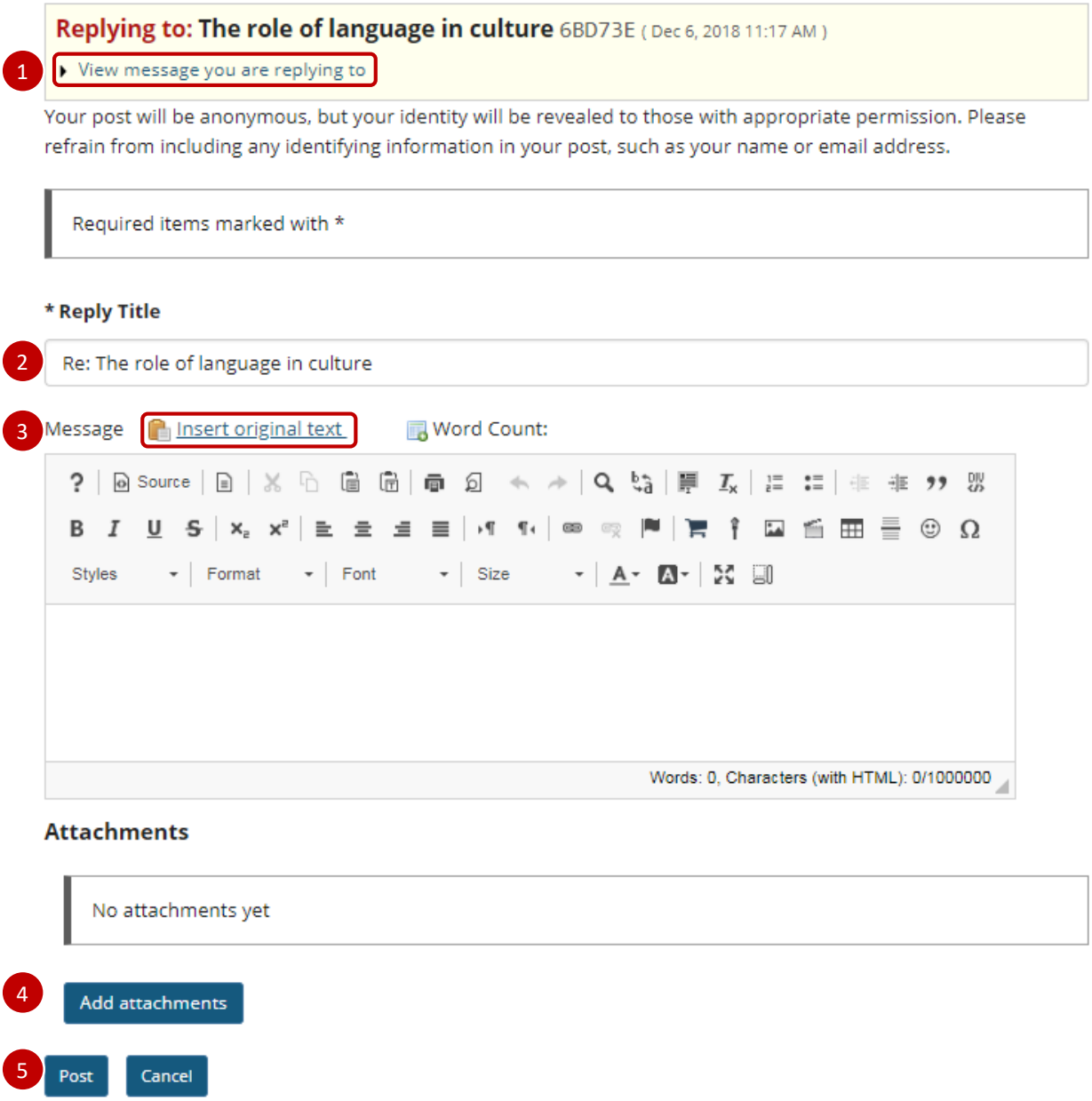


On the next page, note the student view when replying to messages.



You have two different options for replying to the post within the Forums tool.

1. Click **Reply to Initial Message** at the top of the conversation to reply to the first message in the conversation or thread.
2. Click the **Reply** button within the message itself to reply to the item you are currently viewing. This is the option you want to use if you would like to reply to someone else's reply.



1. The message you are replying to will be displayed at the top. You can hide/view the message by clicking on the small downward arrow next to "**Hide/view the message you are replying to**".
2. The title will be taken from the initial message and prefilled for you, but you may modify it if you wish.
3. Use the Rich Text Editor message box to type your reply.

> ***Note:*** *You may optionally click on the* ***Insert original text*** *link above the editor area to include the original message along with your reply.*

4. Click the **Add attachments** button if you would like to browse for and attach a file.
5. Click the **Post** button to post your message to the conversation.

What the Watch feature does in forums

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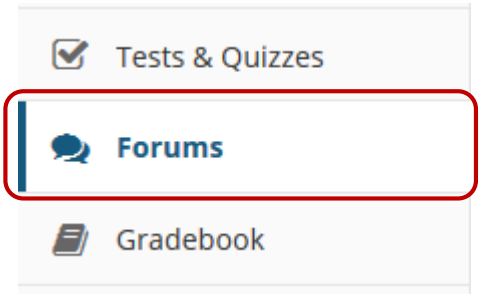
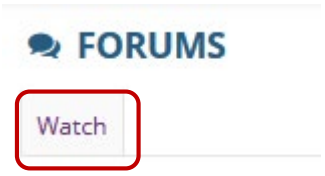
In order to stay notified of recent posts on a forum, the Watch option is helpful in doing so.

Note: *New post notifications will be sent to the user's external/institutional email address, not via the Messages tool.*

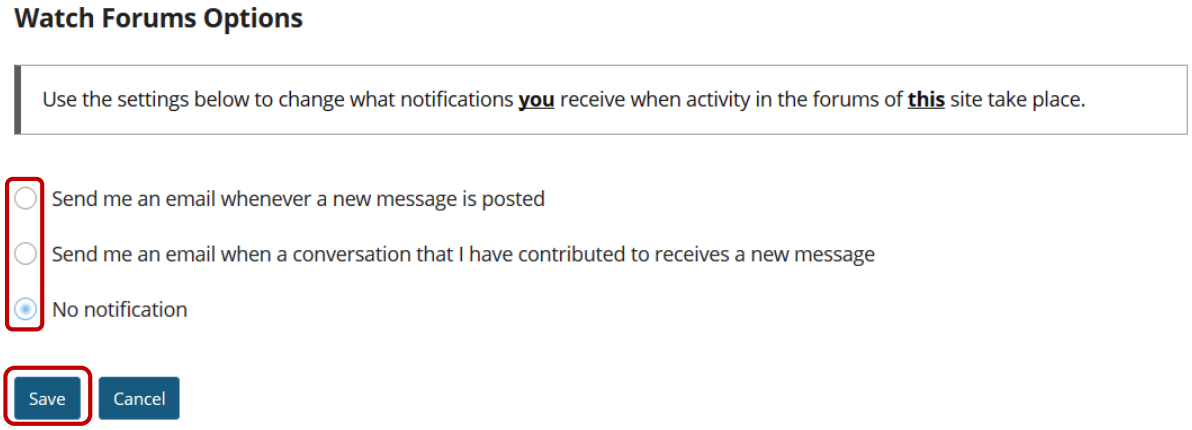
Select **Forums** from the Tool Menu of your site.



Click the **Watch** tab at the top of the screen.



The default settings template allows you configure the default settings for all new Forums and Topics in this site.



Select whether an email is desired for every new message posted on the Forum, every new message posted on a Forum that the user has contributed to, or turn off all notifications. Click **Save** when you are done.

Need help?

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You can make use of the Sakai based Help resources available on all eFundi sites, or contact your site of delivery eFundi Support Desk.

OR: Please attend eFundi training or stop by during office hours for additional help.

eFundi Support Desk:

Call centre: 018 285 5930

Campus support:

Mafeking: Tel.: 018 389 2447 Office: ADC Building, Block D Room G80	**Potchefstroom:** Tel.: 018 285 2295 Office: Building E8, Room 107A	**Vanderbijlpark:** Tel.: 016 910 3035/8 Office: Building 13, Room SL313

OR

Log a ticket: support.nwu.ac.za