

Blogs

What is needed for this class?

Basic Internet and mouse skills. An email account is also required.

What is a blog?

- The word “blog” is short for “web log.” It is an online website that contains entries similar to a personal journal. Blogs are used by individuals to discuss their daily lives and hobbies, groups to communicate and stay up to date, and companies to provide meaningful two way communication with their customers. A blog generally consists of a number of posts of varying lengths, links, author information, and comments by readers. They can be formal or informal, and can be updated frequently or only occasionally. Blogs can also include or consist of pictures, podcasts, and sound files.
- Blogs are a great way to keep up to date. This media can include news, friends, or professional interests. Because blogs tend to be updated so frequently, the information tends to be more current.
- Information on blogs should be viewed as the opinion of an individual. Any factual information should be supported by references or bibliographies. Any facts used for a professional or academic purpose should be used with caution.
- In this class, we will learn how to set up, post to, and update blogs using Blogger software.

How do I get started?

- First we need to create your Google account. Open a web browser and type in www.google.com. In the top right corner of the screen, you will see a blue link that says **Sign In**. Click on the link.
- On the page that appears, there is a sign in box on the right hand side. Underneath this box, there is a smaller one that has another blue link that says **Create An Account Now**. Click on the link.
- The next page will have a quick form to fill out. Enter your current email address (this is what is used to sign into your new Google account) and a password of your choosing. Uncheck the boxes for **Remember Me On This Computer** and **Enable Web History**. Type in the word verification, and click the box that says **I Accept. Create My Account**.
- Open your email in a new tab or window. An email will be sent to you to confirm your new account.
- Go back to the window that you have Google open in. Click **Click Here To Continue**.
- Now type www.blogger.com in the address bar of your open browser window. On the right side of the screen that appears, type in your username (which is the email that you used to set up your Google account) and password. Make sure that the **Remember Me On This Computer** box is unchecked. Click **Sign In**.

- Now we will do the signup process for Blogger.

How do I set up my new blog?

- Blogger will now ask you a series of questions so that it may set up a personalized blog for you. On the first screen, you will see your email, with a blank below for your display name. Your display name will be the name that appears in your profile. You will be greeted with it when you sign on, and other people will be able to see it when they view your blog posts.
- Click the box that accepts the terms of service. Next, click the orange at the bottom of the screen to go to the next step.
- The next page you see is called your Dashboard. You will be able to do much of your editing and creating from this page. For now, click on the blue button that says **Create Your Blog Now**.
- Now for the fun part: we'll choose the name, settings, and colors that people will see when they view your blog.
- In the first blank, create your blog title. This is the name of your blog, and what will appear on each page of it. Under this, there is a blank for creating your URL. The URL is the web address that people will use to get to your specific blog. It may be easiest to remember if this is your name or blog title. Type in your selection and click **Check Availability**. This will check if the name is already in use. Once the name is approved, click on the orange arrow to continue.
- The next page displays all the basic templates that can be used. When you see one you like, click on the circle next to the name to select it. Anything you write will be put into this template. It can be easily changed later, so if you don't see one you love right away, don't worry. Click the orange arrow to continue.
- Your blog has been created, and you're ready to post! On this new page, click the orange arrow to continue to posting.
- The page that appears looks much like an email form. Give your post a title in the first blank. In the main text block below, type a short post. For now, you might start by calling it **First Post**. In the text block, you can type something about how you are setting up your first blog. You can delete or change this post at any time.
- When you're done writing, you might want to customize your entry. You can use the toolbar located at the top of the text block to do this. It is likely you are already familiar with many of these icons, such as the spell check (the blue arrow with ABC above it) and the font selector (the first option on the toolbar). Others you may not be as familiar with yet. The sixth icon in is a globe with a chain. This allows you to create a link to another webpage or blog. Next to the spell check icon we already discussed, there are two more icons with which you may not be familiar. One adds pictures to your blog, while the other adds video.

How do I add media to my new blog?

- It's pretty easy. Click the image icon (located next to the spell check icon; it is an image with mountains and blue sky.) A popup box will appear asking you what to find or select the image you want to insert. You may use an image from your computer or an image online. (if it isn't yours, please ask the owner first!)
- Click on the **Browse** button to add a picture from your computer. A directory of your computer will appear. Double click the name of the picture you would like to insert.
- If you would like to insert a picture that you found online, just type the URL (the address of the webpage) in the blank provided.
- Next, choose where you would like your new picture to be located on your blog posting. You can also choose a size. Uncheck the box that says **Use This Layout Every Time** unless you think that you would like each posting set up in the same manner. Agree to the terms of service and click **Upload Image**. To remove your pictures, move your cursor to the right of the image and press the backspace button on the keyboard until the image is removed.
- To add video to your post, click on the film strip located next to the image icon and repeat the same process as you did for the images. The video needs to be on your computer for you to upload it. Again, please only upload video that you have permission to post.
- There are a few more options for your posting. Clicking on **Posting Options** at the bottom of the text block will allow you to control whether or not people are allowed to leave comments on your blog post. You also have the option of tagging the blog entry with words that are meaningful. You can tag the entry right next to the link for posting options. Be sure to separate your tags with commas.
- Click **Publish Post**.

What now?

- When you log in each time, look for the **Dashboard** link. You can do any composing and editing work there. The link is located next to your username in the top right corner of the screen.
- On your Dashboard, you can add posts, edit old posts, edit your profile, or even create a whole new blog.
- To edit a post, look for the white box on your Dashboard page. Click on the blue link that says **Posts** located in the right bottom corner of the white box. A list of your posts will appear. Next to each posting, there are options to edit or view the post. Click on **Edit**. This will direct you to the page where you created the post. When you are finished editing, just click the orange button that says **Publish Post**.
- To edit your profile (information about you) click on the Dashboard link again. Look on the top right for the link that says **Edit Profile**. Click on the link. On this page, you can choose your settings, upload an image, and add a variety of personal information and likes/dislikes. You can add as

much or as little as you are comfortable with. When you finish, click the orange button that says **Save Profile**.

What are some other features?

- On your main Dashboard, you can click on the help topics at any point if you get confused or have a question. The **Help Resources** box is located on the right side of the screen about halfway down.
- You can view your blog at any time. If you are on your Dashboard, look for the link that says **View Blog**. This is located across from the name of the blog, in the white box. From anywhere else in Blogger, just look for the **View Blog** link located on the top of the page next to the **Template** tab.
- Click on the **Settings** tab for more advanced blogging options. Here you can control comments, translation, and other permissions. Just look for the blue links at the top of the screen (right under the tabs.)
- Under the **Template** tab, you can change your template, try out new fonts and colors, edit your html code (you should probably only do this if you are already familiar with html), and change the layout of the page elements.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to email the Adult Reference department at adultref@balibrary.org or call us anytime at (847) 382-1300.

