

Blogging for Beginners

What is a Blog???

- A “web log”
- A website where you can update people on information they might find interesting
- A place to share your thoughts/ideas
- A place to keep a public (or private) journal accessible from anywhere there is internet

“The purpose of a writer is to keep civilization from destroying itself.” - Albert Camus

How to become a "blogger":

You don't need a degree to write. Just do it!!

Write, write, write! Write first, as questions later.

The written word is historically very important, and the best way to tell our story is to write it down.

Grammar, syntax and spelling are all important, but focus on content for now, and those will come in time.

Keep writing! Dedicate a half-hour a day to the betterment of self and the world through writing.

“English usage is sometimes more than mere taste, judgment and education - sometimes it's sheer luck, like getting across the street.” - E. B. White

DON'T BE AFRAID!

Blogs can be open for all to see, or private for only those you want to see.

You can have as many blogs as you want, so use one for practice!

Types of Blogs

Podcast

- Prerecorded audio program
- Spoken word and pre-recorded sounds

Vlog

- Same as weblog, only with video
- Uploadable to YouTube and other video sites

Photoblog

- A weblog, with pictures.
- A picture is worth a thousand words.

“We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.” - Ernest Hemingway

Blog Sites:

- <http://wordpress.com>
- <http://blogger.com>
- <http://tumblr.net>
- <http://livejournal.com>
- <http://typepad.com>

Podcasting/Vlogging:

- Podcasts are simply prerecorded sound files (mp3s) which you can post on your Blog.
- Vlogs are Video Streams uploaded to popular video sharing sites, such as YouTube, which you can then share via your Blog, if you like. You can even embed the playable video into your website!

www.blogger.com

Login: mdmlatfcpl@gmail.com

Password: mdml2014

- Everyone is welcome to post and comment on others' writing.
- Be constructive with criticism. Helpful, NOT hurtful
- Feel free to add something any time! (keep it classy, plz...)

Free Writing Exercise...

1. Open Word
2. Pick an object in the room...
3. Insert said object into a story about either "voyages to a strange land" or "first trip to a new planet".
4. Write for 20 minutes and then read what you have written.
5. Think of ways to improve the story and go for it!
6. Post your words to the techatfcpl blog, if you like!
7. Remember, this is just the beginning!

Tips for Successful Blogging

"This above all: to thine own self be true." - Wm. Shakespeare

1. Write what you know
Don't be concerned with writing stuff that will pull in more people. Write stuff that you know, and you will sound more intelligent :)
2. Write from the heart
Say what you mean, and mean what you say. A good reader can spot sincerity a mile away.
3. Write something useful
If you have some information that may be of use to another person, why not share it? When your words help a person, that make your site more important to them.
4. Write it in Word first
Instead of typing the whole thing out in your blog site, type it up in your word processor. That's what it is for, and it's good at it! This has the added bonus of having Spell Check, which can help you save face.
5. Keep the reader in mind
How your paragraphs sound when read back can be just as important as the content! Try reading the article back to yourself once you've pounded out a rough draft. If it doesn't sound right, revise it.
6. Don't just write about yourself
Okay, so maybe something interesting happened to you today, but that doesn't mean your whole life is interesting. Unless you are a POI, keep personal info to a minimum, or on a separate page of your blog (About The Author), and focus on what's really important...
7. Interact with readers
If your readers leave a comment, it means they want to be heard as much as you do. Show respect and respond to your comments. And if the comments are abrasive or offensive, you can always delete them :)
8. Give them a reason to come back.
Why would a reader keep coming back to your blog? Why would they subscribe, when there are so many other blogs out there to subscribe to? You've got to give them a reason. And the reason is that they can see what amazing content you put out on a regular basis, and they can reasonably expect you to continue to produce that content. Giving them anticipation works in your favor.
9. Write catchy titles
The reason newspapers become popular is often the way the headlines make the articles sound. Even if it isn't something "amazing", make it POP out to the reader, and they will want to read it just to see what that title was about!
10. Cite sources
So you have a ton of info you've culled from the internet...why should people just trust you at your word? Letting people know where information CAME from lets them know you are honest, and that you don't just believe everything you hear. If you are an expert in a field, cite your experience, any diplomas, awards, etc., you've gotten over the years. And posting a link to the website you got the information from helps the original blogger out as well. Maybe they will reciprocate and link to one of YOUR posts!
11. Keep it fresh
Don't be afraid to talk about something new. If you only talk about one thing, your blog may be considered stagnant and no longer interesting. Everyone has varied interests, so if you have a blog about peanuts, perhaps try adding other legumes to the mix once in a while...

12. Don't be long-winded

Focus on what is absolutely essential to say, and not much more. If you have useful information, feel free to add it, but keep in mind that nobody likes reading a 3 page essay, even about something they are interested in.

13. Give enough info

On the other hand, make sure you don't leave any essential information out. And try to speak on a level that even a beginner could understand. That way, you will be catering to a larger audience, and improving your chances at keeping people coming back.

14. Choose a design that suits your subject

Remember, you can change the look of your site once you add some content, but you want to be sure you pick a look that matches the feel of your words. Having a blog about science with rainbows in the background will not prompt your readers to take you seriously... Make it stand out, but don't make it hard to read, either. Avoid the following:



15. Formatting

If you have enough to say to warrant naming sections of a single post, be sure you use a subheading size of text (Header 2). Use bullet points or numbers for lists, "blockquotes" for quoting somebody else's info, and bold text to make important **vital** info stand out.

16. Show them what you look like

Even if you AREN'T easy on the eyes, a reader will be nine times more likely to trust a person if they know what they look like. Go to gravatar .com and upload a pic of yourself, and link it to the email you used to set up your blog. Any time you post something, your face will show up next to it.

17. Use images

In your blog posts, a well-placed image can catch a person's eye, and again, most people will be more likely to read an article if you spice it up with some relevant pictures. Whether they are screenshots of your computer, pictures you've taken on your digital camera or cell phone, or just some reference material you scanned into your PC, a picture is worth a thousand words...

18. SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

This is a concept much talked about around the internet. It refers to web search engines (like Google, Yahoo, and Bing), and how well they index your website. Proper SEO can skyrocket your blog to fame, and improper SEO can leave it in the dust. For more info: <http://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo>