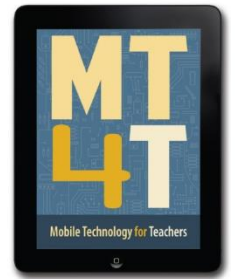




iOS/iPad OS



## MOBILE TECHNOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

# Blogging for Teachers

Apple Mobile Devices | 2nd Edition

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# BLOGGING FOR TEACHERS

Apple Mobile Devices | 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

## Mobile Technology for Teachers (MT4T)

*A Teacher Resource Kit Using Mobile Technology  
for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning in Southeast Asia*





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For more resources on Mobile Technology for Teachers, please visit our website at <https://www.seameo-innotech.org/mt4t> or download the  SEAMEO INNOTECH Reader from your Apple, Android, or Windows device's application store.

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# Introduction

Welcome to Mobile Technology for Teachers (MT4T), a teacher resource kit that will allow teachers to use mobile technology to deliver twenty-first century learning in Southeast Asia. MT4T is designed to provide teachers with easy access to information, resources, examples, and best practices in using mobile technology for their personal and professional growth. While MT4T recognizes the availability of a wide array of mobile technologies, it aims to primarily focus on smartphones and tablets. It will enable teachers to navigate mobile devices beyond the typical Short Messaging Service (SMS) or text messaging, and the call function. It is intended to help teachers recognize the huge potential of mobile devices as tools for teaching and learning.



The MT4T resource kit provides teachers with basic knowledge and skills on how to operate the most popular mobile platforms—iOS and iPadOS (Apple mobile operating system), Android, and Windows. Also contained in this resource kit are discussions on built-in apps (including examples to expand their functionality) and social networking and blogging which aim to foster collaboration among teachers in Southeast Asia and beyond.

MT4T is a collection of ten (10) e-books available in three mobile platforms—Android, iOS, and Windows. The e-books include the following:

- An Introduction to Mobile Technology for Teachers
- An Introduction to Teachers' Personal and Professional Learning Networks for 21st Century Learning
- Uses and Functionalities of Mobile Devices for Teachers
- e-Citizenship: An e-Book for Teachers about Cyber Wellness and Digital Citizenship
- Facebook for Teachers
- Twitter for Teachers
- **Blogging for Teachers**
- Edmodo for Teachers
- LinkedIn for Teachers
- Annotated Resources for Teachers

Users of MT4T are supported by a website, which makes the e-books available in two file formats: ePub and PDF. Some of the e-books are available in both formats, while the others, like this e-book on **Blogging for Teachers**, is available only in PDF. Nonetheless, both e-book formats work well on most available e-reader apps. For optimum performance, it is suggested that you access the MT4T resources using the SEAMEO INNOTECH Reader, which is designed to work consistently across mobile platforms running Android, iOS, iPadOS, and Windows.

The SEAMEO INNOTECH Reader also provides users with additional features such as creating bookmarks, highlighting important phrases, and even creating drawings or doodles on the e-book pages. You can find out more about the other components of the MT4T Resource Kit from the e-Book, ***MT4T: Mobile Technology for Teachers***.

Unique to the Resource Kit are discussions on using mobile technology to promote higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and values among both students and teachers. Links to teaching and learning resources that promote HOTS have been provided in each e-book. Issues related to 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning such as proper etiquette and digital citizenship are also discussed in several chapters of the e-books.

### ***Blogging for Teachers (Apple Mobile Devices | 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)***

This e-book, ***Blogging for Teachers (Android Mobile Devices | 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*** encourages the use of blogs in education and explores its potential benefits to teachers like yourself. It focuses on the use of WordPress (an open source software for creation of website and content management system) as the recommended blogging platform to start your blogging journey.

This e-book has been customized for end-users of Apple mobile devices, particularly iPads. While the screenshots provided were generated using an iPad, the features of the WordPress app do not have significant differences across Apple devices; hence the instruction contained herein are applicable for both iPads and iPhones.



# Chapter 1: What is a Blog?

The Internet was once just a hub for information. Websites then were simple with no platforms to communicate with anybody, be it the source or fellow readers. Because of technological advancement, the Internet became more interactive. Transaction-based websites were slowly introduced, giving way to what we now know as “online shopping.” With the advent of Web 2.0 or the social Web where user-generated content became an integral part of the Internet, **Web logs or blogs** and social networking sites were born—completely changing our preconceived notions of the Internet being one sided.

A **blog** is an online journal where you can record your thoughts.<sup>1</sup> Blogging is a way of expressing your, ideas, opinions, and/or experiences by uploading articles online. Blogs are created for various reasons. Some people blog for socializing: to connect with friends and family or to meet new people. Others use blogs to expand their professional networks.

Blogs eventually integrated features that served as means for two-way conversations. Readers can now leave comments on blog posts, which the owner or writer can respond to, thus starting a dialog or a discussion.

Today’s blogs have either become personal websites or online communities with content as if it were a journal or a diary. Each entry is dated and displayed on the home page with the most recent entry on top. With more than 500<sup>2</sup> million blogs existing to date, its popularity among Internet users cannot be denied. In WordPress alone, more than 70 million new posts get published and around 77 million comments are generated each month.<sup>3</sup>

Blogs have become more than just personal online diaries. They have now also been used by large corporations and organizations to keep their customers updated on product-development and/or services. Blogging has become an important part of the online world that popular bloggers are influencing politics, business, and society as a whole. Incorporating these into the world of education, teacher bloggers are presented with limitless opportunities of making even more significant contributions to their colleagues and students by sharing their ideas, research works, and teaching resources.

There are many kinds of blogs, depending on the content and style of writing. Ganesha, in her article, talks about personal blogs, the niche blogs, the collaborative blogs, podcast blogs, freebies blogs, news blogs, and the teachers’ blogs among others.<sup>4</sup> One can talk about almost anything: from sharing opinions and unique experiences to encouraging discussion of ideas. A blogger may opt to focus on a certain passion, creating a “niche”.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Gunelius. “Ten Reasons to Start a Blog,” *Lifewire* (updated February 2, 2020). Accessed September 02, 2020. <https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-a-blog-3476707>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *WordPress.com*. “How many posts are being published?” Last accessed on 12 April 2020, <https://wordpress.com/activity/>

<sup>4</sup> Ananda Ganesha. “11 Types of Blogs: Which is The Best Choice for You?” *000webhost*, 11 February 2019, Last accessed on 12 April 2020, <https://www.000webhost.com/blog/types-of-blogs>



There are also collaborative blogs for people who prefer creating content with others by having guest bloggers to help them and share some entries. For people who prefer and enjoy talking more than writing, considering a “podcast” blog might be a good fit. It consists of topical audio or video discussions related to a specific niche. For people who like creating and sharing useful materials like PDFs, MP3 files, and templates, they might want to consider “the freebies” blog. If they prefer teaching people or showing others how to do things, “the teachers” blogs may be for them.

While these types may seem distinct from each other, they are in fact not mutually exclusive and often overlap. Any “blogger” is given wide discretion as to the content he or she renders for posting. Teacher blogs, for example, focusing on a shared passion for teaching and learning, are also niche blogs.

Given these aspects of blogging, it is important to highlight that blogging is a great opportunity for you to enrich the educational experience among learners. By teaching and sharing to others, as well as to learn from the interactions, you may be able to further hone your craft as long as you are clear about your goals and intentions.

### **Why Start a Blog?**

Tsisana Palmer mentions how it is imperative for teachers in the age of technology to keep abreast of skills on digital collaboration such as blogging. With the profile of students today showing almost every student being exposed to technology, it cannot be further stressed how being able to relate to them on this level can help in reaching any educational goal. Technology keeps on reinventing itself and utilizing these platforms in engaging students as well as in enhancing one’s professional development proves to be inescapable. <sup>5</sup>

Blogging is a great tool for students to express their ideas and get into a writing routine. Imagine the impact of telling your students that you also blog and that doing so helped improve your writing. Wouldn’t that make it easier for you to convince your students to follow suit? Relatability and common ground may prove to be useful in inspiring students to express themselves through language, literature, and writing.

Starr Sackstein, a nationally board certified high school English and Journalism teacher, published a post in *Corwin Connect* about her experience in starting to blog actively. She reiterates the irony of demanding students to try new things and yet remaining fearful as educators to do the same. She advises fellow teachers to be genuine in what they intend students to see from them in leading by example.

After initially encountering difficulties, Sackstein eventually learned the art of blogging and now allots time to write and reflect daily. According to her, making blogging a habit helps in exposing students to the experience since it capitalizes on their affinity towards technology. <sup>6</sup> It also serves as an opportunity to teach them how to be better digital citizens in this day and age through responsible writing and engagement online.

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<sup>5</sup> Tsisana Palmer, “15 Characteristics of a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Teacher” *Edutopia, Technology Integration* section. Last accessed on 15 April 2020. <https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/15-characteristics-21st-century-teacher>

<sup>6</sup> Starr Sackstein. “Blogging blurbs for growth” *Corwin Connect*, July 2, 2014 Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <https://corwin-connect.com/2014/07/blogging-blurbs-growth/>

For Andrew Wise, a professional blogger and owner of the blog site *Wise Startup Blog*, blogging has many uses and unintended benefits. He cites several reasons that hopefully can convince you to get started with blogging <sup>7</sup>. According to Wise, through blogging, you can:

- **Become a better writer and thinker.** The more time you spend blogging, the better you will be at writing and thinking. Practice hones your skills; producing high quality and engaging content would demand you to tap into your creative side and to push yourself. As you tackle new challenges with your blog, it is inevitable that your writing, thinking, and research skills will improve.
- **Establish yourself as an expert.** Blogging is the perfect platform to establish yourself as an expert of your field by producing great content that offers a unique point of view and by releasing credible information. Your audience will reward your efforts by sharing your material and by helping you build a larger following. While it may take some time and effort, you can become a recognized expert and a trusted voice in your own niche through blogging.
- **Increase your self-confidence.** After you write and publish your first post, you will be filled with a sense of accomplishment. Your creative juices will be flowing, and you can watch as readers visit your site, leave comments, and validate your work. Think about it this way: essentially, you are writing a book one piece at a time. Being a published author is bound to increase your confidence and lead to even more creativity and productivity.
- **Make friends and have fun.** Over time, you will see the number of readers and followers steadily increase. A wider reach means more opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others. You will be amazed to see how much a simple blog can inspire and encourage your readers. This also opens doors to making meaningful connections with people all over the world. You will eventually find your personal and professional network for support and resources increasing exponentially.

Tsisana Palmer further weighs in on the value of encouraging teachers to blog. According to her, teachers should blog in order to: <sup>8</sup>

- **To Share.** Share your successful projects, ideas, and resources. Think of the brief on-the-go encounters with fellow teachers. Don't they often turn into helpful "how-to" sessions, where we exchange our best teaching practices, lesson ideas, or classroom management strategies? A constant exchange of free-flowing ideas on educational management helps in widening your perspectives and doing the same for other educators. Experiential learning from other teachers would prove to be beneficial in honing your craft.
- **Lead your own professional development.** Turn your blogging into your own professional development. Engage with your audience and build your personal and professional learning network (PPLN). Your blog can turn into the best professional development you could ever hope to have. It will help you identify your starting point, where you are now and where you are heading. Following various teacher blogs, commenting on the entries, and interacting with other teachers are excellent forms of professional development. (Loriana Romano, n.d.)

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Wise. "Introduction to Blogging. What is a Blog & How can I start one?" *Wise Startup Blog*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020 at <https://wisestartupblog.com/what-is-a-blog/>

<sup>8</sup> Tsisana Palmer, "9 Reasons Why Teachers Should Blog." *Edutopia*, 22 June 2015, Last accessed on 15 April 2020 at <https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/9-reasons-why-teachers-should-blog>

- **Become a digital citizen.** Become proficient with digital technology. Establish a digital presence. Build a positive digital footprint. Blogging will make you a producer (as opposed to a mere consumer) of information. Having an active participation in shaping discourse online would make you a part of a world beyond the four corners of your classroom.
- **Serve Others.** Build your own library of content and resources and share it with others. Wouldn't it be nice to create a library of useful links, articles, content, activities, etc. and share them with educators who teach the same grade, level, or student population? We all turn to the Internet when searching for ideas and materials. Selecting the best resources and organizing them on your blog will save others a lot of time.

## Why Use Blogs for Education?

The educational system is constantly adapting and changing, looking for the latest trend or quickest solution to a problem. Blogging is a trend that is also a worthwhile long-term investment that you can implement into your teaching practice.<sup>9</sup>

In the post, "10 Benefits of Blogging in Education," Rebecca Hicks compiled a list of the most important aspects to consider when making the decision to incorporate online blogging in the curriculum. Here are some of them:

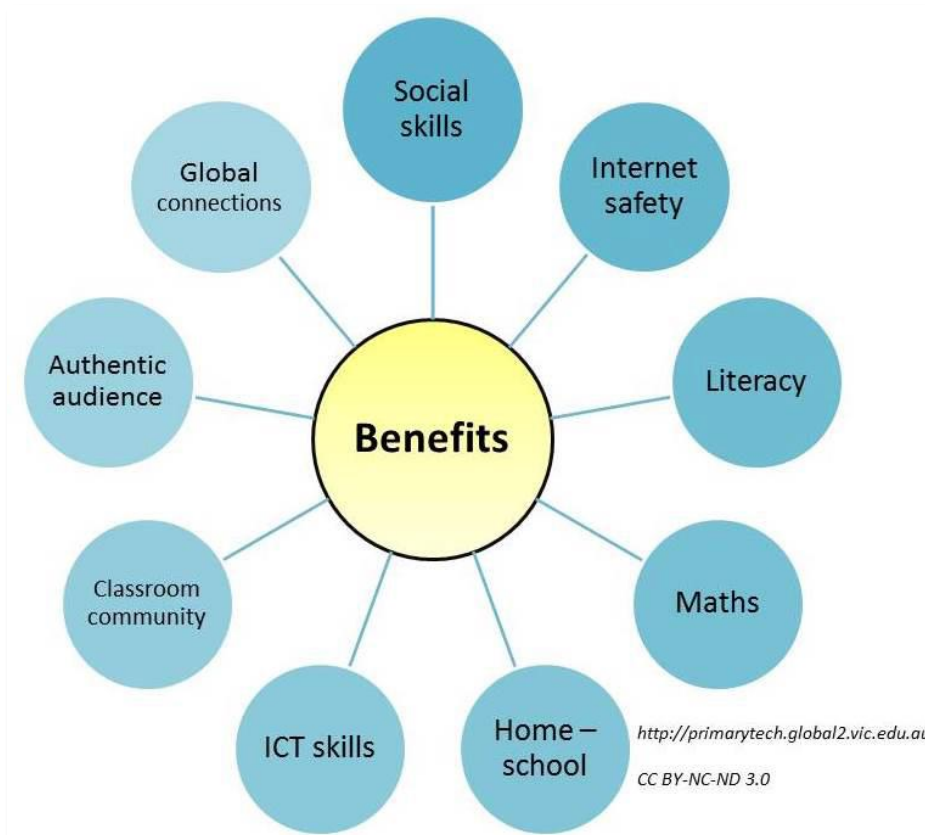
- **Blogging helps students adapt to technology.** Based on the result of a 12-year comparative research on online versus traditional classroom teaching, it was found that online students ranked a full 9% higher than students educated solely through conventional teaching methods. Educational blogs can direct young people's love for technology toward the productive goal of improving their academic performance.
- **Blogging helps develop communication skills.** Communicating through blogging allows students to practice critical social skills. Educational blogging can help teach students to use words in the appropriate context, learn how to give and take constructive feedback, and carry on productive discussions about the class subject matter without being restricted with the demands of conventional learning.
- **Blogging promotes diversity.** Studies have shown that classroom diversity promotes creativity and problem-solving skills. Blogging can provide opportunities for students from different cultures, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and nationalities to interact and contribute their own unique perspectives and life experiences regardless of where they live. Through blogging, the world is within reach being just a click away.
- **Blogging enables student individuality.** Creativity and personal identity develop as students explore aspects of their own interests. With blogging, students can keep individual blogs showcasing their personal interests. The opportunities to work with multimedia allow students to explore their creativity in depth and discover their own personality to a greater extent.

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<sup>9</sup> Rebecca Hicks, "10 Benefits of Blogging in Education," *Wise Startup Blog*, 6 July 2015, Last accessed on 15 April 2020 at <https://wisestartupblog.com/10-benefits-of-educational-blogging/>

- **Blogging helps motivate students.** As peers monitor work, students become more encouraged to perform well. Through blogs, students can comment on each other's work. This fosters a sense of collaboration and healthy competition, as students are motivated not only by the goal of getting a good grade, but they also get the opinions and feedback of their peers.
- **Blogging brings parents into the curriculum.** Parents can monitor students' progress without taking the time off from work to visit a school. With online education, parents can easily check on their children's academic tasks and correspond with teachers, without the need to interrupt their work schedule.
- **Blogging develops valuable tech skills.** These skills include using software applications such as Java Script; Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint; and Adobe Photoshop. Through educational blogging, they can also learn other valuable skills that will benefit them for many years to come, in both their professional and personal lives.

Kathleen Morris, a former primary school teacher and a successful educational blogger from Australia, recounts how she initially thought of blogging as merely a "fun and good way to connect with the parents" of her students<sup>10</sup>. She later finds out how blogging brings many more educational benefits than what she originally thought of which can be seen in this diagram:



<sup>10</sup> Kathleen Morris, "Why Teachers and Students should blog: 18 Benefits of Educational Blogging," *Primary Tech*. 14 March, 2018, Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <http://www.kathleenamorris.com/2018/03/14/benefits-blogging/>

Based on this diagram, Morris explains how blogging benefits education.

- **Building social skills and confidence.** “While some people may be quick to say that blogging and social media can inhibit social skills, I see blogging as a terrific starting point (to socialize). It can help certain individuals practice their skills and transfer them into the “offline world.”
- **Learning about Internet safety.** Blogging is an excellent way for students to learn about Internet safety and to practice being responsible members of an online community. The students’ regular blogging offers them an opportune time to discuss cyber safety issues and to practice appropriate online behaviors.
- **Improving Literacy skills.** In Morris’ classes, she has used blogging to explicitly teach English conventions. She noticed that as her students get more active in blogging, their engagement levels and literacy skills improved. The reluctant writers made use of their blogs to purposefully communicate and converse with others.
- **Introducing Math Concepts.** Apart from using blogs as a platform for teaching and learning literacy, Morris also found a way to make good use of it to introduce Math concepts. Through a blogging project called “Our World, Our Numbers,” students from different countries engage in conversations to teach each other about different aspects of Mathematics based on their own culture.
- **Connecting home and school.** By having a class blog, parents and families of students can have real-time access into their children’s education. Many parents and families have come to appreciate this as a means of getting more involved in their children’s education by viewing blog posts and posting comments without having to break their routines or having to set appointments.
- **Promoting ICT skills.** Perhaps an apparent benefit of blogging is its assistance in helping students become more ICT literate—a crucial twenty-first-century skill. Through blogging, the students also become familiar with keyboard shortcuts, learn about Creative Commons licenses, conduct online research, and do troubleshooting.
- **Fostering teamwork and collaboration.** Creating a class blog fosters teamwork and collaboration. In this process, a real sense of classroom community and class identity can be developed even beyond the classroom.
- **Getting authentic audience.** Blogging provides a chance for students’ works to be exposed to a much larger audience, who can potentially provide constructive feedback by posting comments. Morris observes that as students gain confidence in their blogging skills, they also develop pride in the work that goes onto each post that they publish. This encourages them to further do their best for their potential audience.
- **Developing global connections.** Morris refers to this as one of the most exciting benefits of blogging. Through blogging, borders become non-existent for students. Being able to connect with students across the globe as “blogging buddies” promotes diversity and inter-cultural collaboration. Morris says the benefits of these global connections are priceless since it helps develop a sense of understanding and collegiality.

Both young and old learners can immensely benefit from blogging once teachers get them started on it through a class blog. In an infographic (see Image 1) developed by SEAMEO INNOTECH, it highlights the “8 Reasons Why Blogging Can Be Beneficial for Learners.”<sup>11</sup>

Blogging is also commonly used in the academe. Here is a list of the different ways universities and higher education institutions (HEIs) use WordPress according to Sue Waters<sup>12</sup>

- **School website.** Numerous schools host their entire school website on WordPress. The latest school news is published as posts on the front page with important school information in the sidebars and pages. You can even map your school blog to your own school domain using domain mapping.
- **Class website.** The *Digital Gators Blog* is a good example of how a blog is used by a teacher as a class website. The teacher provides links to resources, assignments, and information to help students with their middle school computer classes.
- **Class blog.** Class blogs are used in different ways. Some teachers use their class blogs to post daily tasks, information on what was covered in class, and assignments deadlines. Teachers do this to update students and parents, to inform absent students of what they have missed, and to provide resources students can use for revision.
- **Class blog with student blogs.** Lots of teachers use class blogs for global collaboration, authentic learning, reflective blogging, collaboration, and discussion. When used for these purposes, it is common for their students to have their own individual student blogs. Teachers find that when students are asked to write for an audience outside of their class, they are more motivated, learn more, and they write better than if they only write for their teacher.
- **Specialist subject area blogs.** It is also common for educators who teach specialist subject areas for a range of grades to use one blog for all classes. This is how many art teachers showcase student work.



Tap to see full image

<sup>11</sup> MT4T infographic. 22 June 2020. "8 Reasons Why Blogging Can Be Beneficial for Learners."

<sup>12</sup> Sue Waters. *The Edublogger*. "'The Top 10 Ways Blogs and WordPress Are Used in Schools'" Last accessed on August 22, 2017 at <https://www.theedublogger.com/2013/11/11/the-top-10-ways-blogs-and-wordpress-are-used-in-schools/>

- **Personal or professional educator blog.** The main reasons why educators have personal or professional blogs include:
  - Sharing information and tips with other educators.
  - Collaborating with a global audience. Increased collaboration with others leads to greater innovation and ideas because everyone sees a different perspective, giving all involved greater “food for thought!”
  - Reflecting on their learning or their teaching or work practices.
  - Learning how to blog themselves so they can use blogs effectively with their students.
- **Library blogs.** School libraries and resource centers use blogs in a range of ways. The *MHMS Daring School Library Blog* and *England Library Blog* uses their blog to provide library news for teachers, students, and parents; to support their reading program; to assist teachers who use technology; and to release book reviews.
- **Group collaboration and projects.** Group collaboration and project blogs can be as simple as students or teachers collaborating on a group blog and may even involve collaborators from the same school or different schools in case of large global projects.
- **e-portfolios.** We are seeing an increasing number of educators using blogs for their own or their students’ digital portfolios. Student blogs are used to showcase their work and share their learning throughout their school life while the educators’ personal e-portfolios may be used to document their skills against professional standards.
- **Professional learning.** These are the blogs set up to support educators who use technology in school, the school district, or community so they can model how blogs are used. It serves as a repository of experiences that educators may refer to in charting their own respective blogging journeys.

As a teacher, you can build and expand your Professional Learning network (PLN) through blogging. Blogging and commenting on others’ blogs can help you gain information and resources and connect with peers all over the world.



## Web Resources

For more information on professional learning networks

### e-Book

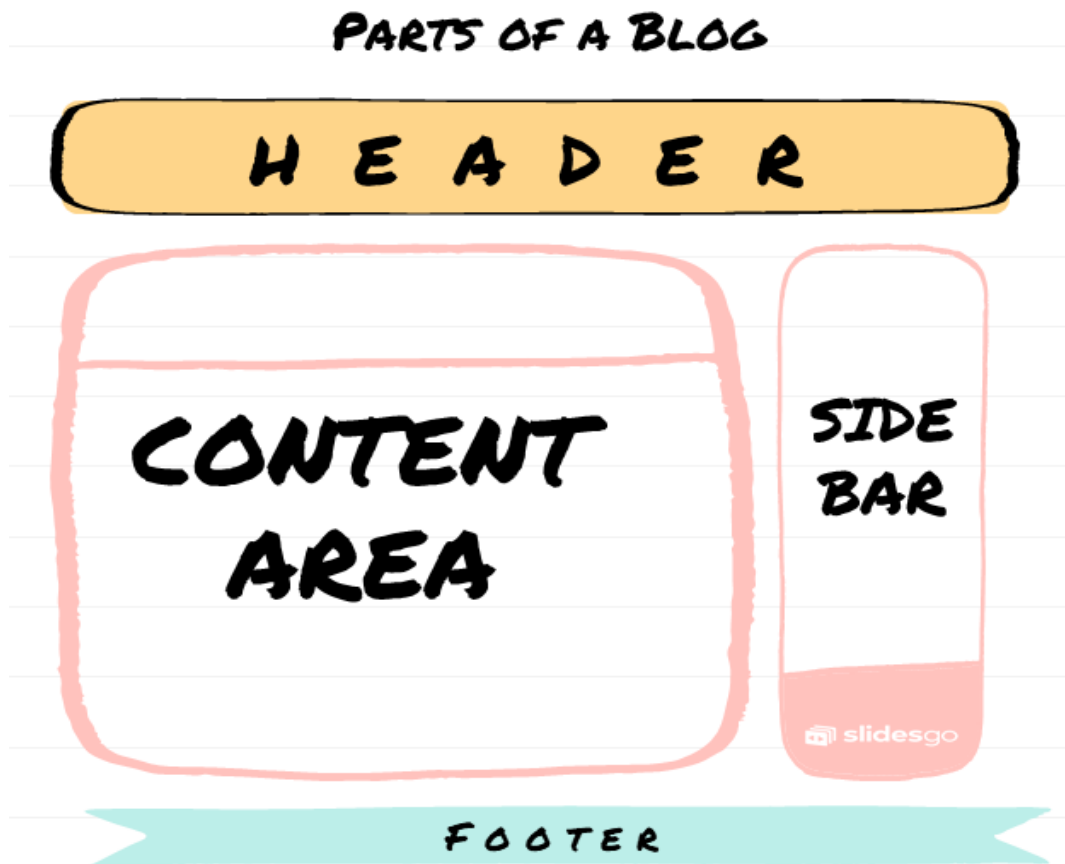
#### “An Introduction to Teachers’ Personal and Professional Learning Networks for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning”

*Mobile Technology for Teachers (MT4T)*

<https://www.seameo-innotech.org/mt4t/e-book/an-introduction-to-teachers-personal-and-professional-learning-networks-for-21st-century-learning/>

## What Are the Components of a Blog?

The structure and appearance of blogs have significantly changed through the years. However, most blogs still retain some “standard” features and structure. A typical blog still includes four significant sections—the **header**, the **content area**, the **footer**, and the **sidebar**.<sup>13</sup>




The first three areas are found on nearly all blogs and are described as:

- **Header.** Headers usually consist of an image, with the name of the blog and a menu or navigation bar. It may generally include a tag line with a slogan describing the purpose of the blog. On many sites, the blog’s name and tag line are displayed as text, usually stylized, rather than as an image. This can potentially speed up the loading time of your blog and provide marginal search engine benefits. In addition, there are usually one or two navigation menus. Menus are usually updated as the number of posts expand to include links to different parts of the blog/site such as one page for updates, another page for insights and lessons.
- **Content area.** This is the section where you put the latest blog posts and other posts that you want to highlight. Technology now allows blog designers to produce creative layouts. The main content area could be filled with different image sizes, different amounts of text, and the layout could be in two columns.

<sup>13</sup> Anya Skrba, “What is a Blog- The Definition of Blog, Blogging, and Blogger,” *Firstsiteguide.com*. First published on April 18, 2018, updated on September 17, 2020. Accessed on 10 October 2020, <https://firstsiteguide.com/what-is-blog/>





- **Footer.** A footer usually displays copyright, basic information, and ownership. But some footers can be quite elaborate. This encourages visitors to carry on clicking to view content in other sections of the site. Some even link to the contact page from the footer for easier navigation.
- **Sidebar.** This usually contains widgets, which can be very useful to improve site navigation and add enhancements to the blog. Some blogs, however, do not use a sidebar.

As you progress through the chapters of this e-book, you will learn more about how to work on each component of your blog. In WordPress, you are already given **themes** to choose from that contain all the components and would vary in design. What is important is to build on the content area first and progress to refining the design and different components as you become more comfortable using the  **WordPress.com** platform.



# Chapter 2: Basic Users

This chapter is for basic users who have little to no knowledge in blogging, particularly in creating a blog as a professional development tool, and in using WordPress as a platform for blogging. In this level of user competence, you will learn among other things the difference between  **WordPress.com** and WordPress.org, process of setting up a  **WordPress.com** account, manner of posting a blog entry, use of images in a WordPress blog, and how to adhere to proper blogging etiquette. As a basic user, it is suggested that you carefully follow the instructions to effectively use WordPress to create and manage your blog.

## Where Do You Start?

Just like writing a lesson plan or planning out the school year, creating a blog starts with being clear about your objectives and your goals. It is also important to think about how much time and effort you can render for this endeavor. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- *As a teacher and professional, what would be useful for you right now, or in the coming school year?* Do you want to develop your skill as a writer and become a reflective practitioner? Do you want to share your ideas with other teachers and gain insights from the interaction? Are you a subject specialist who wants to share more about creative writing or Science? Or do you find it useful to have your own class blog as a homeroom adviser for your students or for communicating with parents? These are things to consider before starting a blog. It would be good to choose 1-2 goals for your blog.
- *Be honest with yourself and ask, how much time and effort can you allot for managing your blog?* What would be a doable schedule for you to write your content and work on your blog? Do you plan to write weekly, monthly, or erratically? What kind of multimedia do you prefer to use? Do you prefer writing or possibly sharing photos to document your process? Or maybe even uploading audios or videos? These are questions that can help in ensuring that you can sustain this initiative.

## **Choosing Your Audience** <sup>14</sup>

Part of the process of identifying your goal also involves identifying who your target audience is. Here are some of the main audiences you may want to consider, depending on your context and need:

- *Co-teachers or fellow educators.* Do you want to share ideas with your co-teachers or other educators? Are you a subject specialist who would want to focus on blogging about how to teach Mathematics, Science, English, or Art?

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<sup>14</sup> Step 1: Setting Up Your Blog. Last accessed April 15, 2020, <https://teacherchallenge.edublogs.org/step-1-set-up-your-blog/>

- **Students.** Do you want to start a classroom blog? Will it be helpful for you to have a blog for your students? What will it contain? Is it for their homeroom or a particular subject? What do you want them to get from it? How would it make things easier for you in terms of teaching and learning for your class?
- **Parents.** Will it be useful for the parents of your students to have access to a classroom blog for updates? What stories or articles will be helpful to share with parents?

Choosing the right audience for your blog is helpful in clarifying the direction of your own blog as a teacher. While it may be tempting to cover a wide area of interest to attract more readers, it is advisable to focus your efforts initially on building content for a targeted set of prospective readers only. Having a more focused target audience (e.g., physics teachers in your school district) should help you to more easily create content each time and eventually help establish your credibility as an authority on your chosen content area.

### **Examples of Educator Blogs**

If you want to get some ideas about what teacher blogs are, below are some examples from Scholastic <sup>15</sup>; Teachthought <sup>16</sup> and the edublogger.com <sup>17</sup>

- **Blogs for Teachers**
  - **Science Fix.** In this blog, middle school science teacher Darren Fix shares resources on science lessons and experiments. According to him, posting stimulates his creativity and helps him come up with new ideas. "It's a positive experience in a profession that unfortunately dwells on the negative too much."
  - **Teach Junkie.** In this blog, Leslie, a veteran Kindergarten teacher shares free teaching ideas and activities for kindergarten through fifth grade.
- **Blogs for Students, Parents to View or Class Blogs**
  - **Ms. Cassidy's Classroom Blog.** A retired Canadian first-grade teacher Kathy Cassidy invites readers into the classroom to interact with students and her dynamic lessons. What is noteworthy in her blog is how she shares student's learning firsthand. She says, "My favorite thing about blogging is that the students literally have a worldwide audience. They see themselves as writers because people can and do read and comment on their work." <sup>18</sup>
  - **Learning Stories.** Shemo Gani, a Kindergarten teacher in Nanjing International School in China started the *Learning Stories* blog in September 2015. She shares, "After sending out class newsletters for years, I wanted to find a better way to showcase the learning stories of the children. I also wanted to collect the stories in a way that I can access them more freely, even after a few years."

<sup>15</sup> "Top 13 teacher blogs," *Scholastic* (2009). Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/top-teacher-blogs/>

<sup>16</sup> "52 Education blogs you should follow," *TeachThought* (January 15, 2020). Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://teachthought.com/pedagogy/52-education-blogs-you-should-follow/>

<sup>17</sup> Kathleen Morris, "13 examples of great class blogs," *The Edublogger* (May 27, 2019). Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://www.theedublogger.com/13-great-class-blogs/>

<sup>18</sup> "Top 13 teacher blogs," *Scholastic* (2009). Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/top-teacher-blogs/>



# Web Resources

Tap the links to access the resources

## Blogs for Teachers

*Science Fix*

<http://www.sciencefix.com/>

*Teach Junkie*

<https://www.teachjunkie.com/>

## Blogs for Students and Parents

*Mrs. Cassidy's Classroom Blog*

<https://mscassidysclass.edublogs.org/>

*Learning Stories*

<https://shemo.edublogs.org/>

## How to Set-up a WordPress Account

To create a blog, you need access to a blogging platform such as WordPress. Before signing up for a WordPress account, let us learn more about this platform by familiarizing ourselves with WordPress terms to also differentiate between WordPress.Com and Wordpress.org.

### What Is WordPress?

WordPress is an online, open source blog creation tool. In non-technical terms, it is probably the easiest and most powerful blogging and website content management system (CMS) in existence today.<sup>19</sup>

WordPress powers 35% of the entire Internet that's approximately 76.5 million WordPress.com blogs<sup>20</sup> including the [SEAMEO INNOTECH's Center website](#) and the [MT4T website](#). This number continues to grow as there are 50,000 WordPress.com websites being launched daily.

WordPress has two main areas that you need to become familiar with: the **front end** and the **back end**. *Wise Start Up Blog* provides a comprehensive article to guide newbies on how to manage a WordPress blog/website, how to make design changes, and start publishing pages and posts. You can read more about "[How to Use WordPress](#)" when you visit the blog or read some of the highlights of that post:

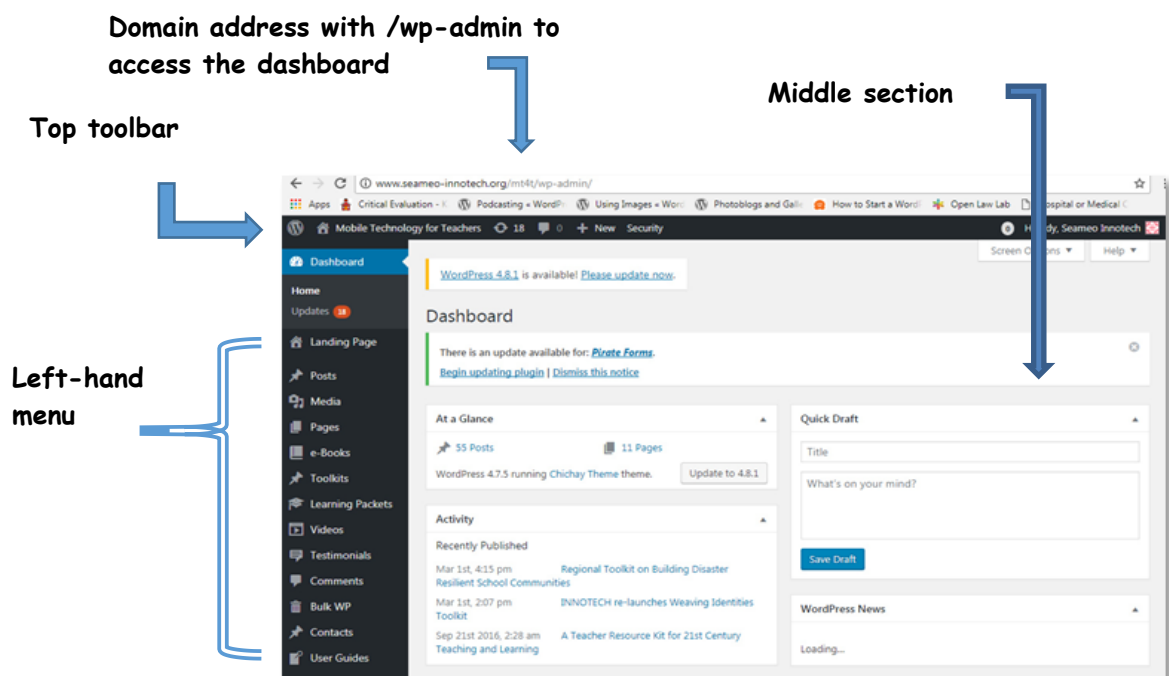
- **WordPress Front and Back Ends.** The *front end* is the content that is readily seen by visitors as they browse through your website. This is where all the changes that you make are seen by your audience. The front end also allows your audience to take certain actions like signing up for your newsletter, leaving comments and sharing your work on social media.

<sup>19</sup> iThemes Media LLC. "What Is WordPress?" *iThemes*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020 at <https://ithemes.com/tutorials/what-is-wordpress/>.

<sup>20</sup> Karol K. (August 2019) "The Ultimate List of WordPress Statistics." Accessed from Code in WordPress at <https://www.codeinwp.com/blog/wordpress-statistics/>

The **back end** refers to the WordPress dashboard where you manage your blog website. This is where you do all the hard work that shows up on the front end. Only those who have an account with your blog will be able to gain access to this area. Navigating to your website's dashboard area is simple: add **/wp-admin** to the end of your domain address and enter your WordPress username and password to make changes to your site. For example, **mywebsite.com/wp-admin** would take you directly to the login page.

- **Navigating the Dashboard.** Your WordPress dashboard is the main hub that allows you to complete administrative tasks and to control your blog. The dashboard consists of three main areas that you will need to navigate in order to make changes to your site: the top toolbar, the middle section and the left-hand menu column. While each of these sections is important, you will spend most of your time using the left-hand menu.



The left-hand column will also contain menu options for plugins<sup>21</sup> that you have added to the site. The exact location depends on the plugin and could be listed under any of the general menus listed above or new menu in the left-hand column.

- **Posts vs. Pages.** These two have a lot of similarities. Both can be added, deleted, updated, and edited. Both contain a title and targeted content. Both may contain media types like video, audio, photos, and links. While there are similarities between the two, there are significant differences, as well that are important for you to understand. Your blog will consist of several *posts* with content that you can continuously update. Every time you write new content and publish this, it shows up as a blog post. Pages, on the other hand, are generally more static. These have contents that are more permanent which rarely changes such as the Contact page, or About page.

<sup>21</sup> WordPress plugins are apps that you can add to customize your WordPress site.

## What WordPress Terms Should You Know?

Every WordPress blogger needs to know certain things if they want to become effective at blogging. It's easy to get confused with certain terms when you're new to WordPress. To avoid this, you may refer to the following as a guide as you start your blogging journey:<sup>22</sup>

- **Back end:** This is the main control hub for managing content and performing other administrative tasks. Only authorized users (with a username and password) can access the back end
- **Content:** Content is the actual material you put up on your site such as text, images, and video. Content should not be confused with structural components of the site, such as pages.
- **Dashboard.** This is a part of your blog's back end which summarizes information about your site for you to manage.
- **Front end:** This is the immediately apparent view of the site that visitors see. It does not contain any administrative functions but only the uploaded interface and layout as rendered from the back end.
- **Plugin.** A plugin is add-on code that integrates with WordPress for some specific task or feature.
- **Post.** An actual blog entry, also known as an "article."
- **Sidebar.** An area on a page, typically a column on one side, which enables a site owner to provide additional information or other content that is set off from the main content on that page.
- **Site.** A site is the website itself published by WordPress.com.
- **Template.** A file that defines how your blog is laid out. It is a component of a theme.
- **Theme.** A WordPress theme is a package of files that define the overall look and feel of your blog—the graphic design, color scheme, text fonts, and more. Themes include templates and may incorporate custom code for interactive features.
- **Widget.** A widget is an object, usually including a code and some visual elements, that performs a specific task when incorporated into a page.
- **What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG).** This describes the rich-text editor feature that enables you to compose and format text in a single interface. What you see in the editor is approximately what your blog's visitors will see when they visit your blog.



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<sup>22</sup> Kris, "WordPress Terminology for Newbies." *Smashstack* (August 31, 2015). Accessed September 2, 2020 <http://www.smashstack.com/articles/wordpress-terminology-for-newbies/>.




## What Is WordPress.com and How Is It Different from WordPress.org?






Source: <http://www.wpbeginner.com/>

Do you know that there are two kinds of WordPress available? There is  **WordPress.com** and there is  **WordPress.org**. How is one different from the other?

Before you embark on your blogging journey, you need to carefully choose the correct WordPress platform that will serve your purpose. Choosing the right platform is crucial for the success of your blog.



 **WordPress.org** offers a lot more possibilities for serious bloggers. A blog from  **WordPress.com** is useful to those who want to explore first or have a feel of starting and maintaining a blog. People who want to share their hobbies, or students and teachers who want to create blogs for their class or fellow schoolteachers, for example, are among those who would find  **WordPress.com** a convenient option for starting a blog.

For most professional bloggers, it makes more sense to use  **WordPress.org** because you can install plugins, customize your site design, and the most important consideration for some, is that it also allows you to generate income through your blog without any restrictions. Whereas the free plan of  **WordPress.com** does not let you do all that unless you upgrade to their premium plan.

 **WordPress.com** has four kinds of paid accounts, also known as “plans”—1) personal, 2) premium, 3) business, and 4) eCommerce.

- A **personal** plan costs approximately Php 2000/month (about USD\$40), providing 6GB storage space, access to dozens of free WordPress themes, free domain for one year, no WordPress.com ads, an email, and live chat support.
- A **premium** plan is best for freelancers which costs around Php 416/month (about USD\$8.50/month) and comes with 13GB storage space, unlimited premium themes, and advanced tools for design, marketing, and monetization.



- The **business** plan is best for small businesses which costs around Php 1,166/month (about USD\$24/month) with a 200GB storage space. It has all the features of the premium plan with the addition of business class features that allows you to remove WordPress.com branding, to install plugins, to get personalized help, and to personalize your design to match your vision for your blog.
- The **eCommerce** plan comes with a 200GB storage space at around Php 2,099/month (about USD\$43/month). It allows you to have an online store with a powerful and flexible platform, together with all the features of the business plan with the addition of advanced eCommerce features (e.g., ability to accept payments from over 60+ countries, integration with top shipping carriers, and ability to add and sell unlimited products and services).

All  **WordPress.com** paid plans have similar primary features, including a growing collection of well-designed themes to choose from, basic customization features, unlimited bandwidth, and customer support. Since  **WordPress.com** takes care of the hosting of any blog, you do not have to worry about hosting, security, backups, or software updates ever.







If these paid plans overwhelm you, you can always start with the **free** plan, which will not cost you anything. You just need to start creating your blog and be on your way to publishing your content in less than five minutes. With this chosen arrangement, you can create a customized site, which comes with:

- Your own WordPress.com address such as "example.wordpress.com"
- 3GB of storage space for uploading images
- More than 200 free themes to choose from
- Basic customization features that allow you to add pages and widgets, upload a custom header or background, integrate with your social accounts, and more
- Site statistics
- Staff, volunteer, and community support in WordPress.com forums

Both  **WordPress.org** and  **WordPress.com** have its pros and cons, depending on your needs. Some of these differences are summed up as follows:

-  **WordPress.org**, a.k.a. "the real WordPress" is the more popular WordPress platform. All the rave reviews you have read so far about WordPress actually pertain to sites developed using this platform. Most professional bloggers also recommend this more than  **WordPress.com**, which is a hosted version of WordPress.org and created by its co-founder, Matt Mullenweg.




- The selling point of  **WordPress.org** is that it is “completely customizable and can be used for almost anything.” while  **WordPress.com**’s main advantage is that it lets you “start a blog or build a website in seconds without any technical knowledge.”
- The major difference between the two is about **hosting services**. With  **WordPress.org**, you host your own blog. While you can download the WordPress software for free, you will need to register your own domain name, and search and pay for web hosting services.<sup>23</sup> With  **WordPress.com**, you don’t have to download the software, register a domain name, and search elsewhere for hosting services. It does all of these for you, but with some limitations.
- If you are not interested in having to pay for your own hosting, manage your own web server, or pay someone else to handle that for you, you would probably prefer using  **WordPress.com**.<sup>24</sup> But if you are interested in having more flexibility and control over your site, and envision generating some income through your blog, then you should choose  **WordPress.org**. With this self-hosted version of WordPress, you can create your own domain name; upload and install different plugins; customize your site’s theme and design; and create unique functionalities.

To get a more comprehensive comparison of the two platforms, you may refer to this [infographic](#) developed by Karen Evans and published in March 2017 by [Start Blogging Online](#).

## Steps to Set-up Your WordPress.com Account

Before you can start a blog on  **WordPress.com**, you need to set-up an account. To do this, you can view the presentation, “How to Sign Up for a Blog at WordPress.com,”<sup>25</sup> or follow the succeeding step-by-step guide.

As a basic user, we recommend that you use a personal computer (PC) to sign up for  **WordPress**. (Note: If you only have an iPad, please proceed to the section of this e-book on how to download the WordPress app and follow the steps indicated.)

1. **Open your web browser.** This is the software that you will use to access web pages. Examples of web browsers include Chrome, Firefox, Edge, and Safari. Type “<https://wordpress.com/>” into the **Address** bar to open the WordPress.com website.

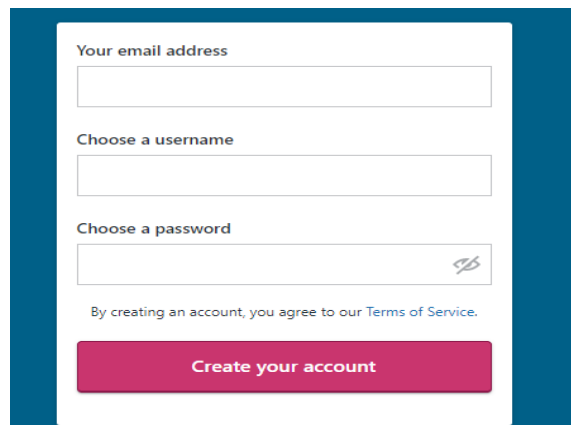


<sup>23</sup> A *domain name* is what people type to get to your blog site. It’s like an address on the Internet. *Web hosting*, on the other hand, is where your blog site can be found. It’s like a house on the Internet.

<sup>24</sup> *iThemes.com*. “WordPress.com vs WordPress.org” Last accessed on 15 April, 2020 at <https://ithemes.com/tutorials/wordpress-com-vs-wordpress-org/>.

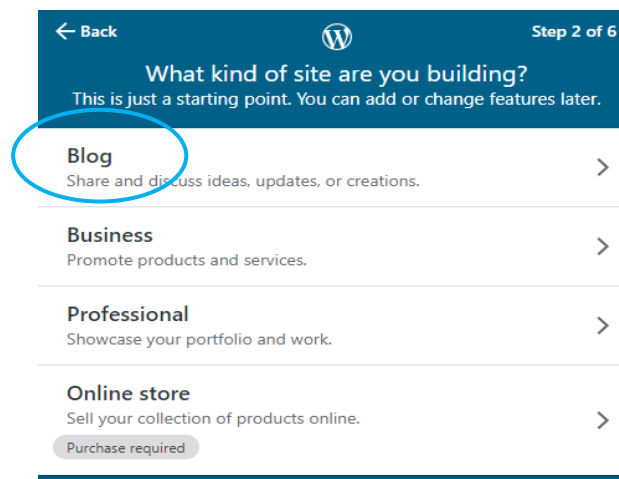
<sup>25</sup> Jaysarie Gundran. (17 December 2012). *SlideShare*. “How to Sign Up for a Blog at WordPress.com.” Last accessed on 17 July 2017, [https://www.slideshare.net/jaysa\\_ncg/how-to-sign-up-for-a-blog-at-wordpresscom-15679000](https://www.slideshare.net/jaysa_ncg/how-to-sign-up-for-a-blog-at-wordpresscom-15679000).

2. Tap **Start your website** to get started with creating a WordPress.com account. Together with your email address, provide a username and a password for this account. Once done, tap **Create your account**.



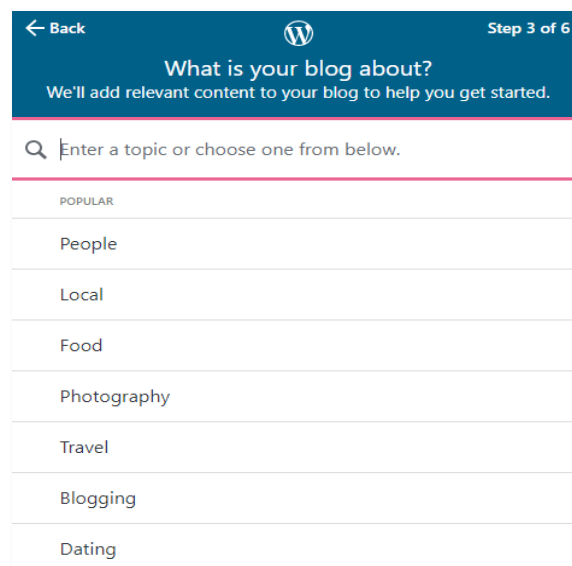
The screenshot shows a registration form with three input fields: "Your email address", "Choose a username", and "Choose a password". Below the fields is a link to the Terms of Service and a pink "Create your account" button.

3. Next, select the kind of site you want to build. You have four choices: Blog, Business, Professional, and Online Store. Except for the last option, all are for free. Choose **Blog**.



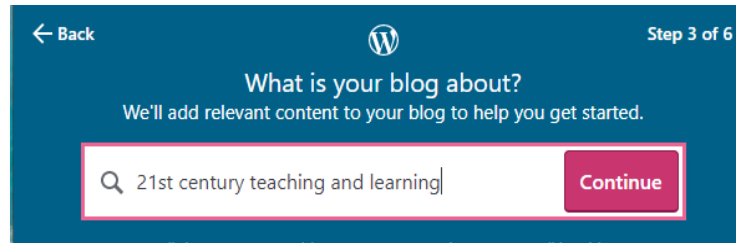
The screenshot shows a selection screen titled "What kind of site are you building?". It lists four options: "Blog" (circled in blue), "Business", "Professional", and "Online store". The "Online store" option is marked as "Purchase required".

4. Indicate the focus of your blog on the space provided or select from among the list suggested.



The screenshot shows a screen titled "What is your blog about?". It features a search bar with the text "Enter a topic or choose one from below." and a list of suggested topics: "People", "Local", "Food", "Photography", "Travel", "Blogging", and "Dating".

- As you type the topic of your choice, WordPress.com immediately gives you a preview of the default look of your blog, including the topic you identified. Note that once you complete the set-up of your WordPress.com account, you can further customize the design of your blog based on your vision. Once done, tap **Continue**.





- Provide a title for your blog. This is how your readers will refer to your blog and how your blog will be known. In this example, the blog name is "Mobile Technology for Teachers." The blog name is visible at the top of your blog page. Remember that you can change this anytime. Now tap **Continue**.

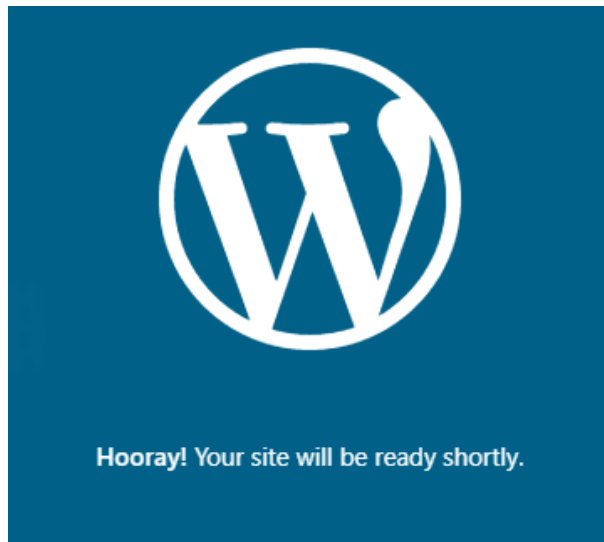


- Next, give your blog site a domain name. This is what people will type into their browser to get to your blog. Indicate the domain name you want or type in some keywords that describe your blog into the **Enter a name or keyword**.




**Note:**  **WordPress.com** gives several options for your domain name based on the word you entered. Most of the options, however, are included in paid plans. For now, select the **Free** domain name suggestion of WordPress.com by tapping the **Select** button across it.


8. Next, as discussed earlier,  **WordPress.com** offers you **four** plan choices—**Personal**, **Premium**, **Business**, and **eCommerce**. The rate per month is given and each comes with different features. **Personal** offers the lowest plan with limited features, while **eCommerce** is the highest paid plan. For now, choose the free site by clicking the link **Start with a free site**. Congratulations! You have successfully created a WordPress.com account on your Apple mobile device.





Now, customize your blog site. WordPress has a quick list of setup tasks to guide you before publishing your post online or making it visible to everyone. Note that until you are ready, your site remains private and is only visible to you. Follow the **Site Setup List** to guide you with the additional steps toward launching your site. The additional steps include updating your homepage and confirming your email address. Once these are done, you are on your way to launching your blog site.

## How to Install the WordPress App

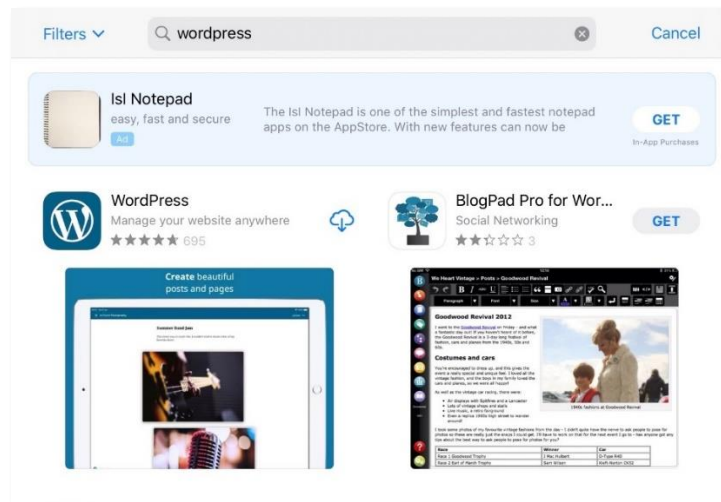
You can install the  **WordPress.com** app on any mobile device running Android or iOS. Windows currently does not support the mobile app for WordPress. However, Windows device users can still enjoy blogging by installing in their PCs the WordPress Desktop app, which is an open source desktop client developed by the parent company of WordPress.<sup>26</sup>





For this e-book, note that we used an Apple iPad 2018 6th Gen running iOS 13.3.1. To install the  **WordPress.com** app, follow these instructions.

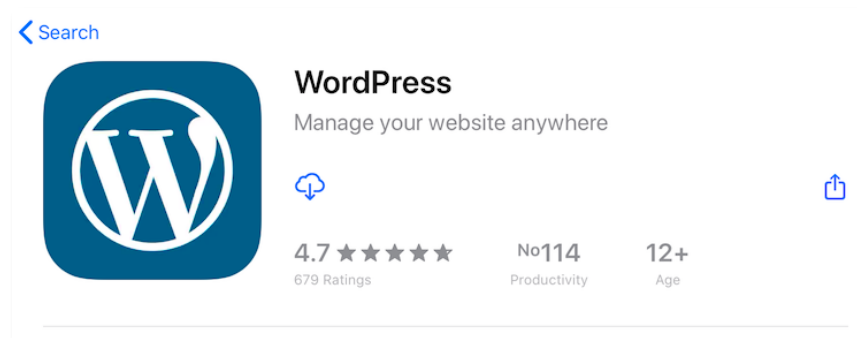
1. Open your iPad. Look for and tap  to open the app store.
2. Type “WordPress” into the  **Search for Games, Apps, Stories and More** field. Note that suggestions will appear as you type.


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<sup>26</sup> “The WordPress Desktop App (Mac, Windows, Linux): The 110% Guide,” *WP Buffs* (Updated April 21, 2020). Accessed September 2, 2020. <https://wpbuffs.com/wordpress-desktop-app/>



3. Tap  **WordPress.com** from among the search results to open the **WordPress** page.
4. Then, tap  to Install. You will know when it is done installing when the  icon is replaced by the  icon.

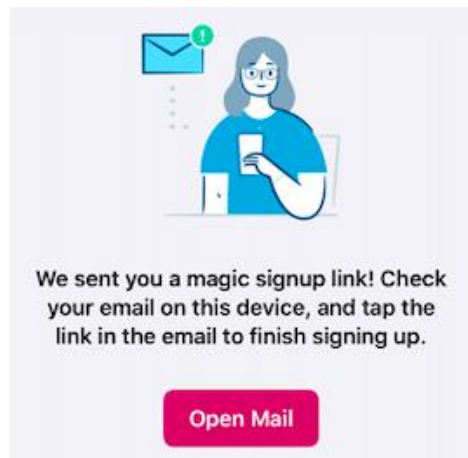



5. Exit the Apple store and Tap  to launch **WordPress**.
6. Since this is your first time to open the app, you need to log in your credentials. If you have signed-up for WordPress using the PC, please proceed to **Step 12**.
7. To sign-up for WordPress using the app, when you see the options below, choose **SIGN UP FOR WORDPRESS.COM**

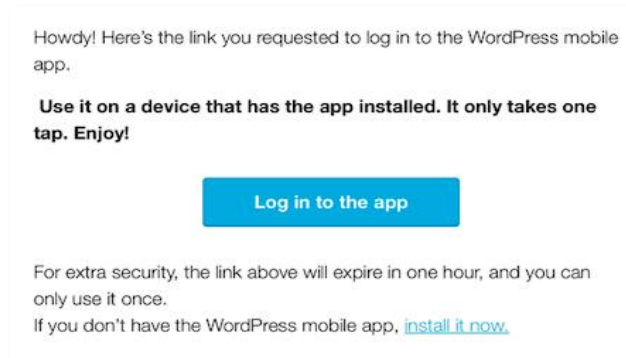


8. You will be asked whether to sign-up using e-mail, with Google, or continue with Apple. Choose depending on what is readily accessible to you.
9. Enter the e-mail address you will be using for your blog. It would be helpful to use your official teaching e-mail for this. Please make sure that your e-mail is readily accessible and open, because a confirmatory link will be sent thereafter.

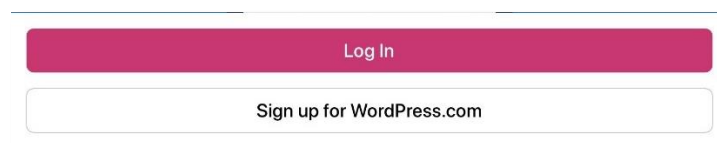
10. This will show up. You may click on **Open Mail** to open your e-mail in your iPad where the link was sent.




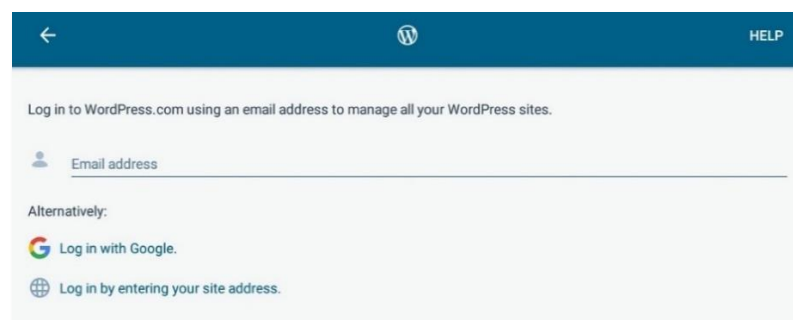
11. When you open your e-mail, this is what it can look like (see below). Click on **“Log in to the app.”** It will then redirect you to the  **WordPress.com** app. Please skip Step 12-15 since clicking this button will already lead you to create your site.



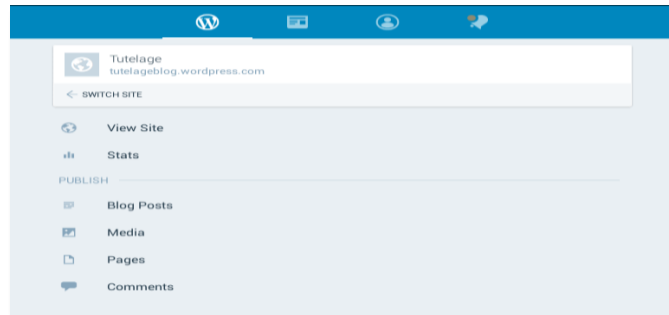
12. If you have already signed-up, tap **Log In** found at the bottom of the screen.



13. Enter the email address you used to create your  **WordPress.com** account then tap **Next**.



- WordPress will inform you that a link will be sent to your assigned email address so you can access your WordPress account. This link will not anymore require you to type your password. Tap **Send Link**. Alternately, you have the option to just enter your password. If you prefer this option, tap **Enter your password instead**.
- Fill out the required information and tap the **Sign in** button. This will open your **Dashboard**.

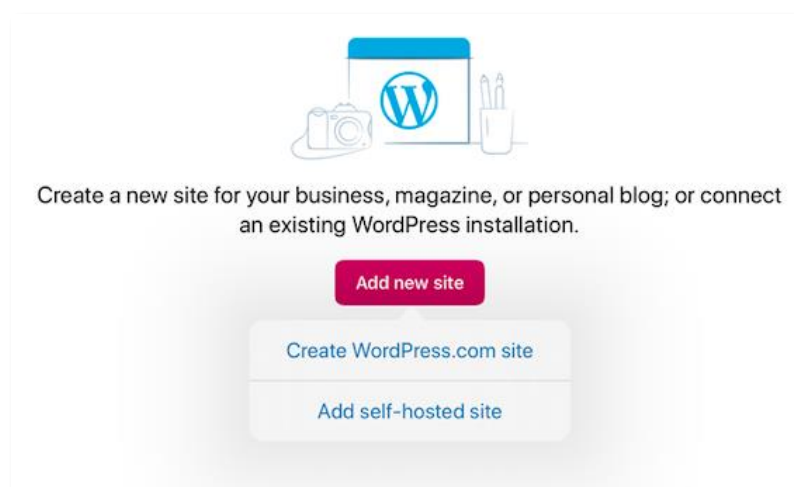


- Congratulations! You can now start blogging on **WordPress.com** via your Apple mobile device.

**Note:** This can be installed for both Apple mobile phones and tablets. There are rare instances that the app may not be compatible to your device. If this happens, you will need to use a browser to access WordPress.

## How to Post a WordPress Blog Entry

Now that you have created a **WordPress.com** account and installed the app in your Apple mobile device, you are on your way to writing your first blog entry. Please note that for those who used an Apple mobile device to create their account, they will first be asked to create a new site. Tap **“Create WordPress.com site”** and Choose **“Blog.”** Then you will be asked to create a domain name. After that, you can continue with writing your first blog entry.



To help you write your first blog, here are some tips from successful bloggers<sup>27</sup> on what to remember.

- **Do smarter research.** Collect as much information as you can on your chosen subject. You cannot write high-quality content without collecting relevant information/data to base your blog from. You can search the Internet for case studies and even expert quotes. After gathering links, start reading these articles. Try retaining as much information as possible and make notes for the key ideas.
- **Have a clear outline.** Good writing is spontaneous yet easy to read. Having proper structure in your writing is key in clearly conveying your point of view. Creating an outline before writing your first draft ensures that you remain focused and sets the direction you are to take.
- **Be creative in writing headlines.** Without a compelling title, your writing efforts are likely to get wasted. Most people will not read past an article's headline so you should think carefully of the words that you will use. Headlines contribute significantly on gaining traction of articles on social media.
- **Indent and level your paragraphs.** Doing this would make reading information much easier. Do not make the reading experience of your audience painful by writing large chunks of text. During an average visit, **only 20% of words** on the page are read by the user. Scanning text is an extremely common behavior for higher-literacy users.<sup>28</sup> You can make scanning or skimming easier by using relevant sub-headlines for easier reference, emphasizing key points by using bold or italics, and leveraging bullets and numbers to clearly break arguments into easy to read chunks.
- **Use one image for every 350 words.** A plain text post makes reading a boring experience. Human beings seek visuals because 90% of information transmitted to the brain is highly visual. Based on a study<sup>29</sup> by **Blog Pros** of 100 high ranking blog posts, it was found that on average, there is one image for every 350 words. The result of the study was summed up in the infographic (*Image 1*) on the next page. This proves to be the optimum ratio.



Image 1. (tap to enlarge)

<sup>27</sup> Michael Scott, with contributions from Chintan Zalani. *Wise Start Up Blog*. "How to write a blog post." Last accessed on August 16, 2017 at <https://wisestartupblog.com/how-to-write-a-blog-post/>

<sup>28</sup> Jakob Nielsen. "How little do users read?" *Nielsen Norman Group* 5 May 2008, Last accessed on 15 April, 2020 at <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-little-do-users-read/>



<sup>29</sup> James Parsons, "What makes the perfect blog post?" *Blog Pros*, 7 May 2014, Last accessed 15 April, 2020 at <http://blogpros.com/blog/2014/05/makes-perfect-blog-post-infographic>





- **Do not edit your work as you go.** To improve your productivity, you should shut down your inner editor for the first draft. Once you have written down your thoughts on screen, it is easier to organize and polish. Finish your work and let your thoughts freely flow. Only after doing so should you revise and edit.
- **Use simple language. Avoid being verbose.** Nobody will read past superfluous jargon. Using complex words will be confusing and less understood by your audience. Big words and fancy sentences will only displease your readers. Stick with simpler words. Longer sentences decrease comprehension and longer paragraphs decrease the readability of your article. The simpler your blog is, the better.
- **Ruthlessly edit. Make every word count.** According to a study by Microsoft Corp., people now generally lose interest after eight (8) seconds—a second shorter than the “notoriously ill-focused” goldfish attention span.<sup>30</sup> As a blogger, you now have a responsibility to write tighter, neater and more engaging content.
  - Edit out every redundant word from your first draft.
  - Ensure that your ideas flow logically and are relevant to your headline.
  - Delete any flabby, filler and excessive expressions.

For additional tips on writing powerful posts, read “297 Flabby Words and Phrases that Rob your Writing of All Its Power.”

- **Write a compelling conclusion.** A strong conclusion ensures that people scroll till the bottom of the blog post. Always wrap up with key points from your post and a compelling call to action. You can ask relevant questions to encourage comments and increase engagement.

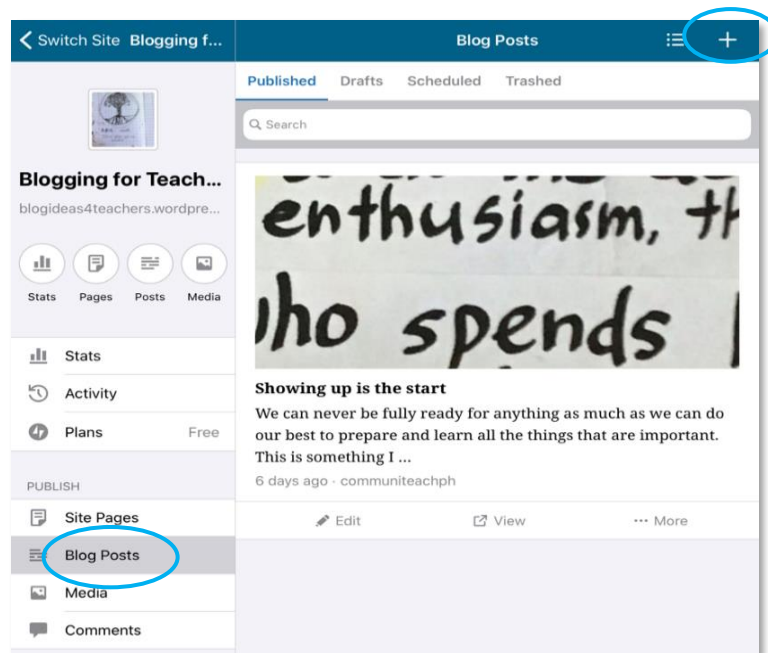
Publishing content on  **WordPress.com** is easy and can be done in two ways. If you’re always on the go and some thoughts strike you, then you might find it useful to post through the  **WordPress.com** app. Otherwise, you will find it a lot more convenient to create a post and publish through the dashboard accessible online.

Detailed below are the simple steps involved in publishing your content via the  **WordPress.com** app in your Apple mobile device.

1. To begin, tap on the  **WordPress.com** app installed in your Apple mobile device, then tap on the Site or Domain that you have created, found on the left side of the screen.
2. Tap “**Blog Posts**” from among the list of options. When it is highlighted, press the + button on the top rightmost area. Please refer to the image below.

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<sup>30</sup> Kevin McSpadden (May 2015). *Time.com* “You now have a shorter attention span than a goldfish.” Last accessed on August 17, 2017 at <http://time.com/3858309/attention-spans-goldfish/>



3. You should see a clear page where you can write your post. Tap the field that says **Add Title**. The keyboard should appear as you do this. Type your desired title for your post if you already have one in mind.
4. Once done, re-read your post. Upon being already fully satisfied with it, tap **Publish**. Congratulations! You just published a blog post through the WordPress app from your Apple mobile device.
5. To see your blog's web version, tap **View Site** on the left bar.

## How to Use an Image in a WordPress Blog

Blogging is not just about plain text written on a page. While good written content leads to traction, it may not be enough to sustain engagement on its own. Embedding images onto your posts can make these more interesting, visually appealing, and inviting.

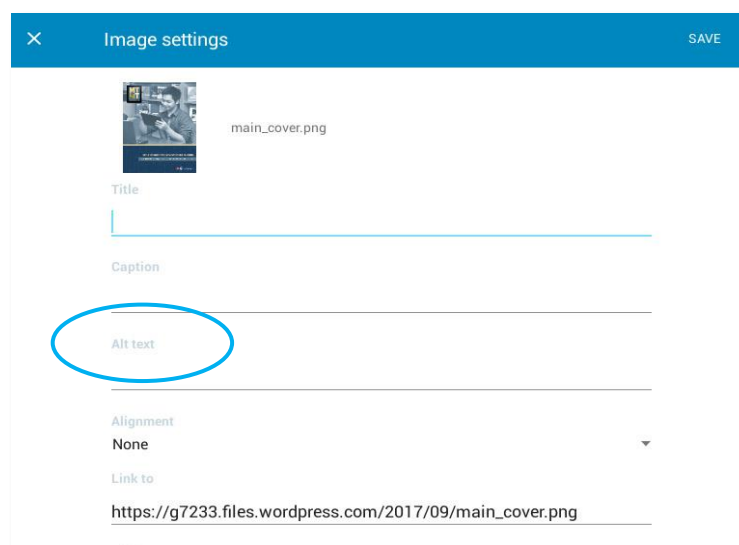
To help you figure out how to effectively create and use images on your blog, here are some tips from Ginny Soskey's article on "The Definitive Guide to Using Images on Your Blog."<sup>31</sup>

- **Creating an Image.** According to Soskey, you can make photos that you have taken more unique and interesting by using any of the following tools:
  - **PowerPoint.** Soskey recommends using PowerPoint for creating graphics, icons, or badges. If you want to learn how to use PowerPoint to create images for your blog, check out this informative tutorial by HubSpot.
  - **PicMonkey.** Soskey says, if you are trying to edit high-quality photos, to create collages or just to hide blemishes, PicMonkey is a good tool to use. It has tons of free options to help you create beautiful photos for your blog.

<sup>31</sup> Ginny Soskey (January 2013). *Shareaholic*. "The Definitive Guide to Using Images on Your Blog" Last accessed on August 29, 2017 at <https://blog.shareaholic.com/how-to-use-images-on-your-blog/>



- *Iconify.it*. If you ever want to make a quick logo or icon for your blog, this tool has free vector downloads that are perfect for making logos, header images, social connection icons, or anything else you may need.
- **Finding an Image**. If you think that your photography skills are no better than that of a first grader, you may rely on the repository of photos online provided, that you give due credit to sources. Look for Creative Commons images—these are free photos and graphics that have been licensed by their creators to be reused, reworked, or shared. Just make sure that you are using images that you have permission to use.
 


Sosley suggests using *Compfight* to search for Creative Commons images. It is a handy tool as it easily filters the results by the type of license.
- **Placing an Image on Your Blog**. Once you have an image to use for your blog post, you should consider where to place it. Remember, you want it to enhance the content of your post, not distract from it. Sosley says some of the best practices around image placement are the following:
  - *Place one image above the fold*. This is a good spot to place your image if you want to grab your readers' attention immediately because it will make your image fully visible without your readers having to scroll.
  - *Align images to the center or right of your post*. This makes it easy for your readers to follow along. Aligning the image on the left will break the left margin from your readers' point of reference.
- **Optimizing Your Site for Images**. Sosley shares some rules to get even more engagement in your blog. These include:
  - *Setting an image's Alt tag to be found by search engines*. Alt tags are a description of images that you place in your post. At times when your browser cannot load the image, the alt tag will show up to give readers an idea what the image is. Apart from this, alt tags allow the images in your posts to be found by search engines. If you are on WordPress, you can set the alt tag here:



- *Uploading the exact file size that you need to cut down on load time.* Before you upload a photo, make sure it is the right size. If the file size is too big, it can slow down the loading time and readers might leave the page or your site without seeing what you have included in your post.
- *Adding share button for easy sharing.* By adding images, and then putting share buttons either directly on the image <sup>32</sup> or at the bottom of your post, you make it easy for your readers to share your post to visual social networks like **Pinterest**.

## How to Add an Image to a Post

Adding an image and even a video into your  WordPress blog is easy.  WordPress.com has a page that gives instructions on the three ways to do it—1) from your computer, 2) from another website, and 3) from your Media Library. Note however, that all these steps will require you to access the dashboard. Just add **/wp-admin** to the end of your site’s URL (e.g., myblogsite.wordpress.com/**/wp-admin**) to access your dashboard. For this section, let us focus on how easily you can insert an image from the WordPress app.




1. Open the post where you want to insert an image. Click the **Edit** icon. This will allow you to go back to your post.
2. Place the cursor by tapping the spot where you want the image to appear. In this case, the cursor is placed at the beginning of the first paragraph. This will insert the image you have selected to appear at the top of the  paragraph.

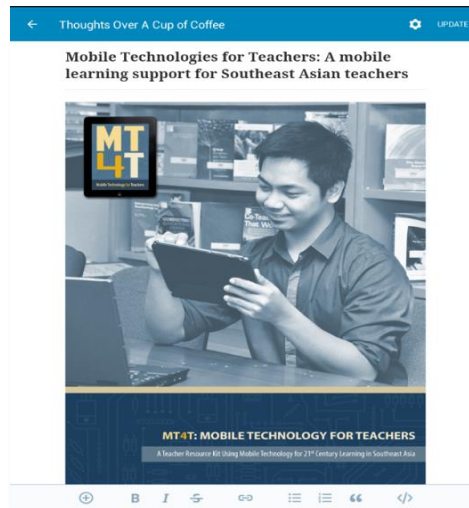


3. Tap button to open the photo gallery of your device.




<sup>32</sup> Mineo, Ginny. September 2012. “How to Integrate Pinterest into Your WordPress Layout.” Retrieved from *Shareaholic* at <https://www.shareaholic.com/blog/top-wordpress-pinterest-plugins/>

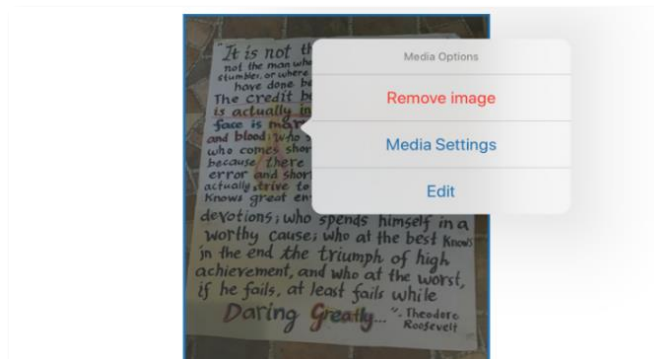
4. You have the option to either add a freshly taken photo or a stored photo by tapping  or .
5. Tap  to choose a stored photo from your device. This will show you photos from your iPad's photo gallery.
6. Now tap on the image. This will load automatically on the spot in your post where you put the cursor. Congratulations! You have just inserted an image into your blog post through the WordPress app.



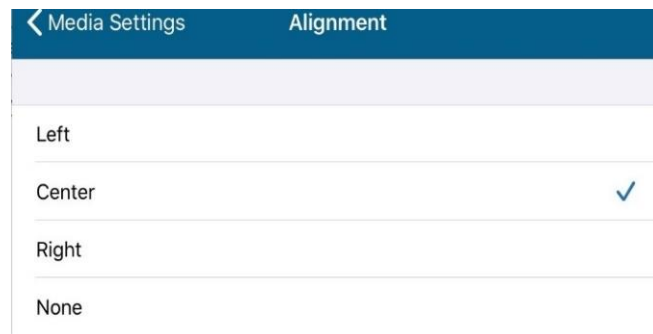
## How to Align an Image in a Post

When you insert an image into your post, it helps when the image is aligned properly with the text to enhance the ease of reading for your readers. You can position the image to the **left**, **right**, or **center** and the text will follow to align with it. You can do this by following these simple steps:



1. Open the  WordPress app and go to **Blog Posts**. Select a post where the image you want to edit is located.
2. Tap the image that you want to align then hold until you see **Media Options**. This will lead you to see the following choices – **Remove image**, **Image Settings** or **Edit**. Click **Media Settings**.



3. You will see different options under Media Settings. Choose **Alignment**. You will be given the following options: Left, Center, Right or None.



4. Select the alignment that you want then, tap on **Done**.
5. Congratulations! You just learned how to align an image in your post.

You can also have two images appear side by side on the same line. Just put the images next to each other and select the alignment that you think is appropriate. Make sure to make the resolution of the images small enough so that these will both fit on one line.<sup>33</sup> If the image that you used is larger than you intended it to appear, you may click on **Media Settings** and select **Size**. If you encounter issues with the images you want to upload or edit, you can check on the  WordPress.com support page for "Troubleshooting Images" or the troubleshooting tips listed on the "Browser Issues" page. In general, the  WordPress app in your Apple mobile device is very intuitive and it will be good to just experiment and test it out.

Here are more useful things to know and to consider regarding the size and quality of the images that you use in your blog posts.<sup>34</sup>

- **Physical size.** The physical size of an image is based on two things: the size of the image on the screen and the file size. These two are treated differently. The physical size of the image determines how much "space" it will occupy on a web page. Remember to conform the width of an image to the width of your content area. If your content area has a width of 800 pixels, for instance, the width of the image you will insert should not go beyond this to protect the layout of your page.
- **File size.** This is the size of the file (in this case, it's the image you want to use) on your hard drive.<sup>35</sup> It determines the time it will take for your image to load on your page. A big file size often indicates that an image has high resolution quality. The bigger the file size, the longer it will take to load on a page.
- **Resolution.** This dictates the clarity of an image. The higher the resolution, the better is the quality and clarity of an image. You need to reconcile the resolution of an image with its file size if you want it to load fast on your page.

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<sup>33</sup> **Resolution** refers to the number of pixels in an image, as well as its width and height.

<sup>34</sup> *Codex.* "Image Size and Quality." Retrieved from *WordPress.org* at [https://codex.wordpress.org/Image\\_Size\\_and\\_Quality](https://codex.wordpress.org/Image_Size_and_Quality)

<sup>35</sup> **Hard Drive.** This is where all the data in your device are stored.



# Web Resources

Tap the links to access the resources

## Websites

### Troubleshooting Images

WordPress



<https://wordpress.com/support/images/troubleshooting-images/>




### Browser Issues

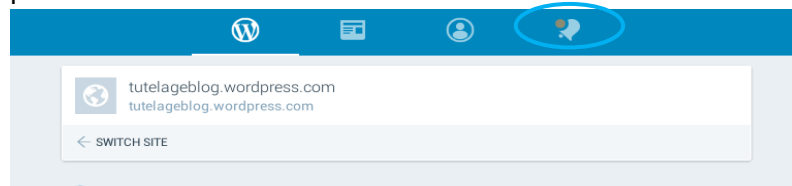
WordPress


<https://wordpress.com/support/browser-issues/>

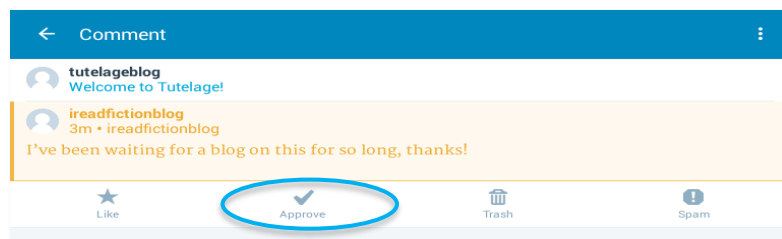
## How to View WordPress Notifications


The  Notifications button allows you to see all the notifications related to your  **WordPress** blog. It lets you keep track of the comments, followers, and likes that have been added to your blog. To view notifications, follow the instructions below.

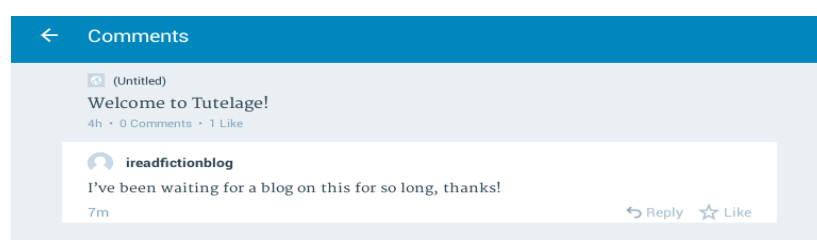
1. Open  **WordPress.com** by tapping the icon. Tap . This will lead you to the **All** tab on the **Notifications** page. If you have unread notifications, an orange dot will appear on top of .



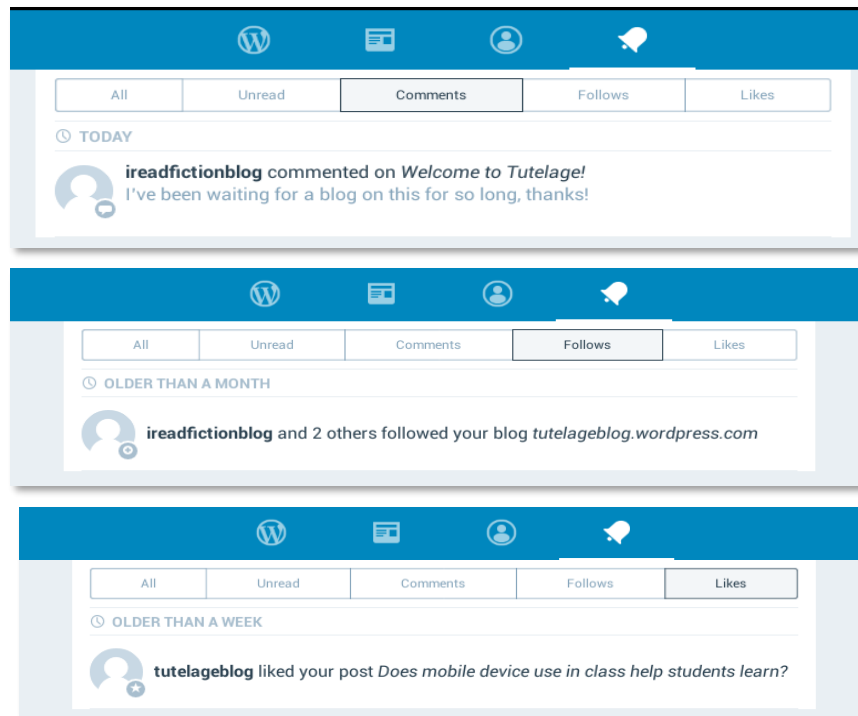
2. Unread notifications are set in boldfaced text. Tap it to read its content. This will open the comment with more details. Choose from among the options what you would like to do with it—like, approve (will show the comment on your blog), trash (will delete the comment), or mark as spam (will prevent comments from the sender from making it to your inbox in the future). Tap  **Approve** to post it on your blog.



3. It will appear when you tap  on the blog post.



4. 🔔 has five tabs—**All**, **Unread**, **Comments**, **Follows**, and **Likes**. **All** shows all the notifications related to your blog. **Unread** just shows the notifications that remain unread. **Comments** only shows comment-related notifications left on your blog by your audience. **Follows** only shows follower-related notifications as to new subscribers to your blog. And **Likes** only shows the “likes” your blog posts have accumulated since its upload.



5. Congratulations! You now know how to read all the notifications related to your blog on an Apple mobile device.

## What Is Proper Blogging Etiquette?

Whether you are commenting on another person’s blog or creating your own post, there are norms or rules to follow. This helps in creating a loyal and stable reader base. Failure to comply with these guidelines can result to adverse repercussions such as losing readership or gaining a negative online reputation. To become as ethical a blogger, follow the tips below from “13 Tips for Proper Blogging Etiquette”:<sup>36</sup>

- **Ask permission. Consent is key.** Most image owners will allow you to use their photos if you cite them as their original creators and ask for permission. However, it is always helpful to familiarize yourself with copyright and *Creative Commons* license laws if you are unsure about using third-party content.
- **Do not sell yourself in comments.** No one wants to read “nice thoughts” followed by ten (10) lines of advertisement for a company. Provide short and insightful comments with maybe one link back to your website or a similar article.

<sup>36</sup> Bola Olonisakin “13 Tips for Proper Blogging Etiquette.” *GTechDesigns*. 21 May 2015. Last accessed on 15 April 2020 <http://gtechdesigns.com/13-tips-for-proper-blogging-etiquette/>.



- **Provide permalinks.** A permalink is the link to an individual blog post. It is important because if you ever need to link to an exact blog entry, you use the permalink as your link. When including links to direct back to certain blog posts, always use permalinks. That way, instead of redirecting readers to main blog pages with newly updated content, they always see the article they are trying to link to.
- **Reply to comments.** Someone took the time out of his/her day to react to content that you created. Respond to them as common courtesy. You need not engage in a full-blown discussion. A polite thank you would suffice as opposed to merely ignoring the comment.
- **Be polite.** If you have nothing good to say, better to keep it to yourself. Inasmuch as the Internet is a marketplace of ideas, not all speech is protected. If it borders on being discriminatory or prejudicial, it is better to not say it anymore. Criticisms are welcome but they must always be constructive. Remember that you are engaging a community. Dragging anyone down will not only reflect badly on your character as a blogger but also as a member of the niche you chose to be in. Bloggers are supposed to help each other, not tear each other down.
- **Read the post.** You cannot have a successful discussion with someone if you have not actually read his or her entire post. If it appears that you do not know what you are talking about, you will just end up being embarrassed.
- **Do not post too often.** Updating your blog on a regular basis with new posts is ideal but try not to overdo this by publishing several posts in a day. This can overwhelm your readers. Staggered posting as a strategy is better as it keeps the reader's interest and ensures that your impact would not go stale.
- **Ask before linking to other blogs.** Most blog owners will be thrilled if you ask to link back to their blogs but it is often nice to check with them what the content will be about so they do not find themselves supporting something that goes against their values. Again, consent is always key.
- **Be original.** No copy-pasting. Plagiarism will never be tolerated. Readers can tell what content is unique to a blog owner and it is rude to infringe on someone's well-written blog post. Remember, intellectual property principles are still at play even in the online realm of blogging.
- **Provide copying agreements.** Make it easier for readers to use sections of or pictures from your blog by providing a disclaimer saying what is and is not okay for others to use.
- **Stay on topic.** If you are commenting on someone's blog post, be sure to keep your comments in line with original discussions.
- **Accept criticism.** Ignore messages that are borderline destructive (e.g., "You suck,") but if you are receiving comments about the vast amount of text you use, embrace the constructive criticism and use it to improve your posts. Screening criticism is a key trait that any blogger must have. One must be able to stay true to oneself without being tone deaf or oblivious to what is universally right and wrong.

Follow the golden rule, it applies to blogging, too. Treat other bloggers as you would like to be treated.



## Web Resources

Tap the links to access more information on proper blogging etiquette

### Web Articles

#### **Strategic Blogging Tips, Rules, and Etiquette for Success**

by Valia for *CMS2CMS*

<https://cms2cms.com/blog/blogging-rules-and-etiquette/>

#### **The 11 Dos and Don'ts for Writing and Managing Blog Comments**

by Ginny Soskey for *Shareaholic*

<https://blog.shareaholic.com/blog-comment-etiquette/>

#### **Strategic Blogging Tips, Rules, and Etiquette for Success**

by Anita Dunai and the Kinsta Team for *Kinsta*

<https://kinsta.com/learn/blogging-tips/>

#### **Calling Emily Post: A Blogging Etiquette Roundup**

by Ben Huberman for *Daily Post*

<https://dailypost.wordpress.com/2015/07/08/blogging-etiquette-roundup/>


#### **Seven Rules for Proper Blogging Etiquette**

by Heidi Ferguson for *HoneyBear Lane*

<https://www.honeybearlane.com/2017/01/seven-rules-of-proper-blogging-etiquette.html>



# Chapter 3: Intermediate Users

Intermediate users refer to those who are already familiar with the basic features of  **WordPress.com** and are ready to learn for more complicated tasks. At this level of competence, you should know how to improve your blogging profile, how to make successful blog posts, and how to interact with fellow bloggers. Also, you are expected to promote and practice acceptable values as a blogger. You will need to have a more in depth understanding of data privacy and how this is intrinsically linked to blogging. The last section of the chapter gives a walk-through of how you can deactivate your WordPress blog should you ever feel the need to stop blogging.

## *How to Customize Your Blog Theme*

There are hundreds or even thousands of blogs out there. And every blogger wants to stand out. One way to do that is to personalize your blog. You can do that first by enhancing your blogger profile. Your profile explains who you are, what your blog is about, and how to contact you. If someone is new to your blog, he or she will most likely look at your profile for more information.



Jessica Knapp, in "How Do I Write an About Me Page," <sup>37</sup> mentioned the following items that your profile should contain:

- **A picture of yourself.** Including a picture helps your readers connect with you on a more personal level.
- **An overview of what your blog is about.** Share your elevator pitch (a short explanation of what your blog is about) then expound on your points. This is the perfect opportunity for you to explain why you are different from the other bloggers who write in your niche. What makes you special?
- **Your contact information.** People are going to want to know how to contact you. Your e-mail address should be prominently displayed on your sidebar and profile. Including contact information is particularly important if you are hoping to be contacted by colleagues for research, for instance. Do not bury your e-mail address. Make it as prominent as you can.
- **Interesting information.** When writing about yourself, it may be hard to determine what to share and what not to disclose. Your goal is to make yourself interesting enough to hook your audience. Audience analysis and introspection would help you find what to share in order to meet your goals.

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<sup>37</sup> Jessica Knapp, "How Do I Write an About Me Page." *Blogging Basics 101: Social Media and Blogging Tips*, 3 August 2009, Last accessed on 20 April 2020, <http://www.bloggingbasics101.com/how-do-i-write-an-about-me-page/>.

To enhance your  **WordPress.com** profile, follow these instructions.

1. Open  **WordPress** app. You will **see** the icon  **Me** at the bottom area. Click this and you will be led to your **Profile**.
2. Fill out the details for the **First name**, **Last name**, and **About me**. Write an interesting description about yourself. Note that this will be seen by everyone who visits your blog. So, if you want to become an authority in your field or use your blog for professional development, make sure your description presents you as such.
3. Click **Add a Profile Photo** to include a photo of you.
4. Congratulations! You have successfully enhanced your profile using an Apple mobile device.

Get more attention for your blog by improving how it looks. Inasmuch as people say, “Looks should not matter,” in the blogging world, they do in getting more unique engagements online. Remember that the best blogs do not just get awards because of their content. They are recognized because they look good, too.

Yaro Starak, in “Blog Traffic Tips Weekly Newsletter,”<sup>38</sup> believes blog design is important. He thinks a good blog design will positively impact your traffic. The crucial point though is to realize that a good blog design means nothing without good content. Without pillar articles, regular content, and time spent attracting readers to your blog using comments, trackbacks, networking with other bloggers, and attracting links, the nicest design you could dream of will not do anything for your traffic. It serves a supplementary purpose of making your already good content even more palatable to your audience.

Adding a distinct and unique look to an already successful blog is like icing on the cake. It makes the cake more enticing to eat even if the cake already tastes good as it is.



## Web Resources

Tap the links to get more information on why looks matter in blogging

### Infographic

#### **16 Rules of Blog Writing and Layout. Which Ones Are You Breaking?**

Sue Anne Dunlevie for *Successful Blogging*

<http://www.successfulblogging.com/16-rules-of-blog-writing-which-ones-are-you-breaking/>

### Web Articles

#### **How to Design a Blog and Make It Look Pretty**

Marko Saric for *How to Make My Blog*

<http://howtomakemyblog.com/how-to-design-a-blog/>

<sup>38</sup> Yaro Starak. (2017). *Entrepreneurs—Journey.com*. “Blog Traffic Tips Weekly Newsletter.” Last accessed on 19 July 2017, <https://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/newsletters/does-your-blog-design-matter/>.



# Web Resources

Tap the links to get more information on why looks matter in blogging

## Web Articles

### Blog Design; Does Design Impact Your Success?

Steve Snell for *Vandelay Design*



<https://www.vandelaydesign.com/impact-of-design/>

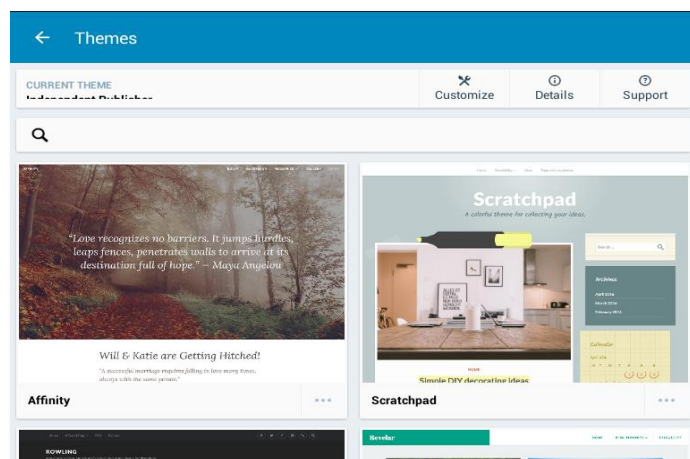
### Your Blog: Do Looks Matter?


By Rebecca Haden for *Haden Interactive*

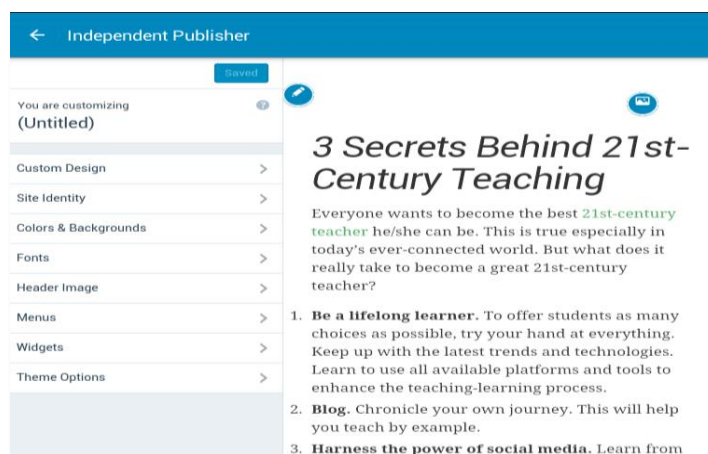
<http://www.hadeninteractive.com/your-blog-do-looks-matter/>

A blog design that fits your goal and needs should be unique. It should reflect your personality and content style that you want to publish. To improve and personalize your blog's look and feel, follow the instructions below.

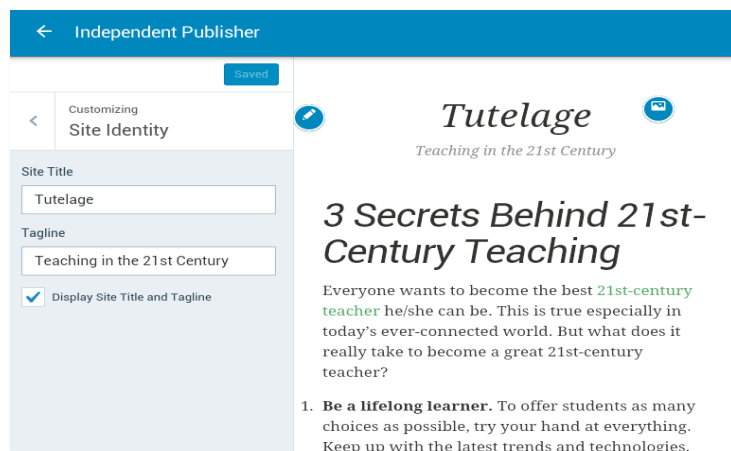
1. Open  **WordPress** app by tapping it. Tap  **Themes**. This will open the **Themes** page. This will let you customize how your blog looks.



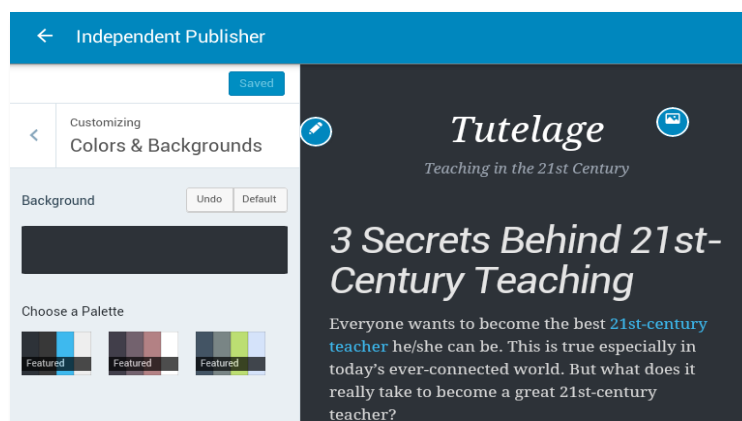
2. Tap  **Customize**. This will open your blog's current theme.



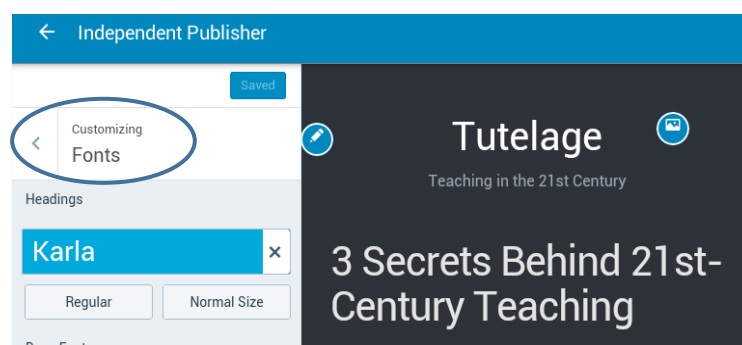
3. Tap **Site Identity**. Type your blog's title into the **Site Title** and your desired tagline into the **Tagline** fields. Then tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will apply the changes to your blog. Tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will change into the **Saved** button.



4. Tap **<** beside **Customizing Site Identity**. Then tap **Colors & Backgrounds**. Change your blog's background or palette color. Tap the palette of your choice from among the available options. This will apply the change to your blog. Tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will change into the **Saved** button.



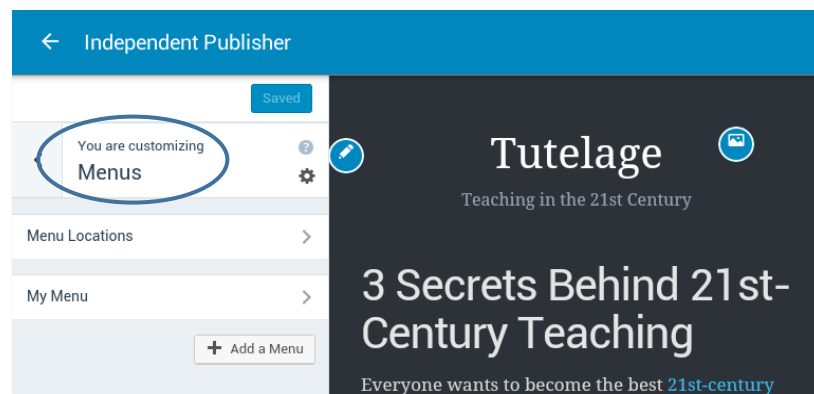
5. Tap **<** beside **Customizing Colors & Backgrounds**. Then tap **Fonts**. Change your blog's headings and base font styles and sizes according to your preference. This will apply the changes to your blog. Tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will change into the **Saved** button.



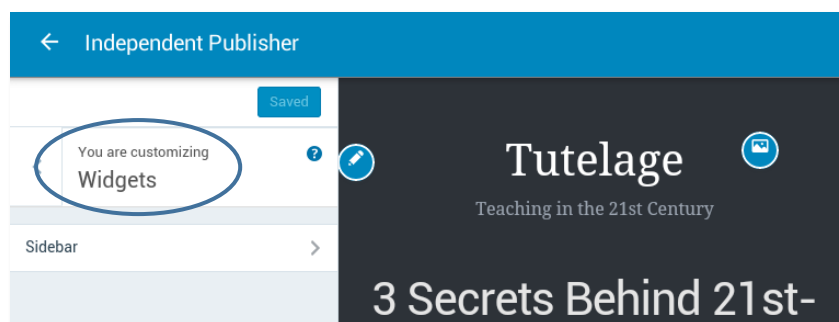
6. Tap ◀ beside **Customizing Fonts**. Then tap **Header Image**. This will add a header image, which will appear alongside your site title and tagline, to your blog. Choose one that applies to what your blog is about. You can opt to leave it blank, too. Tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will change into the **Saved** button.



7. Tap ◀ beside **Customizing Header Image**. Then tap **Menus**. You can customize your blog's existing menus and add more here. Make your desired changes. Tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will change into the **Saved** button.



8. Tap ◀ beside **Customizing Menus**. Then tap **Widgets**. You can add widgets— independent sections of content that can be placed in sidebars—to your blog here. Tap **Sidebar** on this page and choose the widget you would like to add by tapping its name. Make your desired changes. Tap the **Save & Publish** button. This will change into the **Saved** button.



9. Tap ◀ beside your theme's name and you are done. Congratulations! You just personalized your blog on an Apple mobile device.

The succeeding sections should provide you with tips and suggestions on how you can better tweak your blog posts to make these catchier and more interesting to your readers.

## How to Prepare Successful Blog Entries

Successful bloggers should familiarize themselves with different aspects of the medium while being able to write compelling and engaging content consistently. Doing this depends on your own style. Here are some basic principles of writing great content that are worth noting from "*How to Write Great Blog Content*."<sup>39</sup>

- **Make your writing easy to read.** Most people read online by scanning the page for individual words or phrases, headings, and other visual cues. Studies show that reading from a screen is more tiring and is about 25% slower than reading on paper. As such, scanning becomes a technique that most employ. This demands that your blog post should be written and posted in chunks with subsections and highlights for easier reference.
- **How long should a blog post be?** A typical Web reader has a short attention span when it comes to reading online. Average blog readers stay only 96 seconds per blog. Whatever the number—it is generally not long. As a result, many webmasters purposely keep their content length down to a level that is readable in short chunks.
- **Use effective titles.** First impressions are crucial in keeping your readers hooked to your material. Apart from your blog's design, creating a good impression through your post titles is an effective strategy in increasing readership online.
- **Marinate ideas.** Ideas need time to grow and mature. Many bloggers post their thoughts too quickly and do not allow them to develop to a point where they are unique and useful enough to reach their utmost potential. Hence, it is important to collect your thoughts and let them simmer in your head. It helps you to develop a concept and idea first before jumping into writing your blog.
- **Decide how often you would post.** While multiple posts get you more traffic, they also make it easy to lose loyal readers. Posting frequency is a question that bloggers need to consider very carefully on several fronts, including writer and reader burnout, reader participation, and search engine and *Rich Site Summary* (RSS) referrals, among others. Spacing your releases based on previous content, time markers, material engagement rates, and primetime trends, can be valuable in establishing your blog.
- **Declare war on blog apathy.** You can have the best strategic plan in the world but if you are not motivated, passionate, or driven about blogging, it will almost always amount to nothing. Take a long-term approach to your blogging, which calls for constant work.

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<sup>39</sup> ProBlogger.com. "How to Write Great Blog Content." *ProBlogger*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <http://www.problogger.net/how-to-write-great-blog-content/>.



- **Eliminate the echo chamber. Add to the conversation.** It is easy to be unimaginative by merely recycling news, following trends, and others' ideas at the expense of your individuality in developing your content. It is not wrong to bounce off others' ideas but starting conversations rather than just responding to others or reporting them can lead into a one-dimensional type of blogging.
- **Write good content.** For a blog to be successful, its content needs to be unique and useful to readers. Bloggers need to constantly ask themselves when they review their blog, "Is my blog useful?"



## Web Resources

Tap the links to access the resources

### Web Articles on Blogging for Beginners

By Darren Rowse for *Pro Blogger*

#### Using Titles Effectively on Blogs

<https://probblogger.com/using-titles-effectively-on-blogs/>

#### Marinating Ideas into Blog Posts – My Posting Workflow

<https://probblogger.com/marinating-ideas-into-blog-posts-my-posting-workflow/>

#### How Often Should a Blogger Post?

<https://probblogger.com/how-often-should-a-blogger-post/>

#### Declaring War on Blogger Apathy

<https://probblogger.com/1362/>

#### How to Eliminate the Echo Chamber and Add New Dimensions to Your Blog

<https://probblogger.com/how-to-eliminate-the-echo-chamber-and-add-new-dimensions-to-your-blog/>

#### Writing Good Content

<https://probblogger.com/writing-good-content/>

#### Post Length – How Long a Blog Post Should Be?


<https://probblogger.com/post-length-how-long-should-a-blog-post-be/>

#### Writing Blog Content – Make it Scannable

<http://probblogger.com/writing-blog-content-make-it-scannable/>

## How to Enhance a WordPress Blog Post

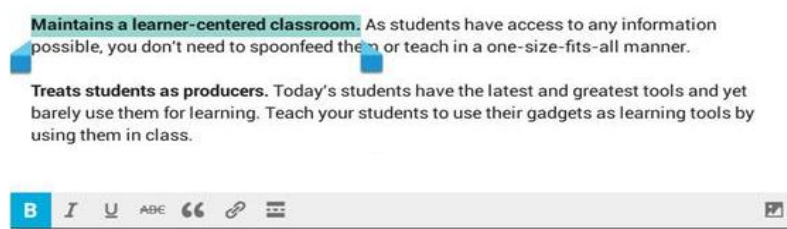
In this section, you will learn how to set a featured image on a blog post, as well as to use lists and other techniques to enhance how your blog looks. To begin, follow the instructions below.

1. Open  **WordPress** app by tapping it. This will open your **Dashboard** to the left. Tap **Blog Posts**. This will open a page where you will see all your posts and where you can also start a new post.

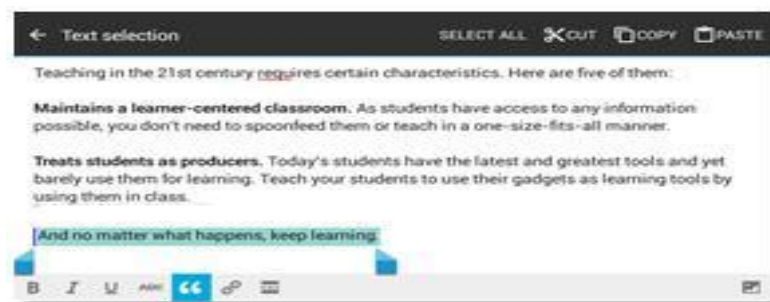


2. Type your desired title into the **Title** field. Then type the content into the **Content** field. Use the following features to enhance your post:

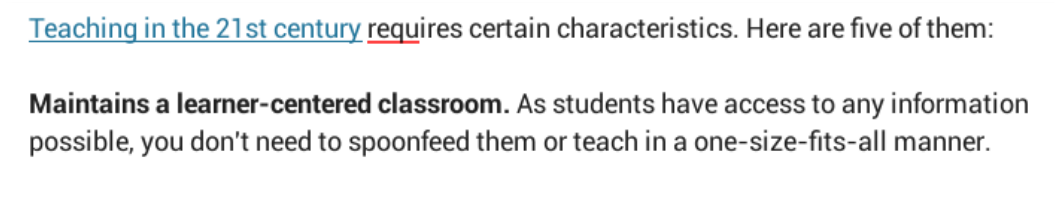
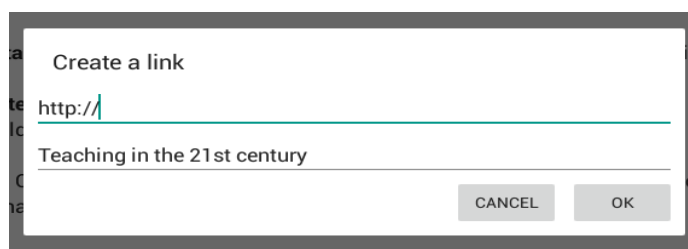
- **B**, **I**, or **U**: Highlight text that you want to emphasize in your post then tap **B**, **I**, or **U**. This will turn the highlighted text into boldfaced, italicized, or underlined text, respectively.





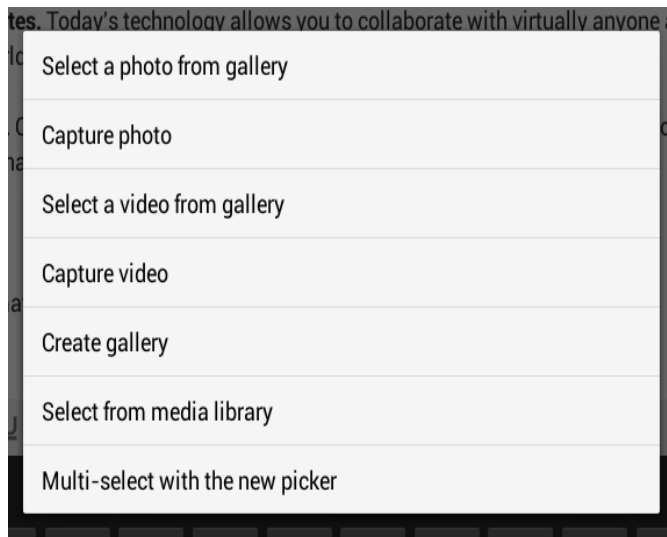
- **“”**: Highlight a paragraph in your post if you want to turn it into a block quote then tap **“”**. This will turn the highlighted paragraph into a block quote. The blue vertical line beside the paragraph indicates that it has been turned into a block quote.



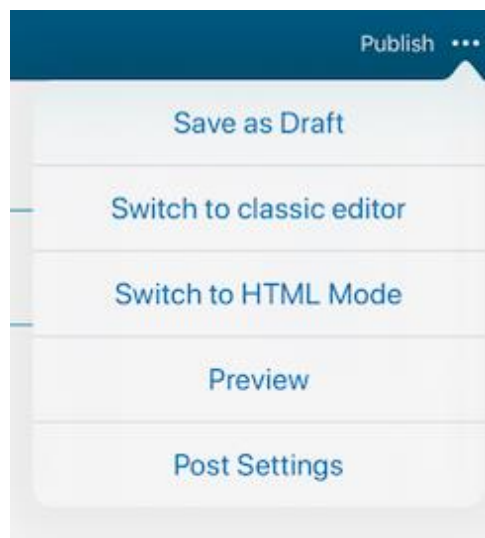
- **🔗**: Highlight text that you want to link to another Web page. You usually do this to let readers see more relevant information on the same topic or to reference a source. Then tap **🔗**. This will make a pop-up message appear where you would type or paste the page's link into the hyperlink field. Tap the **OK** button. Note the change in the text's color. It will now be clickable and will take the reader to the website that you linked it to.



- : Tap anywhere within your post to add an image. Then tap . You will be prompted to choose where you would like to get the photo. Make your own choice. Once tapped, the chosen photo will be added to your post.



3. Tap the 3 dots (...) beside **Publish** found on the Upper Right corner when you are done. You may choose to Preview to review how the post will look like in your blog.



4. Check for and correct spelling, tense consistency, proper preposition use, and grammar errors. When you have quality assured content, tap **Publish**. This will take you to the **Posts** page.
5. Tap **View Site** to see your blog's Web version. Note that your post can be seen on it. Congratulations! You just published your first properly formatted blog post on an Apple mobile device.

## How to Interact with Other WordPress Bloggers



Nicholas Tart, in "How to Get Bloggers to See and Follow Your Blog,"<sup>40</sup> shared that beginner bloggers who want to join the big leagues should let big-time bloggers know about them. The following can help you get other bloggers to see and follow your blog:

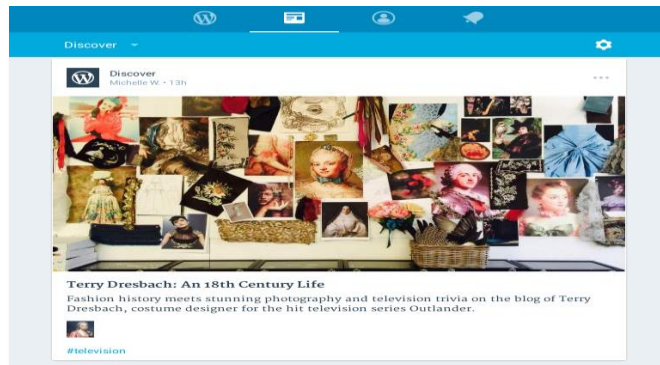
- **Create a follow-worthy blog.** This is the first and most critical step. It also happens to be the most challenging because it does not follow a linear step-by-step process. You should try to stick to your clearly defined niche. Target your audience by focusing on a very specific problem. Use a distinct voice. People should know who wrote the post without even seeing a name attached to it. This can be done through apparent choice of words, writing style, and overall tone. Use a unique blog design. Create with an air of authority. Write based on what only you could know. Have consistent content. Post regularly and reliably.
- **Find other bloggers in your niche.** Before other bloggers follow your site, you need to find them. Search using relevant keywords. You will find all the top bloggers in your niche if you use the right keywords. See who your favorite bloggers interview. Bloggers interview people they admire. Find top lists. If you can find a few of the top-ranking lists, there is a good chance that the top bloggers are featured. Follow people on social networking sites to expand your network.
- **Regularly comment on their blogs.** Once you know who the top bloggers are, start engaging them by commenting on their blogs. Bloggers like comments because these show that you are engaged and that their content is relevant. If you become a regular commenter, the blogger is more likely to recognize your name when you reach out. Even established bloggers comment on each other's blogs.
- **Link to their posts.** Bloggers appreciate being linked to by other bloggers. Exert effort to consistently link to your favorite bloggers, both as a value-added resource for your readers and as a favor to your idols. When you link to one of their posts, it shows up as a trackback in the comments. They notice.
- **Include them in a flattering "top" list.** One of the ways that bloggers climb to the top is by being included in this sort of list. Make your own and include them in it.
- **Interview them for your blog.** Along with getting included on a "top" list, bloggers like to do interviews. It gives them a chance to reach your audience as an authority on something they are interested in. You can do this via e-mail or chat. You may also ask them to reshare whatever output you come up with which in effect would also inform their network of the content that you do.


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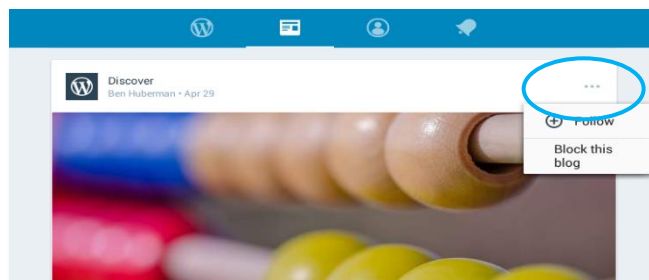
<sup>40</sup> Nicholas Tart. "How to Get Bloggers to See and Follow Your Blog." *Income: How Pros Make Money Online*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <http://www.incomediary.com/bloggers-see-follow>.



Start following blogs that are inspiring for you to widen your own blog's reach. To do that, follow these instructions.

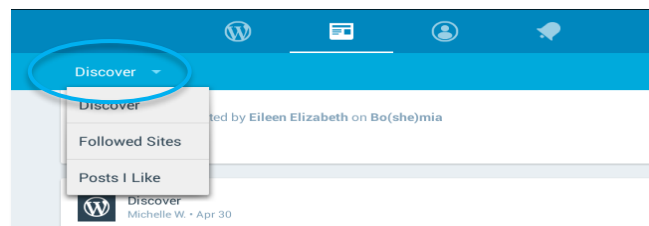
1. Open  **WordPress** app by tapping it. Then tap . This will open the **Reader** page found at the bottom area of the screen. WordPress.com constantly suggests posts from blogs that you may want to follow on this page.



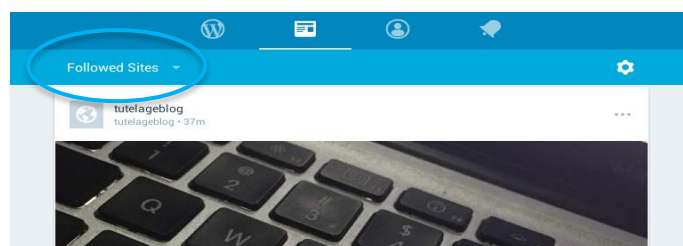
2. Scroll through the list of posts. Tap  on the top-right corner of the post you are interested in. A drop-down list will appear.





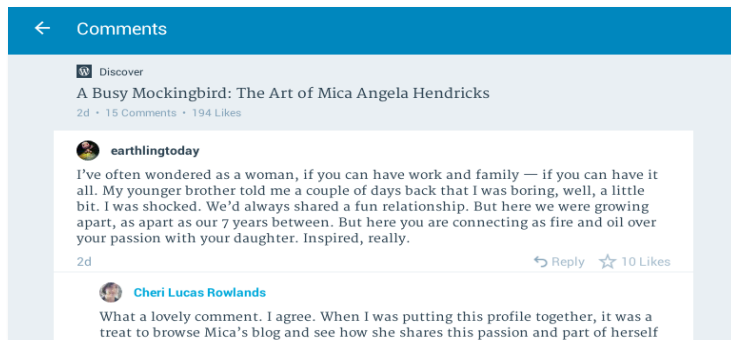
3. Tap  **Follow**. The blog where the post was published will now be included in the list of blogs that you follow. You can see all of them by tapping **Discover** . This will make a drop-down list appear.



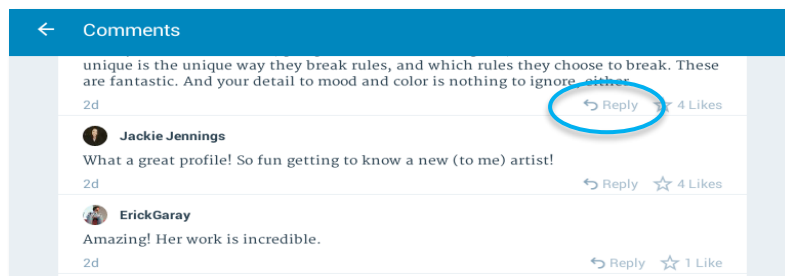
4. Tap **Followed Sites**. This will open a page where you can read posts from all the blogs that you follow.





- Some posts have commenting and liking features available. Tap  to comment on a post. The number beside  indicates how many comments have been made on it. This will open the **Comments** page.



- Type your comment into the  **Reply to post...** field then tap **Send**. This will add your comment to the existing thread.



- Tap  to go back to the **Followed Sites** page. Tap  to like a post. The number beside  indicates how many likes the post has received. Note that  changed color and the number beside it increased by 1.



- Congratulations! You now know how to interact with other WordPress bloggers on an Apple mobile device.

## Why Is Information Privacy an Important Blogging Issue?

Sylvianne Nuccio discussed why maintaining privacy when blogging is important in “Online Privacy and Blogging: Why Is It Important?”<sup>41</sup> Here are excerpts from her article:

“The Internet has made us relaxed about the idea of privacy in general. We have become accustomed to sharing our lives online, potentially with thousands of strangers, without the slightest fear of giving too much information about private matters. This increased connectivity has been wonderful in some ways, bringing everyone closer together. But with a closer look, our privacy could be in danger.”

### Who should care about privacy?

“Given that selfies have entered general usage, and everyone is taking photos of what they had for lunch, the idea of having to retain some privacy when blogging seem almost quaint. Blogs rely on featuring their owners.” In fact, the ones that choose to endlessly post photos of themselves on their blogs are the most successful. “However, there are major downsides to broadcasting your entire life online.”

### What are the risks?

“If you are too open with information about you and your life, then the risks are substantial.

- You put yourself at the risk of stalking. It might not seem like it could happen to you, but realistically, no one thinks that – yet stalking still happens. It is always a risk.
- You could expose your family and friends to unwanted attention by their association to you. Just because you feel comfortable putting yourself online does not mean that everyone else in your life does. You must take the time to consider those who are sharing your life as well.
- It is invasive. Studies are constantly being conducted on the impact of lack of privacy, and psychologists have long been warning that social media use can make you feel depressed.

If your offline world drips into your online usage, then it can feel like there is no dividing line between them. And sometimes, you will need that dividing line to help you feel normal and give you a break.”

### How can you blog and maintain privacy?

To blog and still maintain privacy, keep in mind that there is nothing wrong with wanting to post photographs of yourself online; it is something we all do, and it is largely harmless. After all, you show your face to strangers when you go out to the grocery store, right? However, what you want to avoid is anything too identifying.

Here are ways to maintain some elements of privacy sacrificing the entire point of your blog.

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<sup>41</sup> Sylvianne Nuccio. “Online Privacy and Blogging: Why Is It Important?”. *SylvianneNuccio.com*, 1 May 2017, Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <http://www.sylvianenuccio.com/online-privacy-and-blogging/>.

### Photographs

Consider cropping out any identifying landmarks if you are posting photos of areas inside your house, the front of your house, or shops near your home. “Keep things vague; a [photo of a] field is fine, but a field with a signpost on it? Not so much. It is also advisable that when you are out and about, you resist the urge to post photographs of a location until you have left” that place. “As a rule, don’t ever post photos of the following:

- the front of your house,
- your car plates, and
- anything else that directly identifies where you live or work.”

### Content

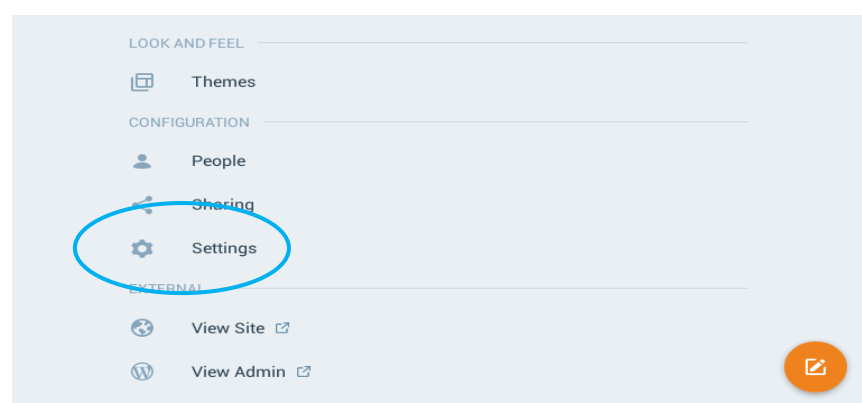
When it comes to creating the content for your blog, then you have full control over the information that you give. Just keep in mind that the important thing as a teacher and educator is to ensure the permission of your students and colleagues in posting information related to your teaching experience. Note that sometimes, you can share the process but not necessarily the full detailed content of your story. You could still mention what type of strategy you did for teaching but stay as vague as possible as on the details. In any case, remember that the more information you put online about yourself, the easier it will be to know the details about you which can become public. Choose the information that is necessary to share.

At the end of the day, the foremost concern is always going to be for your personal safety. Being informed of the potential risks blogging may pose to your privacy will help you be better prepared in identifying and acting on those risks should they crop up.

## How to Change Your WordPress Account’s Privacy Control Setting

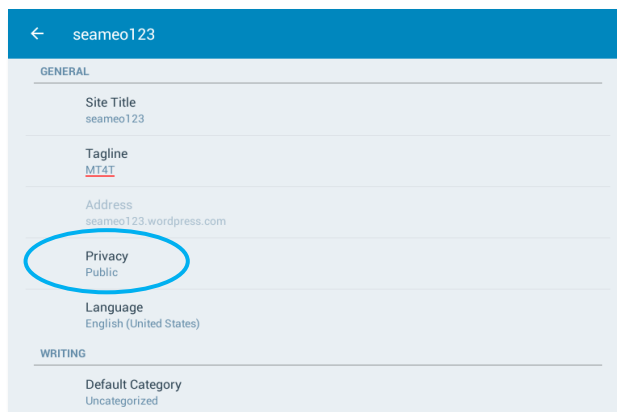
Now that you have understood the importance of information privacy in blogging, watch this quick overview from [WordPress.com Tutorials](#) on how to change your privacy settings or follow these step-by-step instructions.

1. From your iPad, tap the  **WordPress** app to open the Dashboard and tap **Settings**.

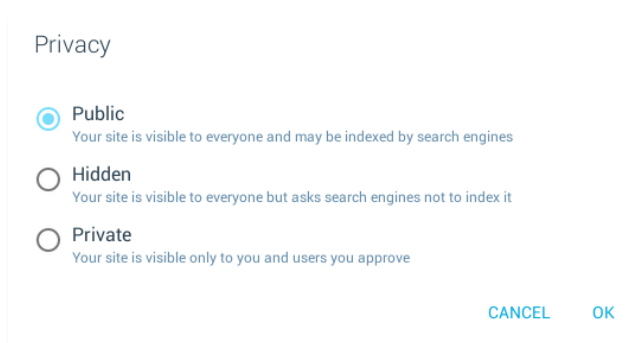




2. Once the page loads, you will see the different sections under this. Under **General Settings**, tap on **Privacy**.



3. A pop-up box will appear. Review what each privacy setting means. Setting your privacy setting on **Public** means that your WordPress blog site is visible to everyone and can be searched by search engines (e.g., Google, Yahoo, Bing). **Hidden** gives you the option to have your posts visible to everyone but cannot be indexed by search engines. The third privacy setting available to you is **Private**, which means that your posts may only be visible to anyone with permission to view.



4. Select the privacy setting that you deem appropriate then tap **OK**. Congratulations! You now know how to change the privacy setting of your WordPress account on an Apple mobile device.

## How to Delete Your WordPress Blog

Blogging can be an arduous task. A blogger must deal with writers' block, building a list of subscribers, and persisting when it feels like you are not going anywhere. It may be challenging to stay motivated in putting in the necessary effort to maintain an interesting and engaging blog.<sup>42</sup>

Given these difficulties, is there ever really a best time to stop blogging? Look at the following list from Shanna Mallon in "When Is It Time to Stop Blogging?"<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Shanna Mallon. "When Is It Time to Stop Blogging?" *JeffBullas.com*. 21 October 2013, Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2013/10/21/when-is-it-time-to-stop-blogging/>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

- **You are not posting anymore.** A sign that it is time to quit blogging is when you have stopped posting. You cannot think of anything to say anymore. Your schedule is too full for you to squeeze in blogging. You may have already forgotten about your blog altogether.
- **You are not enjoying it.** Even with few readers and/or posts, if you love blogging, you have a reason to stick with it. But if you hate it, if you dread sitting down to write, what is the point? Ask yourself if there is still any return on investment (ROI). If it is not for enjoyment, is it for new clients, better branding, or a sense of community with your fans? There should be something to offset the trade off in terms of time, effort, and creative pursuits. Weigh what you are getting against what you invest and make sure the effort is worthwhile.
- **You have given it time.** If, after blogging for two weeks, you are bummed because you are not seeing better press, then, you probably have not given it enough time. If, on the other hand, you have been blogging six months or a year and still do not have readers, something is wrong. It is either time to change your strategy or stop blogging.
- **You are failing.** Even big blogs with huge readerships can fail if that is not their goal. Success is measured not by figures alone but by the goals you have set for yourself. Only then you can define what is a victory. If you have a business blog, for instance, looking to promote your business and gain new clients, having 10,000 subscribers matters little if none of them buy what you sell. If this is the case, blogging is wasting your time. Move on.
- **You are busy with new work.** Maybe you started your blog to get the word out about your business. Maybe you wanted to be a writer and started blogging to build a portfolio. In either case, when your blog finally achieves your goals, it might be time to call it a win and move on. When your business is successful and new clients are coming from other channels, you might not need to blog anymore. When your freelance work keeps coming and you are getting paid to write elsewhere, it makes sense to focus your attention on what is profitable.



## Web Resources

Tap the links for more information on when to quit blogging

### Web Articles

#### **When Bloggers Stop Blogging**

by Nancy Stordah for *Nancy's Point*



<http://nancyspoint.com/when-bloggers-stop-blogging/>

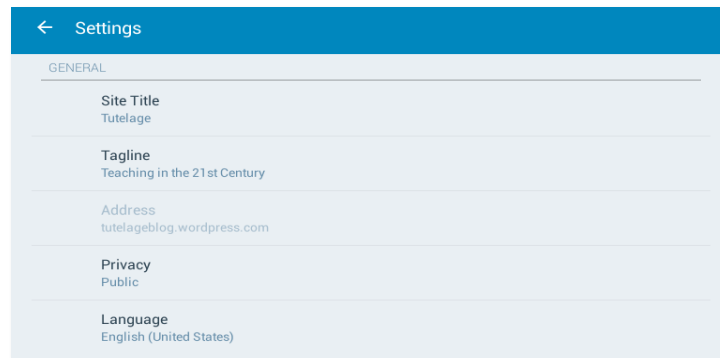
#### **It's Time for (Many) Experienced Writers to Stop Blogging**

by L.L. Barka for *Jane Friedman*

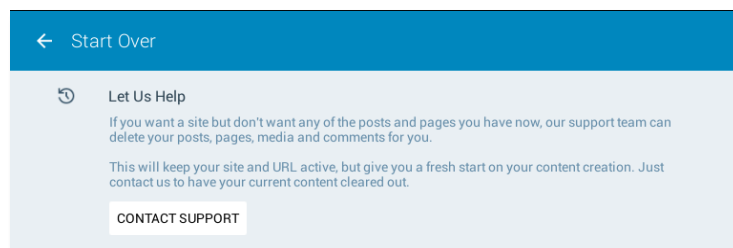
<https://janefriedman.com/its-time-for-many-experienced-writers-to-stop-blogging/>

If you think you no longer want to blog, follow the instructions below to delete your blog.

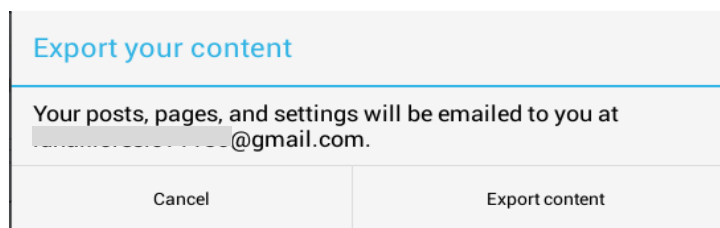
1. Open  **WordPress** app by tapping it. Tap  **Settings**. This will open the **Settings** page.



2. Scroll down to **ADVANCED**. Tap **Start Over** if you want to just change your blog. This will open the **Start Over** page. Tap the **CONTACT SUPPORT** button and let WordPress.com staff help you.



3. Tap **Export content** if you want to keep the content of your blog before deleting it. You will be prompted that you will be e-mailed all of your blog's content.



4. Tap **Delete Site** but only if you are really sure that this is what you want to do. You will be prompted as soon as you choose this option. Tap **Delete** after typing the required information and you are done.



5. Congratulations! You now know how to delete your blog on an Apple mobile device.



# Chapter 4: Advanced and Expert Users

Advanced and expert users refer to those who actively use blogs for professional growth and even for teaching and learning and increasing your blog readership. In this section, you will learn how to use a blog to collaborate with peers and colleagues, to use it in class, and to promote HOTS and values.

## How to Use a Blog for Teaching and Learning

The University of Sydney, in "[Blogs for Education](#)," highlights the essential point that blogs are means to publish important and relevant information. They can promote open dialog and encourage community building where both the blogger and commenters exchange opinions, ideas, and show their attitudes.

You can use a blog to publish instructional materials that your students can access and comment on. You can also let your students create their own blogs for a specific or several subject/s then assign them tasks. These tasks should be done using their blogs (such as publishing and sharing articles with their classmates).

While they develop their own blogs, you can observe and monitor their progress, and identify learning needs that you have not considered (they may directly or indirectly express their doubts on their blogs). As their blogs grow, classify, summarize, and evaluate them, then publish your opinions, directions, and feedback on your own blog or a class blog. By doing so, you are actually helping them get on the right track because if you just let them publish whatever they like, their blogging can get out of control, and their blogs' relevance to what they are learning will be reduced.

Thanh Nguyen, in "[Blogs in Education](#)," meanwhile, gives some areas where blogs can aid in teaching:

- **Classroom management.** A class blog can serve as portal or learning hub to foster a community of learners. As it is easy to create and update, it can be used to inform students of class requirements; post handouts, notices, and homework; or act as a question-and-answer board. It becomes a "one stop shop" for all educational activities and materials.
- **Collaboration.** Blogs provide a space where you and your students can work together to further develop writing or other skills with the added benefit of having an instant audience. While it is true that teachers are expected to implement their educational plans and strategies, learning is a dynamic process. Students, though at the receiving end of learning, play a crucial role in making these strategies even more effective.

You can offer instructional tips while your students practice and benefit from peer review. Blogs also make online mentoring possible. A class of older students can, for instance, help younger students develop more confidence in their writing skill. They can also participate in cooperative learning activities that require them to relay research findings, ideas, or suggestions.

- **Discussion.** A class blog gives students an opportunity to discuss topics outside class. It gives everyone an equal opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. Students have time to reflect before reacting to what others say.

You can also bring together a group of knowledgeable individuals for a given unit of study for students to network and conference with on a blog. Through blogging, their interests are showcased. They are given a platform to shape discourse by asserting their respective views and tempering them to that of others.

- **Student portfolio creation.** Blogs present, organize, and protect student work as a digital portfolio. As older entries are archived, developing skills and progress may be more conveniently analyzed. As students realize that their writing will be published, they are typically more motivated to produce better content. You can talk to students individually about a work in progress or give expert advice for future reference.



## Web Resources

Tap the links for more tips on how to use blogs for teaching

### Web Articles

#### **The Ultimate Guide to the Use of Blogs in Teaching**

by Med Kharbach for *Nancy's Point*

<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2012/06/ultimate-guide-to-use-of-blogs-in.html>

#### **Ten Ways to Use Your Edublog**

*Edublogs*

<https://edublogs.org/2010/08/06/top-10-ways-to-use-edublogs/>

#### **How to Use Blogs in the Classroom**

by Christopher Pappas for *eLearning Industry*


<https://elearningindustry.com/how-to-use-blogs-in-the-classroom>


#### **Using Blogs in the Classroom**


by LSA for *University of Michigan*


<https://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/instructors/teaching-resources/using-blogs-in-the-classroom.html>

## What Are Some of the Recent Blogging Developments and Applications?

Apart from  **WordPress.com**, there are other blogging platforms and/or apps that you can try out for whatever reason—teaching, enhancing your career, and/or promoting HOTS and values. These include:

 **Tumblr.** Tumblr offers users a new way to blog. The app was designed to enhance the way people “tumblelog.” **Tumblelogging** is a type of blogging that utilizes short posts that contain a combination of media. Tumblr allows users to share anything they find on the Web, including images, text, quotes, videos, music, links, and more. Just like other social-networking-style websites, users can build a customized profile that matches their personality or design preferences. Tumblr provides users access to a collection of themes that are available for free or purchase. It currently includes more than 9,382,500,000 posts and over 27,155,000 blogs.

 **HubPages.** HubPages is a community of Internet users who create themed Web pages. A **hub** is a page that focuses on one theme or topic. Users have unlimited options when building hubs. Current pages include everything from traditional Cambodian weddings to pet care and photography. Users can collect various media to put on their pages such as videos, images, maps, and links. Polls and quizzes can also be displayed. Each element added to a hub is referred to as a “capsule.” HubPages encourages users by providing analytics as well as ways to monetize hubs. Users can earn accolades, which are badges that appear on their profiles whenever they achieve goals within the HubPages community.

 **OverBlog.** OverBlog is a blog-hosting service that lets users share their thoughts and ideas while earning income. Users begin by creating blogs. The website gives them access to a list of templates to begin. Users can also start with a blank template to come up with their own blog designs. After creating blogs, they begin attracting readers. The sites incorporate functions to help maximize blogs’ popularity. Users will be able to earn revenue from **ads** placed on their blogs. OverBlog provides users with a large directory of blogs sorted by category, including popular topics such as religion, books, business, philosophy, movies, teens, travel, poetry, economy, love, and many more.



### Web Resources

Tap the links for more blogging apps and platforms that you can try out

#### Web Articles

##### **Best Blogging Apps for iPad: 2020 Edition**

by Harsh Agrawal for *Shout Me Loud*

<https://www.shoutmeloud.com/most-popular-free-blogging-apps-for-ipad.html>

##### **20 Best Blogging Apps Every Blogger Should Use in 2020**

By Anil Agarwal for *Bloggers Passion*

<https://bloggerspassion.com/best-blogging-apps/>



## Web Resources

Tap the links for more blogging apps and platforms that you can try out

### Web Articles

#### **The Best Phone Apps for Blogging**

by Lorraine Reguly for *Income Diary*

<https://www.incomediary.com/phone-apps-for-blogging>

#### **How to Choose the Best Blogging Platform in 2020**

WPBeginner

<https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-choose-the-best-blogging-platform/>

## How Can Blogs Promote Higher Order Thinking Skills and Values?

Schools need to prepare students for the new 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies required when using online digital tools. Blogging is an easy way to help promote the development of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in an online platform.

Lisa Zawilinski, in [“HOT Blogging: A Framework for Blogging to Promote Higher-Order Thinking,”](#) introduced the term “higher-order thinking (HOT) blogging to refer to using a blog to systematically deepen students’ comprehension, particularly when consuming online content.

As students read online and off, HOT blogging allows them to share diverse perspectives and exchange information with one another on the Internet. This supports the development of online comprehension and communication skills and creates a collaborative learning community that builds a deeper and broader understanding across the curriculum. HOT blogging provides opportunities for questioning texts, thinking critically about an author’s message, and synthesizing across diverse perspectives—all HOTS.

Zawilinski adds that “traditionally, dialog journals have provided a useful tool for capturing exchanges that serve to deepen comprehension of text. Moving this instructional practice onto a blog allows us to widen our audience for students, minimize the demands on the classroom teacher, and maximize the comprehension of text. The four recursive steps in the HOT blogging framework adapt the dialog journal approaches to the Internet to help students develop rich conversations through both talk and written text.”

According to Zawilinski, HOT blogging consists of the following recursive steps that each integrates both traditional reading comprehension skills and the new HOTS often required during online reading comprehension.

- **Strengthen background information.** By posting pre-activities and questions on the blog, students are tasked to further build on background knowledge they already have through reading and research. The information that students gather serve as a precursor for them to exercise evaluation, critical thinking, and synthesis. This process equips them with the necessary tools in being more prepared as to performing the task at hand. For example, before reading “Number the Stars” by Lois Lowry, you might post a blog comment inviting students to locate three sites that could help their classmates prepare for reading and understanding the book. Guide questions as to how the book is perceived may also be useful.

These resources help all students to build background knowledge and prepare them for reading the text. In short, blogging serves as an opportunity to invite your students in locating other useful sources to build prior knowledge about the lesson: all for their use and for sharing with fellow students. Building background knowledge is important because students with greater prior knowledge about a text are in a better position to understand it more deeply. All readers use their existing knowledge and a range of cues from the text and the situational context to construct a mental model of meaning from the text.

Research also suggests that students with greater prior knowledge are able to store information in their long-term memory due to association. They are better able to determine what is important in the text and use that knowledge to draw inferences from and elaborate on the text to achieve higher levels of comprehension. Once background has been built, students are ready to prime the pump.

- **Challenge your students.** Use your blog to help students think deeply about the background they have built and what they have read in the beginning chapters of the text to share an initial interpretation. One approach is to post an invitation to students to share any of the following types of thinking to encourage further discussions:
  - Queries or confusions that may need to be resolved;
  - First impressions of the characters or storyline;
  - Summary of what they have learned so far; and
  - Introspection as to themselves, other texts, or the world.

A final aspect of priming the pump is to require students to read what others in the class have posted to prepare for a conversation. Instead of having students tell their own thoughts in a small group or class discussion, ask them to share other students’ comments from the blog. This approach to starting the conversation holds students accountable for reading and considering their classmates’ perspectives right from the start. During the discussion, ask students to jot notes from the conversation. The notes will help students in the next stage of the HOT blogging framework—continue the conversation.



- **Sustain the conversation.** In this stage, students begin to summarize and synthesize understanding across multiple textual units. While thinking about the novel they are reading, the blog posts by other students, and the group/class conversation, students are asked to synthesize what has been shared and learned. Synthesizing is more than simply summarizing; it involves critical thinking and using HOTS in rendering their output.

Synthesis can be challenging for both the teacher to teach and the students to practice. Partially completed outlines or guides can help. Students should work in pairs while crafting synthesis comments since this can prove to be especially supportive. With this, together with earlier stages in this framework, good models, and teacher “think-alouds” will support the development of better student work.

The synthesis process can occur at any point in the text and can be used multiple times while reading a novel or reading online. Reading through student blog posts with a critical eye will help you determine the amount of practice students need with synthesis. Questions to focus your assessment of their blog postings might include the following:

- Do the posts incorporate a summary of other students’ blog posts or discussion comments?
  - Do the posts use any unconventional lens in examining the material?
  - Are the posts structured and focused?
  - Do the posts reflect inferential thinking that moves beyond simple recall?
- **Encourage Collaboration.** By inviting students to read, think, and comment on the classroom blog, you make multiplicity explicit. Students regularly encounter how differently their classmates think from one another. When different ideas are expressed, students are supported in thinking deeply about diverse beliefs and positions. This, too, is a type of evaluation or HOTS, which requires more than simple summaries or retells. Often, this phase may be initiated by a prompt that you provide. You might also use a comment a student posted previously, asking all students to address that issue. This will draw out the many interpretations that may exist.

As students encounter multiple perspectives, they will also see how important it is to support one’s perspective. To convince someone with a differing point of view, evidence and clear explanations become necessary. Crafting a response that includes evidence is not often easy. As with earlier stages in the framework, a teacher think-aloud while constructing a well-supported comment will increase the likelihood of students learning how to support their comments with evidence.

Once students post their interpretations with evidence, the cycle of reading begins again. Ask students to read their classmates’ responses, noting which are similar and different and in what ways. Use these responses to show students how diverse perspectives can further deepen and enrich one’s own thinking. You may, again, need to demonstrate how this is possible by thinking aloud.

HOT blogging is an effective teaching strategy for you to integrate critical and creative thinking competencies within your school's curriculum. When your students read web pages and posts on blogs in addition to prescribed classroom texts, they "read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the world. As students synthesize across websites and blog posts, they 'gather, evaluate, and synthesize data' from a variety of sources to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience, and use a variety of technological and information resources."

This heightens the use of critical thinking skills in performing tasks related to their lessons. By being exposed to various texts, albeit conflicting even at times, they see for themselves how it is to sift through information clutter. This proves to be a necessary skill and a precursor in developing one's way of thinking and perspective as regards any issue.

While writing for themselves and others, they "employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes." When discussing the posts and the variety of perspectives found within, they "apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts." These standards and the HOT blogging framework require higher order thinking in which we want all our students to engage.



## Web Resources

Tap the links to access the resources

### Web article

#### **The Use of Web 2.0 Technologies to Promote Higher-Order Thinking Skills**

by Gail Chittleborough, et al.

<http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30019271/chittleborough-useofweb2.0-2008.pdf>

#### **Blogging Promotes Higher-Order Thinking in Lower School Students**

By Kevin J. Ruth for *Introit*

<https://introit.typepad.com/introit/2009/06/blogging-promotes-higherorder-thinking-in-lower-school-students.html>

### Blog

#### **Children Thinking Skills**

by C.W. Goh and Tan Yi Ling

<http://childrenthinkingskills.blogspot.com/p/high-order-of-thinking-skills.html>

#### **Preparing K-12 Students to be Post-secondary Ready**

by Erik M. Francis for *H.O.T./D.O.K.*

<http://maverikeducation.blogspot.com/>

## How to Use Blogs to Enhance Teachers' Professional Growth

Professional development can mean different things to different teachers, including participating in district meetings, attending conferences, earning a master's degree, or networking with other education professionals on social media. These are all great opportunities. However, development and progression in one's professional career need not take these conventional tracks. An often-overlooked way to expand and develop your teaching skills may actually be free and accessible like starting a blog.

Blogging may require a bit more effort than other popular forms of professional development, but once you get started, you may find blogging to be a very rewarding practice that helps build your career. The following are some ways by which blogs help you grow as a teaching professional from Teach.com's "10 Reasons to Blog as Professional Development": <sup>44</sup>

- **Blogging helps you think and write more clearly.** Making a habit out of expressing your thoughts in written form can help sharpen your intellect, organize your ideas, and prepare you to teach lessons even more effectively.
- **Blogging connects you to other thought leaders.** Putting your ideas out there is a great way to attract discourse: be it like-minded people to argue with, to network with, or to get advice from. Talking with other educators is a wonderful way to learn and grow as a teacher.
- **Blogging keeps you accountable in meeting your learning and development goals.** Do not get stuck in your own bubble. The practice of sharing your ideas with readers forces you to be dynamic to not run out of writing material. It also forces you to defend your common practices or ideas, to fact-check, and to stay on top of your game!
- **Blogging helps you reflect.** Blogging, like keeping a journal or a diary, is a great way to collect and meditate on your teaching experiences. Introspection is surprisingly enlightening for most – more so when looking back on posts from even a few months or a year ago.
- **Blogging creates a landing page for your most important notes.** Whether you are positing curriculum ideas, learning resources, or even recaps of your day at work, having a blog and being part of a community is a great way to keep track of what you have learned and what you already know. It is a convenient means of documenting your own educational progress thus far.
- **Blogging can help you live and teach with intention.** Blogging is a declaration of who you are as a person and as a teacher. In making that declaration, you may find that you change (hopefully for the better) to better fit that image of yourself and your professional role. On the other hand, you may find yourself questioning what you thought you knew and end up moving toward a new direction.

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<sup>44</sup> Teach.com. "10 Reasons to Blog as Professional Development." *Teach*, 12 February 2015, Last accessed on 15 April 2020 <https://teach.com/blog/blogging-as-pd/>.

- **Blogging can give you an important and necessary motivational boost.** Blogging can be a good source of positive reinforcement. Blogging about your passions may lead to getting support from your fellow teachers and education professionals which would inevitably drive you to do better. Being heard by your readers may be a good source of validation. But on top of this, simply having a place to put your experiences in and of itself can be motivating.
- **Blogging keeps you in the loop.** Being part of a blogging community is a great way to stay updated on the latest trends and most effective strategies in educational technology, reform, and policy, or teaching styles. You are also doing your part to keep important issues on the stage for discussion.
- **Blogging may shape a new interest or pave the way for another career path.** A blog may be a stepping-stone to advocacy work or a job as a consultant. Writing about your passions can help you better understand them while sharing your ideas can start branding you as an expert in whatever you are interested in.
- **Blogging is a source of feedback.** Positive or negative, getting reactions from other people in your community is a great way to test your ideas. It can also be a great motivational tool.

Blogging is an effective avenue for teachers like you to explore on active learning strategies and to seek personal and professional development. A good **TEACHER BLOG** is informative, inspiring, entertaining, and beneficial to a teacher in terms of the following: <sup>45</sup>

- **T**eaching-learning experience improvement.
- **E**ncouraging teamwork and collaboration.
- **A**ttainment of professional goals.
- **C**ultivation of reflective teaching.
- **H**oning of higher order thinking skills.
- **E**stablishing digital experience.
- **R**eaching out to other teachers.
- **B**uilding a new generation of responsible digital citizens.
- **L**earning to receive feedback.
- **O**rganization of ideas.
- **G**aining parental engagement.



Tap to see full image

<sup>45</sup> MT4T infographic. 22 June 2020. "10 Reasons Why Teachers Should Blog."  
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## Web Resources

Tap the links for more information on how blogging can help enhance professional growth

### Web article

#### **Blogging Your Way to Connected Professional Development**

Mike Fisher for *TeachThought*

<http://www.teachthought.com/pedagogy/blogging-your-way-to-connected-professional-development/>

#### **Sandy Millin: Professional Development Through Blogs and Blogging**

Paul Braddock for *Teacing English*

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/sandy-millin-professional-development-through-blogs-blogging>






### Brief Paper

#### **Blogging as a Professional Development Tool**

Terence Cavanaugh and Cathy Cavanaugh presented at the eLearn Conference 2005

<https://www.unf.edu/~tcavanau/presentations/elearn/blogPD/paper.htm>


## How LinkedIn Can Help Your Blog

Now that you have gained useful information about  **WordPress.com**, and blogging, it's now time you learn about  **LinkedIn** and how it can be a great help in promoting your blog, as well as expanding your professional network.  **LinkedIn**, as the most popular social network for professionals, can add a dose of professionalism to your  **WordPress** blog.  **LinkedIn** can help you get more people to read your posts by connecting it with your audience, helping you develop professional relationships and drive traffic to your blog. NetSphere Strategies, in "Why Blogging Can't Be a Standalone Effort,"<sup>46</sup> says:





To get the full-blown, positive effects, successful bloggers realized that writing cannot be a stand-alone effort. There are a few essential assets that go together with blogging and those start with a way to broadcast new posts. Be it Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Google+, you will need at least one if not all these platforms to broadcast the fact that your recently crafted blog has been posted. Without that social soapbox, the blog that you just spent so much time writing is doomed to exist in cyberspace unread and unnoticed.


Like throwing a party but not inviting any guests, readers will not know about your new blog post unless you tell them. Your friends and family do not loiter outside your home waiting for your next big bash and neither will the public when it comes to visiting your blog site without prompting.

<sup>46</sup> "Why blogging can't be a standalone effort." Retrieved from NetSphere at <http://www.netspherestrategies.com/blog/why-blogging-cant-be-a-standalone-effort>

Christina Allen, in “Introducing LinkedIn University Pages,”<sup>47</sup> introduces  **LinkedIn** as an educational platform that allows prospective and existing students, alumni, teachers, and administrators and personnel to network online. Apart from supporting blogging, LinkedIn may be used by educators in several other ways.

- **Join the conversation.** A school board is a great place to get regular updates about campus news and activities from the schools themselves, ask questions, and engage with both the campus community and alumni. It is a centralized bulletin board where students can see posts from the school authorities.
- **Explore schools worldwide.** If you are interested in attending a school in France, you can start by searching for schools in Paris. You can then explore the careers of graduates of that school to see if it meets your goal. You can also connect with students or alumni from that school to gain more ideas regarding student life.
- **Check out notable alumni.** What kinds of leaders does this school produce? From astronauts to architects, executives to entertainers, explore the notable alumni who have done great things since they graduated.
- **Expand your opportunities.** Are you looking for teaching materials in science? Explore the careers of science graduates. You may be surprised by the teaching materials they have created. See where they live and work, what they do, and even the skills they have acquired along the way to see what is possible for you.
- **Build your network.** Transform those brilliant, creative, hardworking people you met or will meet on campus into lifelong members of your professional network. Alumni can reconnect with former classmates, and students can strengthen relationships with current and future classmates.

Optimizing your  **LinkedIn** profile may prove to be beneficial in expanding your network. After reading your blog posts, keep in mind that potential clients or professional colleagues might visit your  **LinkedIn** profile to learn more about the brains behind the blog. It is imperative that your  **LinkedIn** profile is complete. In addition to a professional-looking photo, each section of your  **LinkedIn** profile should be filled out with all of your skills and accomplishments.

Research from  **LinkedIn** says that complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities than incomplete profiles. By including your job history, a profile summary and education, potential business connections will get the feeling that they already know you. Doing so gives prospective clients a preview of who you are as a professional. It is a simple way to get a leg up when it comes to networking. And then when they see notifications of your newly posted blogs, they will have more opportunities to get to know you even better.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Christina Allen. “Introducing LinkedIn University Pages.” *LinkedIn Official Blog*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <https://blog.linkedin.com/2013/08/19/introducing-linkedin-university-pages>.

<sup>48</sup> “Why Blogging Can’t Be a Standalone Effort,” *NetSphere Strategies*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <http://www.netspherestrategies.com/blog/why-blogging-cant-be-a-standalone-effort>.

## How to Connect Your WordPress and LinkedIn Accounts



Many  **WordPress.com** bloggers already enjoy the benefits of connecting their blogs to their social networks via **Publicize**. This feature allows you to connect your  **WordPress.com** blog to your account on social networking services like  **WordPress**, broadcasting your posts to your connections automatically for you. This feature also works on other social networking services like Twitter and Facebook. To publicize a post on  **LinkedIn** and your other social networking accounts, read Scott Berkun's article, "Want More traffic? Publicize Now Makes It Easy."<sup>49</sup>




The following are some points to consider before deciding to push your blog's content to your professional profile. According to Ben Huberman in "Should You Connect Your Blog to Your LinkedIn Profile?"<sup>50</sup> the advantages of this connection are obvious.

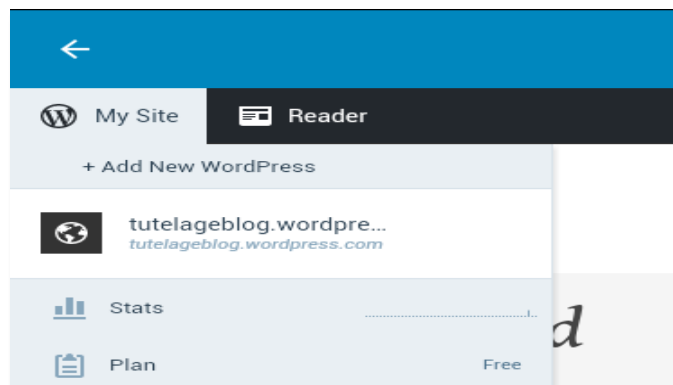
*If your WordPress website is your primary professional home or you often write about work-related topics, having a presence on LinkedIn can give you a boost.*

*Publishing on LinkedIn can broaden your blog's readership and increase its overall popularity. It is a form of syndication. Readers who may never have heard of your blog if it only stayed on WordPress.com now have the chance to consume and comment on your content.*

*As a rule of thumb, if you do not want to think twice about anything you write, and even more so if you tend to regularly approach sensitive or controversial topics, connecting your blog to LinkedIn may be something to reconsider.*

If you are sure that you will only produce and publish content that can enhance your professional growth, then go ahead and connect your  **WordPress** and  **LinkedIn** accounts. To do that, follow these instructions.

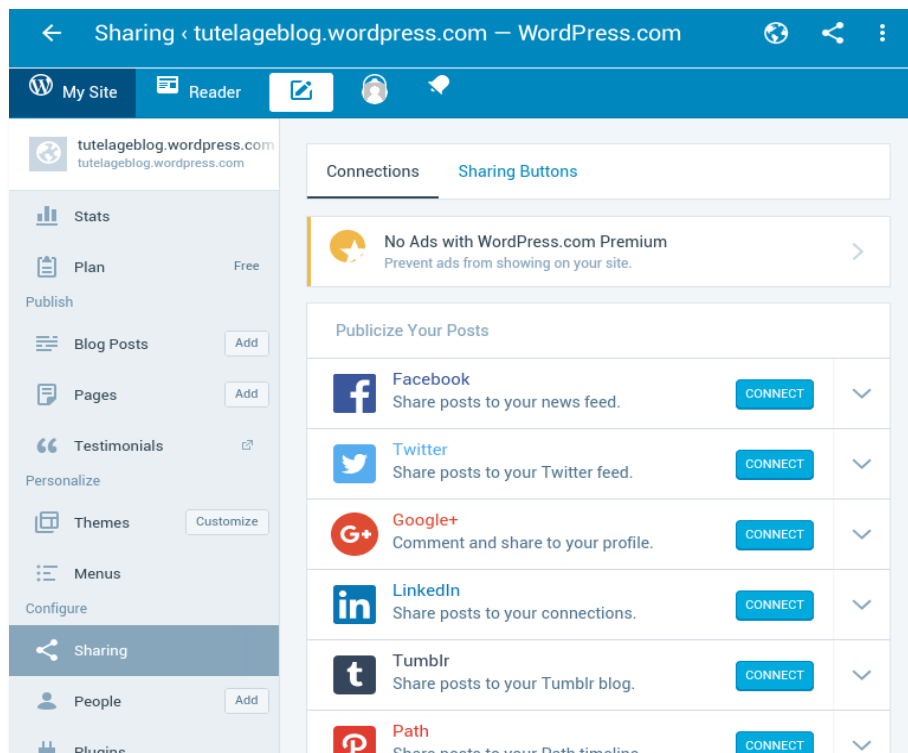
1. Open  **WordPress** app by tapping it. Tap  **View Site**, then  **My Site**. This will make a menu on the left appear.



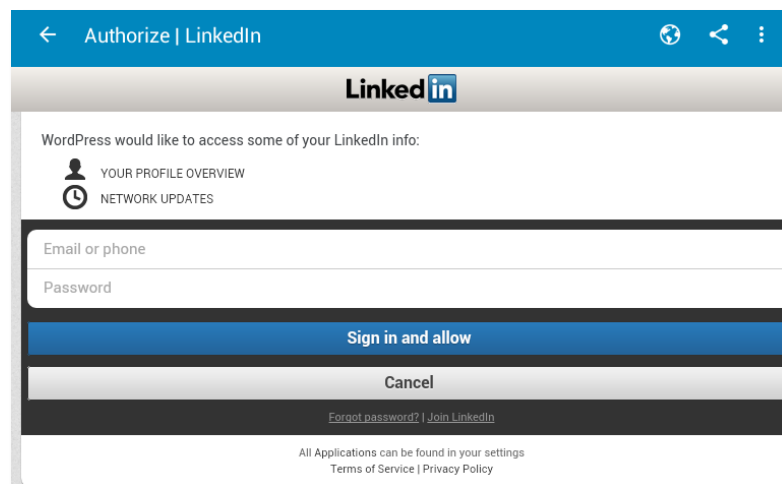
<sup>49</sup> Berkun, Scott. "Want More Traffic? Publicize Now Makes It Easy," *WordPress.com*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <https://en.blog.wordpress.com/2011/02/04/want-more-traffic-publicize-now-makes-it-easy/>.


<sup>50</sup> Huberman, Ben. "Should You Connect Your Blog to Your LinkedIn Profile?" *The Daily Post*. Last accessed on 15 April 2020, <https://dailypost.wordpress.com/2013/12/05/blog-linkedin-profile/>.

2. Tap  **Sharing** under **Configure**. This will open the **Sharing** page.



3. Tap the **CONNECT** button beside  **LinkedIn**. This will open a page that asks you to give  **WordPress** permission to access your  **LinkedIn** account. Fill in the required information then tap the **Sign in and allow** button.



4. You will be asked to confirm your account. Tap your name. Wait for the connection process to finish. You will know when you see Disconnect on the page. Congratulations! Your  **WordPress** and  **LinkedIn** accounts are now connected. Every time you publish a blog, it will be posted as an update on  **LinkedIn** and will appear on your newsfeed.





# Conclusion

Blogging is a fulfilling and worthwhile activity. Everyone may have their own reason to blog, but one thing remains the same for everyone: it is an opportunity to get yourself out there.

Be it for personal gains or for professional development, blogging opens limitless opportunities for you. Blogging lets you connect with people not just within your school circle, but even beyond your region and country. It makes the world within your reach at the comfort of just pressing buttons. Blogging enables you to promote yourself in a far better way than having your Curriculum Vitae printed out and sent to prospective employers, for instance. Your blog is your digital portfolio; a digital recorder of all that you care to share with anyone about yourself, your thoughts, your passion, your world.

Blogging can also go beyond yourself. A lot of people have ventured into blogging with the primary purpose of earning additional income through their blogs. These blogs, commonly referred to as **professional blogs**, tend to either focus on one blog, or many niche blogs to generate a revenue. According to [First Site Guide](#), "professional bloggers tend to use a variety of monetization strategies to achieve their business goal, including selling display ads, creating information and digital products, promoting other people's products for a commission, and others."

As you embark on your blogging journey, here is a **rubric** that could help you assess your level of expertise and gain ideas as well, on how you can further develop your blogging skills. This rubric is also great to use for your class once you decide to introduce blogging to your students. Kathleen Morris, a former primary school teacher in Australia and popular educational blogger who runs the blog site [Primary Tech](#), developed this simple **rubric**.

EDUCATIONAL BLOGGING RUBRIC			
	BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	➤ Read and comment on class blog.	➤ Guest post on class blog and/or contribute some work to class blog.	➤ Establish and maintain an individual blog.
<b>FREQUENCY</b>	➤ Moderate comments and publish posts when time allows.	➤ Post every few weeks. ➤ Moderate/reply to comments within a few days of receiving them.	➤ Consistently publish regular posts at a predictable interval (eg. weekly). ➤ Moderate and reply to comments as they arise.
<b>BLOG DESIGN</b>	➤ Include a search box and links. ➤ Use fonts and dark coloured text that is easy to read. ➤ Choose a basic theme that is easy to navigate.	➤ Include some third party widgets (eg. ClustrMaps). ➤ Include an email subscription. ➤ Use a theme that is clear, well designed and easy to customise.	➤ Limit "fun" widgets to not take away from posts and speed up loading speed. ➤ Include a tag or category widget. ➤ Customise your theme with images, backgrounds, layout etc.
<b>POSTS</b>	➤ Write posts simply about "what you already know". ➤ Include text and an image in posts.	➤ Include some research or facts in posts. ➤ End posts with questions to encourage comments. ➤ Plan posts and save drafts to edit before publishing. ➤ Use one or two simple hyperlinks. ➤ Include text and an image and/or embedded web 2.0 tool/multimedia in posts.	➤ Draw upon thorough research and write posts that are designed to make readers think. Encourage feedback on posts. ➤ Use post topics that are original and creative. ➤ Categorise and tag posts. ➤ Use numerous hyperlinks to add to the readers' understanding. ➤ Include a range of different images (own and Creative Commons), multimedia and web 2.0 tools to enhance posts.
<b>PAGES</b>	➤ Include an about page.	➤ Include a number of pages with static information (eg. guidelines, websites, parent information).	➤ Include a set of nested pages to streamline navigation. ➤ Revise pages regularly to ensure information is up to date.
<b>COMMENTS</b>	➤ Read all comments and reply to comments with questions. ➤ Begin using the <a href="#">letter format</a> for quality commenting.	➤ Read and reply to all comments. ➤ Compliment the writer. ➤ Ask questions. ➤ Consistently follow the <a href="#">letter format</a> for quality commenting.	➤ Reply to all comments and regularly ask commenters thoughtful questions to generate further discussion. ➤ Add new ideas and include links to sources. ➤ Use HTML code in comments for emphasis/improved layout.
<b>WRITING CONVENTIONS</b>	➤ Use simple sentences. ➤ Use basic grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly. ➤ Create a post title that previews the post topic.	➤ Use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly most of the time. ➤ Incorporate some interesting vocabulary. ➤ Use paragraphs and organise ideas coherently. ➤ Ensure all writing is proofread (by self or adult depending on skills).	➤ Ensure all grammar, spelling and punctuation is correct. Use tools such as dictionaries, thesauruses and spell check to refine writing. ➤ Use a range of interesting vocabulary and language conventions. ➤ Develop an ongoing 'voice' in all posts. ➤ Regularly use paragraphs, subheadings, dot points, bold, italics etc. to enhance readability.
<b>COLLABORATION</b>	➤ Read other educational blogs.	➤ Regularly read and comment on a number of other educational blogs. ➤ Curate other blogs in a blogroll.	➤ Work together with other educational bloggers on global collaborative projects. ➤ Curate other blogs in an RSS feed.
<b>DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP</b>	➤ Don't share YAPPY information online (your full name, address, phone number, passwords, your plans).	➤ Understand strong/weak passwords. ➤ Develop understanding of netiquette; respect the viewpoints of all readers/commenters.	➤ Consistently use Creative Commons materials with correct attributions. ➤ Cite all sources of information.

(Tap to enlarge image)



## Web Resources

Tap the links to access these resources compiled and recommended by First Site Guide

### Web Articles

#### How to Use WordPress CMS

<https://firstsiteguide.com/wordpress-basics/>

#### How to Write Blog Content – Posts, Pages, and More

<https://firstsiteguide.com/write-content/>

#### How to Promote your Blog

<https://firstsiteguide.com/promote-content/>

#### The Ultimate List of Tools for Bloggers, Webmasters, and Startups

<https://firstsiteguide.com/tools/>


#### How to Choose the Right Domain Name


<https://firstsiteguide.com/choose-domain/>

#### Best Web Hosting Services 2020

<https://firstsiteguide.com/tools/hosting/>

Blogging also has its challenges. While starting a blog may be easy, it can be very difficult to stay active on it when there are other pressing matters that you need to attend to. Blogging needs commitment. To ensure you update your blog frequently, try having a promotional calendar wherein you would be scheduling your process – from brainstorming to actual writing and uploading. Remember that as you blog about your thoughts and ideas, you also expose a part of yourself. Take caution that you do not expose yourself too much as this can have some security implications also, particularly if you regularly post about your daily work and activities.

Do not speak ill of anyone, especially if your readers include students and their parents. If your blog is connected to your  **LinkedIn** profile, you run the risk of turning off your professional peers, as well. Remember that your blog reflects who you are and your profession. Be professional always by making sure your grammar and spelling are correct, and your content is well researched. Ensure that your posts will not be harmful to your readers.

In case you run into some issues while using  **WordPress**, you may visit the forums on  **WordPress** for tips on how to troubleshoot and view other discussions that might be helpful also. Here is the link to the forum for **Apple** mobile device users of  **WordPress.com**: <https://ios.forums.wordpress.org/forum/how-to-and-troubleshooting>.

This e-book on **“Blogging for Teachers”** encourages the use of blogs in education and explores its potential benefits to teachers like yourself. It focuses on the use of WordPress as the recommended blogging platform to start you off on your blogging journey.

Note that the contents of this e-book have been customized for end-users of Apple mobile devices. The functionalities of the WordPress app do not have significant differences across Apple devices; hence, the instructions contained in this e-book are applicable for both iPads and iPhones.

SEAMEO INNOTECH invites you take part in our initiative to equip teachers like yourself with skills and knowledge on technology relevant to education in the 21st century. You may contribute by sending in new resources on blogging and WordPress for education use that you find useful through the MT4T project email at [si\\_mt4t@seameo-innotech.org](mailto:si_mt4t@seameo-innotech.org). Your support will help ensure that this free e-book on “Blogging for Teachers” will continue to grow and expand.



Mobile Technology for Teachers (MT4T) is a project of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology. Learn more about the project, access its FREE resources, and stay up-to-date through the following:

<https://www.seameo-innotech.org/mt4t>  
SEAMEO INNOTECH Reader Mobile app  
<https://www.facebook.com/mt4tproject>