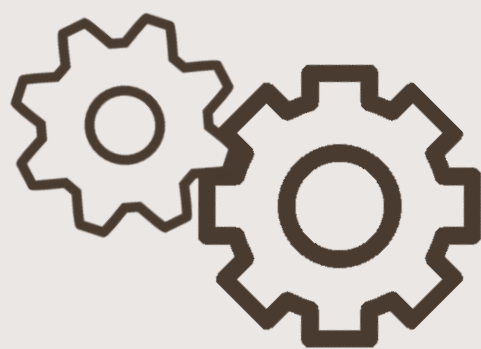


# BUILDING A BETTER DISCUSSION PROMPT



If part of your goal for the activity is to have students actually **discuss** the prompt, it helps to have a prompt that supports discussion.

## IS IT A QUESTION?

Using an **open-ended** question provides a goal for the initial post and requires more than a yes/no answer. The question should be **reasonable in scope** for the level of students and the time allotted for the discussion.



## DOES IT MAKE STUDENTS USE COURSE MATERIAL?

To encourage students to use course readings and resources, the prompt can include instructions to reference these materials to support their thinking. Even in a reflection-focused discussion, **supporting ideas and opinions** with credible sources encourages critical thinking.

## DOES IT ALLOW FOR DISCUSSION?

A prompt that requires a long and detailed initial post doesn't leave room for much follow-up discussion. Consider splitting the prompt in a way that provides **meaningful learning activities** for both the original poster and students who respond to the post.



## DOES IT FOCUS DISCUSSION?

"Reply to 2 people with comments or suggestions" doesn't clarify the goal of the conversation. **What do you want them to do:** brainstorm ideas, reach consensus, persuade, compare/contrast alternate perspectives, propose a solution, prioritize, etc.?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make sure the discussion has a clear purpose and supports your learning outcomes.
- Allocate enough points to active participation in discussions that students take them seriously.
- Participate **lightly** in the discussion yourself to correct, question, and support.

