Discussion App Guide

Blackboard Web Community Manager

Blackboard

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This guide covers all available features and functionality. Features included in your contract may vary.

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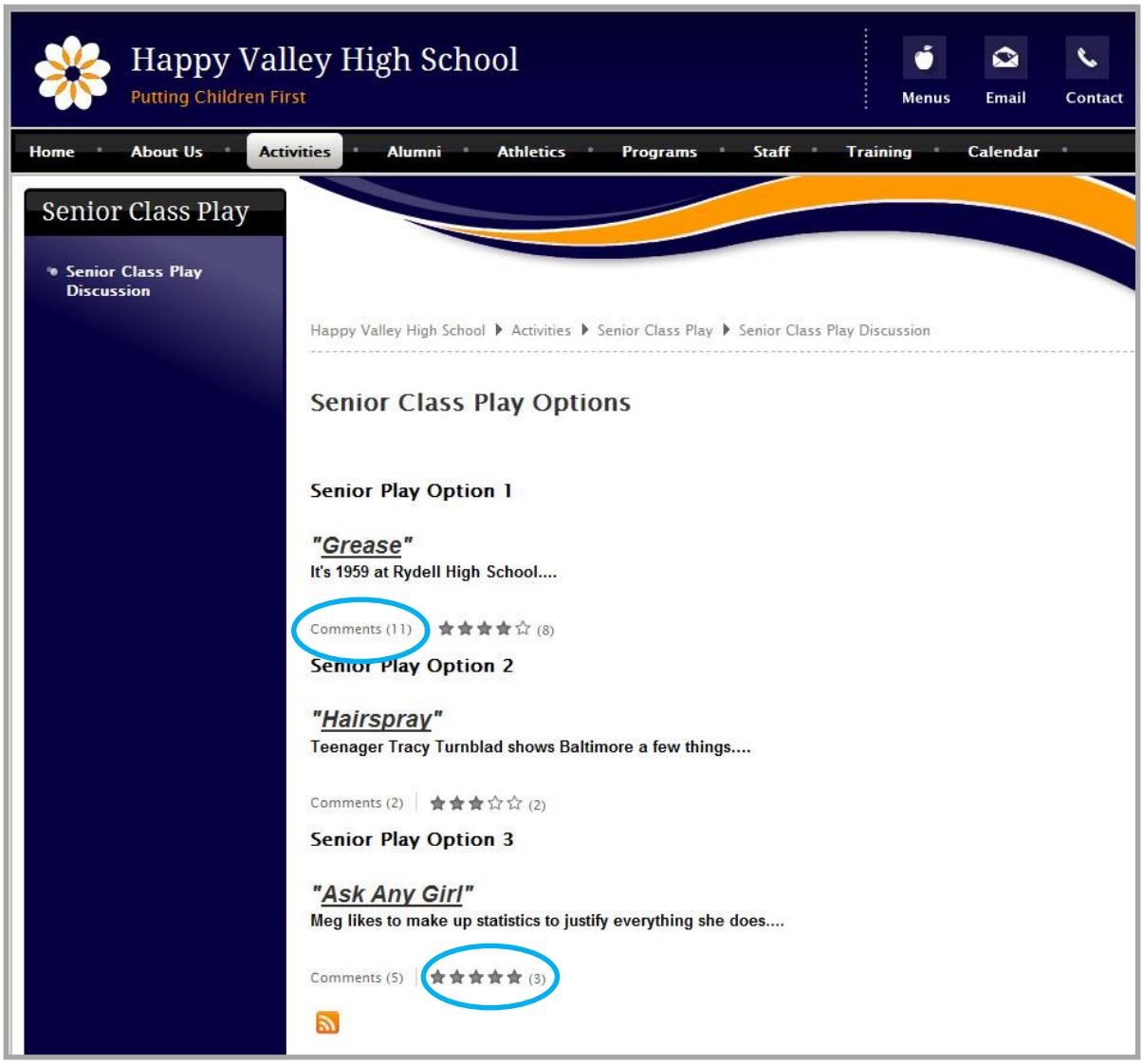
Introduction

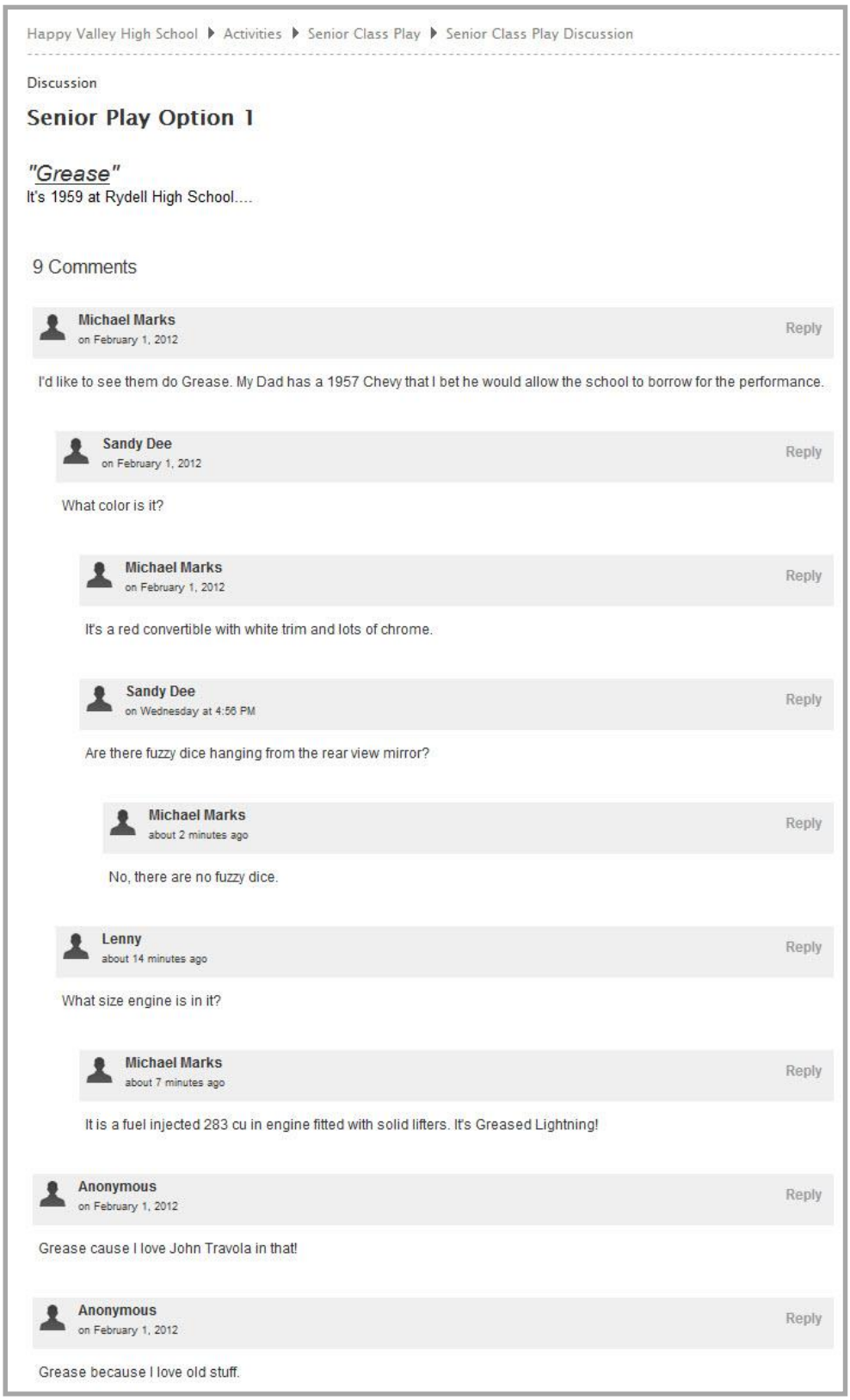
You use the Discussion App to introduce topics of conversation. You can add one or several topics within the app.

If you have *Social Media Framework* and activate *Commenting* for the app, visitors see a *Comments* link and the total number of comments posted for the topic. Visitors can click this link to read all comments posted for the topic or to post one of their own.

If you have *Social Media Framework* and activate *Rating* for the app, visitors see a display of stars that is used to both rate the topic and to display the rating average of the topic. Visitors also see the number of times the topic was rated.

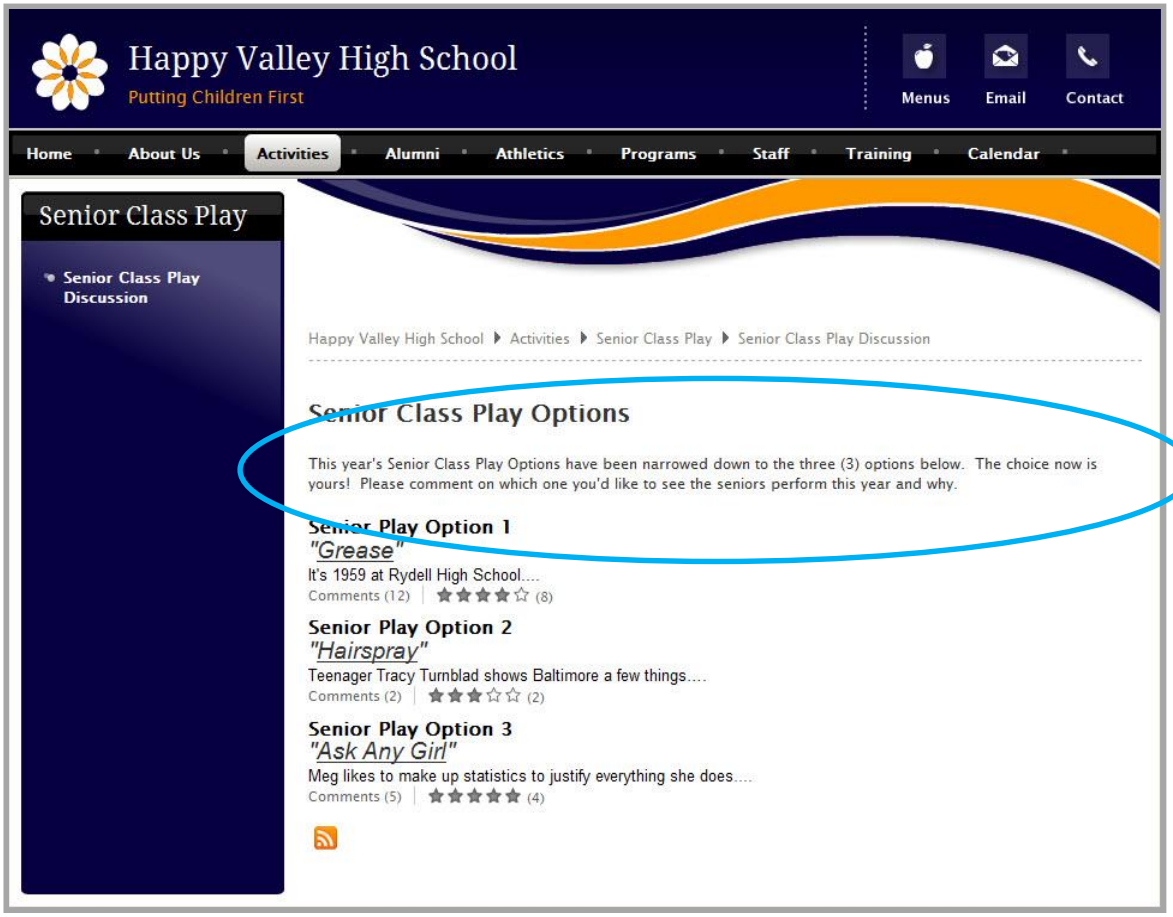


In addition to posting new comments, visitors can reply to comments posted by other visitors for a topic. By doing this, visitors can create multiple discussion threads.



You create a Discussion App by creating a new page and selecting the Discussion App Page Type. This creates a page containing one Discussion App in a one column page layout.

Alternatively, you can add a Discussion App to a page by clicking the **Manage Apps & Layout** action, which takes you to Design mode.

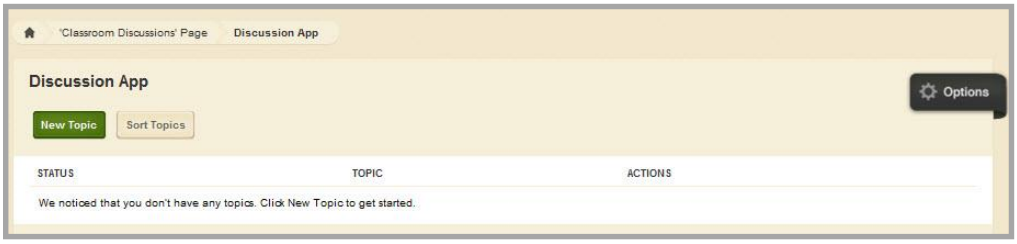


Note that in this example, we added a Content App containing introductory text above the Discussion App.

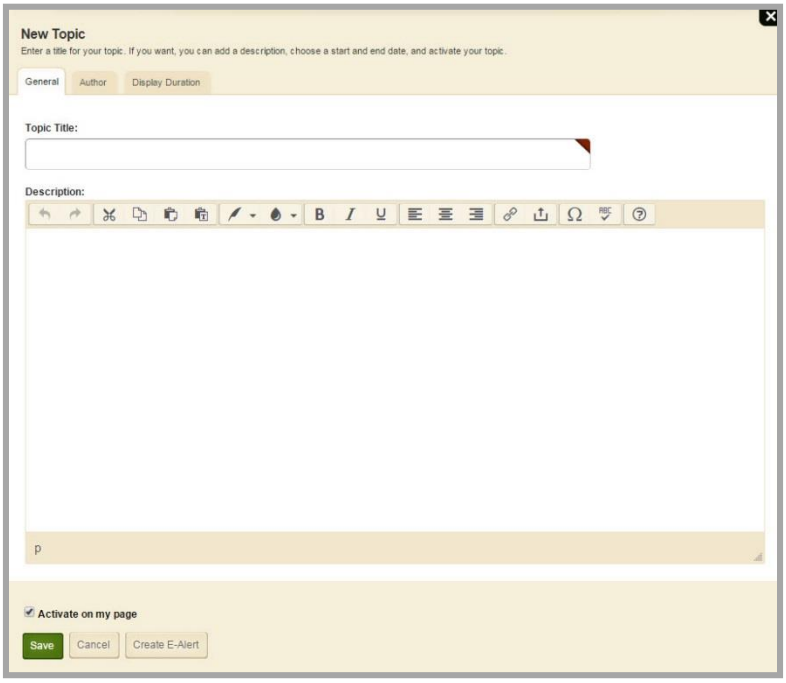
Add a Topic

Here's how you add a topic to a Discussion App.

1. In *Site Manager*, navigate to the workspace containing the Discussion App to which you want to add a topic.
2. Edit the Discussion App.
    - If the Discussion app is the only app on the page, click on the page name to open the app.
    - If you have more than one app on the page, click **Edit Page** in the **Actions** Drop-down list to open the page in Edit Mode. Click on the Discussion App to open it.
3. Click **New Topic**. A New Topic window displays. When you have finished entering your information, click **Save**.

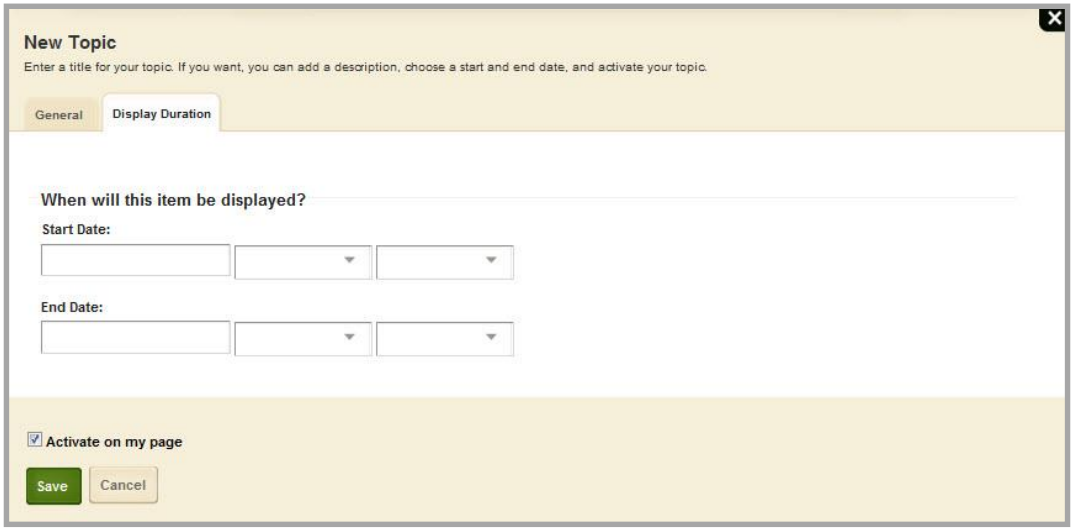


4. On the **General** tab, enter a title for the topic.



5. Enter your topic in the Description field.
6. By default, the **Activate on my page** checkbox is selected, flagging your topic for immediate display on your website once you save it. We recommend that you uncheck **Activate on my page** while working on the topic. Remember to activate it when you have completed work on your topic.

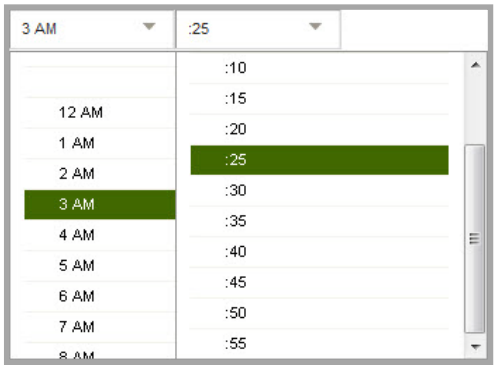
7. Navigate to the **Display Duration** tab (optional). Here you can specify start and end dates and times to control when your topic displays on your website as long as the topic and the page are both active. Note that if you enter no dates and times, the topic always displays.



Here are some things to keep in mind when working with display duration.

- As mentioned above, if you enter no dates and times, the topic always displays.
- If you enter both start and end dates and times, the topic displays on your site within the specified date and time ranges.
- If you enter only a start date and time, the topic displays on your site from the date and time specified forward.
- If you enter only an end date and time, the topic displays on your site immediately until the specified end date and time.

If you choose to specify dates, a Calendar Date Picker displays when you click in the Start or End Date fields. Use the Date Picker to select a date. Alternatively, you can enter date values manually using the format *mm/dd/yyyy*.



To specify a value for the Start and End Date Time fields, click on the Hour and Minute drop-downs associated with each date field and select a time from the list. Hours are specified with AM and PM designations; Minute options begin at 00 and are incremented by units of five.

If you specify only dates, the start time is set to 12:00 AM and the end time is set to 12:00 PM internally.

Edit a Topic

Here's how you edit a Discussion App topic.

1. In *Site Manager*, navigate to the workspace containing the Discussion App you wish to edit.
2. Edit the Discussion App.
    - If the Discussion app is the only app on the page, click on the page name to open the app.
    - If you have more than one app on the page, click **Edit Page** in the **Actions** Drop-down list to open the page in Edit Mode. Click on the Discussion App to open it.

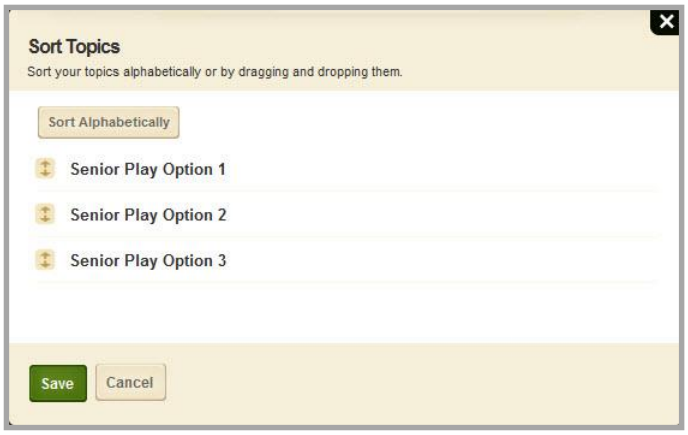
3. Click **Edit** to the right of the topic.
4. Edit the topic, making changes to the information on each of the tabs as necessary.
5. Click **Save**.

Sort Topics

Here is how you sort topics within a Discussion App.

1. In *Site Manager*, navigate to the workspace containing the Discussion App whose topics you wish to sort.
2. Edit the Discussion App.
   - If the Discussion app is the only app on the page, click on the page name to open the app.
   - If you have more than one app on the page, click **Edit Page** in the **Actions** Drop-down list to open the page in Edit Mode. Click on the Discussion App to open it.
3. Click **Sort Topics**. The Sort Topics window displays.

4. To sort the topics in alphabetic order, click **Sort Alphabetically**.
5. To sort the topics manually, drag and drop them to a new location.
6. Click and hold on the name of the topic you wish to move.
7. Drag the topic to a new location within the list and release the mouse to drop it in place.
8. Repeat Steps a and b as required.



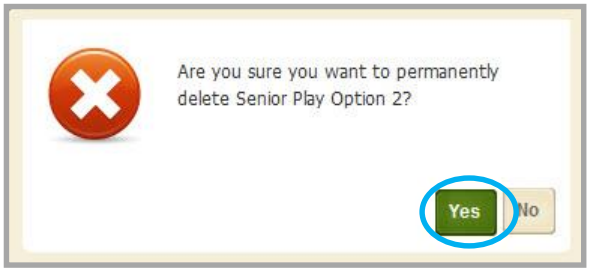
9. Click **Save**.

Delete a Topic

Here's how you delete a topic from a Discussion App.

1. In *Site Manager*, navigate to the workspace containing the Discussion app with the topic you wish to delete.
2. Edit the Discussion App.
   - If the Discussion app is the only app on the page, click on the page name to open the app.
   - If you have more than one app on the page, click **Edit Page** in the **Actions** Drop-down list to open the page in Edit Mode. Click on the Discussion App to open it.

3. Click **Delete** to the right of the topic you wish to delete. A confirmation dialog box displays.
4. Click **Yes** to delete the topic. The topic and all associated comments are removed from your website.



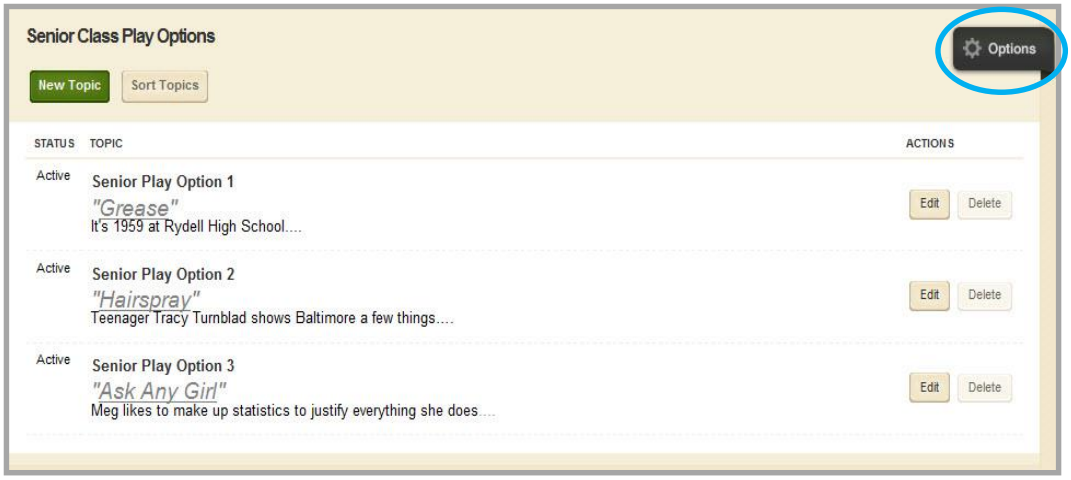
Be certain this is what you want to do since you cannot recover a topic and its associated comments once you delete them.

Set Discussion App Options

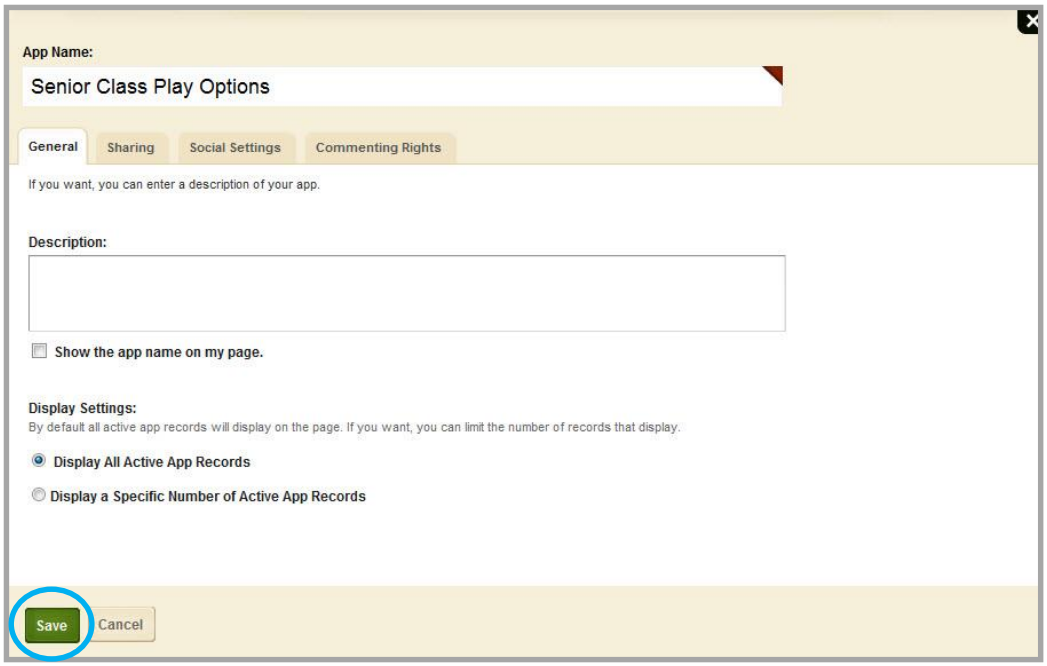
Web Community Manager allows you to modify the default options set for an app that you create. Options for a Discussion App are grouped into three categories: General, Sharing and Social Settings.

Here's how you set options for a Discussion App.

1. In *Site Manager*, navigate to the workspace containing the Discussion App you wish to modify.
2. Edit the Discussion App.
   - If the Discussion app is the only app on the page, click on the page name to open the app.
   - If you have more than one app on the page, click **Edit Page** in the **Actions** Drop-down list to open the page in Edit Mode. Click on the Discussion App to open it.
3. Click **Options**.

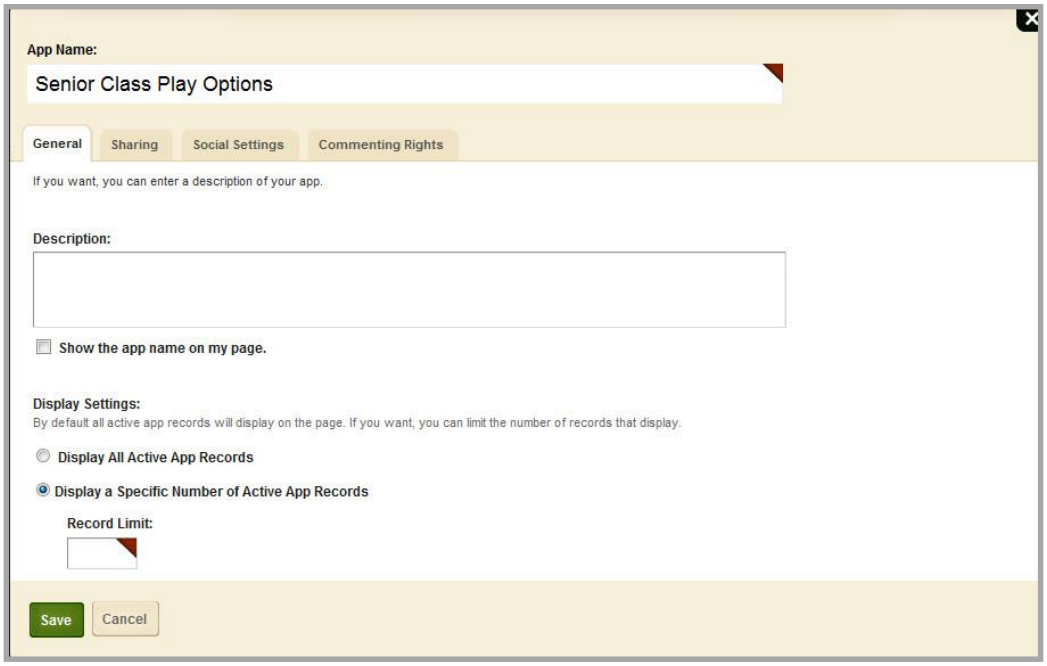


4. An Apps Options dialog displays. Make changes on each of the tabs as necessary. When finished, click **Save**.

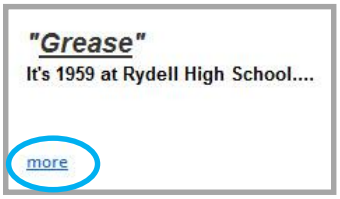


General Tab Options

Use the options on the **General** tab to change the name of your app as well as add or modify a description for your app. The App Name is required.



If you click the **Show the app name on my page** checkbox, the name of the app displays above the app content on the page on your website.

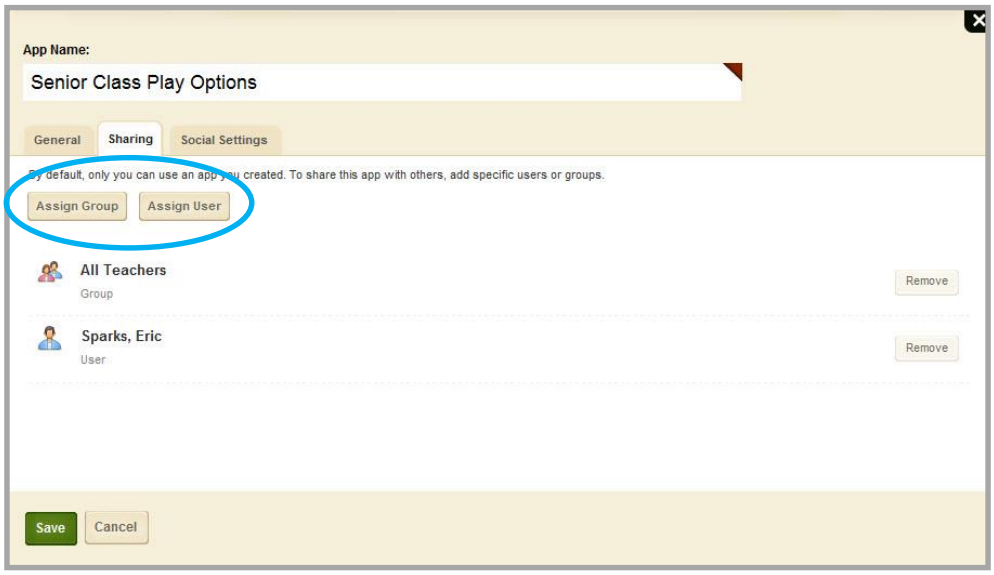


If you click the **Display Limited Records** radio button, a Record Limit field displays. Here you indicate the number of topics you want to show on the page before a **more** link appears on your website. Visitors must click this **more** link to view all topics for the app.

Sharing Tab Options

By default, only you have access to an app that you create. If you would like other editors to be able to place your app on their pages, you must share it with them.

On the **Sharing** tab, click **Assign Group** or **Assign User** to search for and select specific users and groups with whom you would like to share your app.



Social Settings Tab Options

If you have *Social Media Framework*, you may be able to add one or all of these social media elements to your app. Whether you can add a particular element depends on which settings and elements your Site Administrator has enabled. Site Administrators may enable RSS feeds regardless of whether or not you have *Social Media Framework*.

These are the Social Media elements that may be available for your Discussion App.

- Community Editing: Allows visitors to contribute to your app
- Visitor Commenting: Allows visitors to comment on your app.
- Visitor Rating: Allows visitors to rate your app.
- RSS Feeds: Allows visitors to subscribe to Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds for your app.

When enabled, RSS Feeds apply to the entire app and not to individual records within that app. For example, RSS Feeds apply to the entire Discussion App rather than to each topic within that Discussion App. So once enabled for that Discussion App, if visitors use the RSS Feed, they will see the entire Discussion App on their RSS aggregator homepage.

A Site Administrator must enable RSS Feeds for the entire website through a global setting in System Settings in order for you to enable it for your apps.

Use the settings on the **Social Settings** tab to apply the available social media elements to your Discussion App. Depending on the element you select, additional controls may display.