

Working with Ment.io: Suggestions for Optimal Use

On **Ment.io**, every discussion starts with a question. Ideally, the answers provided should be competing answers, to encourage a discussion between the participants. Participants should feel free to argue both for and against suggestions / assertions.

What should you ask?

Ask interesting and engaging questions. The more the question matters to the participants, the more likely they are to provide thoughtful answers.

Different styles of questions produce different types of discussions, varying by the number of answers, the inner logic of the discussion and comments, etc. We suggest using one of these **styles of questions**:

- **Ask the question and supply three or four competing answers.** Instruct the participants to comment and vote only on these answers. This allows you to discuss only relevant options, as well as compare the same discussion within multiple groups.
- **Ask the question and supply three or four answers but instruct the participants that they can also add their own answers** (as well as commenting and voting on all answers).
- **Ask only the question and have the participants provide answers themselves, instructing them to read previous contributions** to the discussion before commenting/answering.

When the due date for closing the discussion arrives, you can read the entire discussion or overview the “highlights” offered on the side menu on the discussion page.

Close/recap the discussion choosing your supporting answers.

Towards the next discussion consider instructing the participants how to improve their contributions.

Let your participants know that you **expect them to share the reasoning behind their answers and comments**. They should agree and disagree, sometimes multiple times within the same answer.

How should you ask?

Ask **open questions** that enable you to envision multiple answers that would provide good possibilities for debate.

Refrain from “Yes/No” questions.

Ask a question that invites competing answers that participants can react to. If the question is based on personal experience only, a discussion becomes less relevant. Instead, you can **ask participants to share examples and argue why they think their opinion is best**. E.g. “What is the best way to do x...?” and then participants contribute from their own knowledge and experience, but the answers still compete and produce a fruitful discussion.

Ask one question at a time, avoiding double-barrel questions. E.g. do not ask: “What did you like best about the article and what did you find most important?”.

Ask clear and concise questions. Leave explanations for the description section.

How can you guide answers?

Suggested guidelines for the students:

- Do not offer an answer until you read the existing discussion. Let's build a conversation.
- Comments are just as valuable (if not more) as answers! Informative and thoughtful responses are what counts.
- Try to provide short answers, and then support them with your own pros and cons.

How can you moderate the discussion?

There are different ways to guide your discussions, ranging from announcing to commenting to requesting clarifications.

If you would like to get the participants' attention and guide them, you can use the "Announcements" button. It is on the top panel, right next to the +Discussion. When you make an announcement, all participants get an email notification.

How can you evaluate contribution to the discussions?

The assessment evaluation is found under "Analytics" on the top bar, available for admins only. The Ment.io grading reflects quantity as well as quality of contributions to the discussions.

For more tips and any questions, feel free to reach out to us at contact@ment.io

Wishing you useful and fruitful discussions!

Ment.io