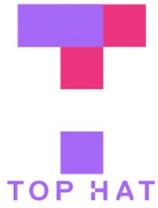


TOP HAT WEEK



Are you interested in new ways to engage your students during class? Top Hat is Vanderbilt's classroom response system, available for **free to all faculty, staff, and students**. Using Top Hat, instructors can pose polling questions and ask all their students to respond using their phones or laptops. Top Hat quickly collects and visualizes student responses, giving instructors a snapshot of student learning they can use to inform class discussion.

The week of **January 28, 2019**, is Top Hat Week at Vanderbilt. The Center for Teaching is encouraging all faculty to try Top Hat by asking their students just **one polling question** sometime during the week. Can you spare **five or ten minutes** of class time to try out a new tool for fostering active learning?

See below for ideas on using Top Hat in your classroom, and see the reverse for step-by-step instructions for getting started using Top Hat. It's easier than you might think. If you have any questions about Top Hat Week, or you'd like to tell us how it went, just email ctf@vanderbilt.edu.

Multiple Choice Questions

Q: Your sister calls to say she's having twins. Which of the following is more likely? (Assume she's not having identical twins.)

- A. Twin boys
- B. Twin girls
- C. One boy and one girl
- D. All three of the above are equally likely.

Ask students to respond individually to a multiple-choice question (like this one from CFT director Derek Bruff's statistics course), then discuss the question in pairs, then respond again. Then ask students to share reasons for their answers, guiding the discussion toward the correct answer (C in this case). Or ask questions that don't have single correct answers. See <https://tinyurl.com/vandytophat01> for an example of a "one best answer" question from Vanderbilt law professor Ed Cheng.

Word Answer Questions

Q: What three words come to mind when you think of leadership?

Q: What are five or six technologies you've used or seen used in teaching?

Q: What counts as alien? Answer in 140 characters or less.

Top Hat's word-answer format allows for free text responses, with results displayed as text or as word clouds, in which words appearing more frequently among student responses appear larger. These questions work well for surfacing diverse student perspectives and experiences. For more examples of using word clouds in the classroom, see <https://tinyurl.com/vandytophat02>. "Alien" word cloud courtesy Mark Sample (Davidson College).



Discussion Questions

Q: What questions do you have about plagiarism in academic settings?

Q: What did you learn from watching the Citizenfour documentary?

Q: What is art?

For longer student responses, try Top Hat's discussion tool, which creates question-specific discussion boards. Scroll through student responses to inform class discussion, or ask students to vote up answers from peers that resonate with them as a way to prioritize responses in larger classes. See <https://tinyurl.com/vandytophat03> for an example of a discussion question that led to deep learning in an art class.

ASKING YOUR FIRST TOP HAT QUESTION IN CLASS

Create an account and course

1. To create an account, visit <http://tophat.com>, click "Signup," choose "Sign-up as a Professor," then login with your VUNetID and password.
2. You'll be prompted to create your first course. Just complete the required form fields; you can edit the course details later.

Learn more about account setup here: <https://tinyurl.com/vandytophat04>

Create a question

1. To create a question, click the blue "Create" button in the upper left of your course screen, then select a question type. For this example, select multiple choice.
2. Complete the question builder form. Be sure to give your question a title, and note that students can see this title. You can customize your question by adding images, setting a timer, and so on, or just keep things simple.

Learn more about creating questions here: <https://tinyurl.com/vandytophat05>

Make sure students can respond

Students need an active Top Hat account to respond to your questions. To save time, have them do so before class by following the directions found here: <http://tinyurl.com/vandytophat04>.

Pose a question to your class

1. Right before class, login at <http://tophat.com> and open your course. You'll see your question(s) on the left.
2. During class, click the question you want to ask, then click the "Present" button. You'll see a Join Code and instructions for students.
3. Share your screen with your students. They should login to Top Hat and use the Join Code to search for and join your course.
4. Click the "Start Presentation" button. Your question will be displayed full-screen. The blue bar at the bottom indicates responses are being accepted. The counter shows how many responses have been received.
5. After students have responded, click the "Pause" button to stop accepting answers, then click the "Responses" button to see results as a bar chart.

Learn more about asking questions in class here: <https://tinyurl.com/vandytophat06>

Find more help at <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/tophat/>