

What are they?

Chats are synchronous online discussion environments where conversations can occur between two or more people.

Chat Room Rules

Guidelines for using the group:

- Try to keep your replies posted in the discussion forum brief.
- Focus on one subject per reply and follow the threads.
- If you introduce a new thread, please make sure you use pertinent subject lines.
- Avoid writing email messages or posting in groups or forums using all capital letters. **IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING!**
- To add humor and personality to your messages, use **smileys**, also known as **emoticons**, expressions you create from the characters on your keyboard.
- Avoid explicit/vulgar/obscene language.
- Avoid racially or ethnically offensive content.

Please remember that these rules are not meant to stifle involvement in the discussion. They are simply ways to keep the conversation under control and on-topic.

Why Use Them?

Advantages

Chats are good for spontaneous responses or brainstorming.

Chats are good as a forum for a guest speaker who cannot meet with the group or has limited time available.

Chats are good for providing spontaneous feedback, advice, and information.

Disadvantages

Chats can go awry easily. Because of the spontaneous nature of this type of communication, thoughts can be lost or participants can become distracted.

It is difficult for some people to type and read at the same time. This factor increases as more people become involved in the discussion. Participants can feel as though they are playing "catch up."

When typing a long response, important points can be missed as they scroll out of view and other responses are entered. Consequently, the conversation can appear disjointed. Some students may feel lost or ignored.