

## UNIT 1 SAMPLE DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

### INITIAL POST

Hi, everyone! My name is Karen Stephenson. I'm a mom of 3 girls, ages 2, 6, and 8. They all keep me busy, especially my 8-year-old, who already thinks she's an adult. We live in Syracuse, New York, with our 2 dogs and 1 cat. I'm also a teacher's assistant at a local daycare center. I love working with kids and want to get my degree in education so I can be a full-time teacher by the time my youngest daughter starts 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

I have many goals I want to achieve in this class. I do not have too much experience with writing beyond what I did in high school and I'm really nervous about writing anything at work because I know I write like I talk and that I have a lot of grammar errors I need to take care of. So, I want to improve my ability to write like the other teachers I will be working with. I want them to respect me and my thoughts and I want to write without having to worry that my sentences don't make sense or that they are filled with errors, especially with commas. I also know I need to become a better reader. I usually get bored when I read most things, or at least distracted, and I have to look up a lot of words to make sure I understand them. I also have to read things over and over a lot. I did like the suggestions in the Set and Achieve Goals article by Linda Talley. She says, in point 4, to make a list of everything you have to do to accomplish any goal, and I'm going to do that starting with this course.

I also think if I work with tutors in the Writing Center, I can improve and reach my goals. But the problem is I'm not the most confident person when it comes to writing. I don't like showing other people what I write because of my fears that they will not understand what I mean or they will see all the errors. It's also my first time trying college and this online thing has me a little scared. But, I'm going to work hard and try my best.

What do you all think I could do to build my confidence and get rid of my errors in writing?

Karen

### RESPONSES TO INITIAL POSTS

#### I. UNSUCCESSFUL RESPONSE

Hi, nice to meet you and welcome to class. I too have a lot of animals and want to be a teacher one day. It's also my first term at college and I too am scared, but I think you will do well. I know what you mean about trouble with commas. They always give me trouble when I write. I also get bored when I read things, especially long articles and books. They just seem really boring. Good luck with the class. I know you will do well!

Keith

**Commented [JV1]:** This is a strong Unit 1 Initial post. Karen answers the Discussion Board (DB) questions well, using details and her own experiences to explain her ideas. She introduces herself, identifies her goals and explains what her concerns are with achieving her goals.

Notice also that she includes a thoughtful question that will help her classmates to respond effectively to her.

**Commented [JV2]:** Notice that Keith's response begins without mentioning Karen's name. Be polite and always use your classmate's names when you respond.

Notice also that even though this is a paragraph long response, it mostly praises the classmate and repeats what Karen has written and is about this Keith's similar experiences. Keith does not offer Karen specific suggestions for how she might achieve any of her goals, nor does he respond to her question. His post does not advance the discussion.

## II. SUCCESSFUL RESPONSE

Hi, Karen,

It's nice to meet you too and I wish you the best in this class and with your goals. I used to have trouble with commas (I've not completely tackled them, though), but I tried something similar to what the Goals article suggests. I did a little google search and found a website that has a podcast on grammar and punctuation problems. I started listening to the podcast and taking notes, and then I listed all the problems I have with commas, based on what I learned. Then, I started working on my editing. I looked at each sentence and tried to apply what this podcast writer said, and it really helps. I know that the Writing Center also has a Paper Review service you might try out. It's my first term and I haven't tried it yet, but a friend of mine says they give you feedback and suggest ways to edit and rewrite, and she says her grades are improving. I like your question about confidence. I'm not the most confident in writing either, but I visualize myself as a great writer at work. I imagine what a great report does, and then I work on making sure, step by step that my reports are just like that great report. You might want to try that as well!

Best of luck in the course and with your goals!

Makayla

## USE CAT TO WRITE STRONG DB RESPONSES

CAT is just an acronym that reminds you of what you want to do when you write a paragraph responding to others in the discussion board. It means:

- **C**apture the essence
- **A**ssign a concept
- **T**ake it up a notch

Makayla's response does this. It shows that she has read and understood Karen's post (capture the essence), that she can address the main concern that Karen has with writing (comma use and confidence), and that she can take it up a notch by not only connecting these concerns to her own experience but also by answering the question Karen asks. She advances the discussion and helps her classmate to see ways she can achieve her goals.

**Commented [JV3]:** Makayla's response is a very successful response to an initial post.

It begins with praise and with Makayla's connecting with Karen on their shared concerns, but unlike with Keith's post, Makayla's post goes beyond that. She offers Karen some specific suggestions for achieving her goals, as well as advancing the discussion and referring to the unit reading material in her post. It is well developed, organized, and edited effectively as well.