

Unit 6

Blogging

Overview

This unit focuses on techniques and strategies for successful blogging. Students will contribute their own works to a blog that the whole class will be contributing to. This can be a meaningful revision of content already created for this class or can be newly created writing.



Essential Questions

- What is a blog?
- Why are or aren't blogs revolutionary?
- What kind of opportunities do they present, and what pitfalls?

Essential Learning Outcomes

- Students will show an increase in skill, objectivity, and technical expertise in the revision process.
- Creative Writing and Rewriting – Understand that writing involves knowledge of craft as well as creativity, and that rewriting is an integral part of the overall writing process involving a change in such elements as plot, conceit, tone, and numerous structural and stylistic aspects of craft.

Unit Resources

[Instructor Blog Intro and Guidelines](#)

[Blogging 101 Handout](#)

[Blogging Responsibly & Digital Footprint Handout & Activity](#)

Videos

[Blogging Video Playlist](#)



Blog

Bloggng is a great way for students to express themselves. Sharing a classroom blog as a group portfolio of work is the perfect collaborative activity. Making students' posts visible outside of class--and sharing their work with family--can also be a terrific motivator. In this unit students will revise their previous works based on the feedback from their peer review groups and post their finished works on the class portfolio blog page.

The Top 3 Blogging Platforms For Teachers

Your first step in blog creation is choosing a platform. A platform is where you build and publish your blog. There are many secure sites where you can do this for free. Here are the top three.

1. *Edublog.com* is the number one site for education blogs. It lets you create and manage teacher and student websites. You can customize your design and even add photos, #videos, and podcasts. Learn more about this free, private, and secure website platform in their engaging edublogging video.
2. *Kidblog.com* is a safe, secure publishing platform designed for grades k-12. It's free for up to 50 students per class. Some of the features include no advertising, privacy, password-protected, no personal information needed from students, and simple to use so students spend more time publishing.
3. *WordPress.org* is a free blogging site and a good choice if your blogs go public. There is no need to purchase a domain name (every blog has "wordpress" in its title; for example myblog.wordpress.org. Although not as simple to use as platforms designed specifically for educators, it has some good features, such as numerous plug-ins that allow you to do almost anything you want with your blog.

The Top 3 Blogging Platforms For Teachers

Guidelines and Expectations

Before starting an outline of your blogging guidelines and expectations check with your district or school for a written guideline. From here you can develop clear goals, guidelines, and expectations for you and your students. For example, your school may or may not allow photos of students on blog pages or they may require written permission from a parent to participate in a blog. You and your students need to know the rules before blogging begins. Guidelines can be published and updated right on your class blog for easy access by students and parents.

Bloggging 101

The word “blog,” a contraction of “web log,” is an informational web page that consists of discrete units called “posts.” The term “log” comes from the history of nautical navigation and originally referred to a record of chronological events kept by a ship’s crew. Like a ship’s log, blogs on the web tend to maintain an ordered chronology, although they often unfold in reverse order. Blog posts are often shorter and less formal than other types of writing. Blogs can be personal, artistic, academic, or professional. It is a unique form of online publishing that creates opportunities for producing knowledge, sharing research, building social networks, developing professionally, sharing creativity or documenting personal growth.

Composing a post You want your blog to invite readers in and keep them coming back for updates. Great blogs are vibrant and visually interesting, but they are also thoughtful and purposeful. Every post matters for generating and holding attention.

Consider the following principles when blogging:

Post often

Blogs should be updated regularly to hold readers’ interest. Actively generate new and interesting content on a daily or weekly schedule.

Proofread

Careless mistakes and errors can distract readers and make you appear less credible as a writer.

Read other Blogs

Take the time to read other classroom and student blogs. This will give you and your students concrete examples of the finished product and give you ideas when creating your own blog.

Plagiarism

Explain to students that plagiarism will not be tolerated. Student contributions must be their own work. Don't post copyrighted images. Do post copyright free images. Include a site here.

Create Visual Interest

Consider which aspects of your content would pair well with visual elements such as photographs, figures, or videos. Break up large chunks of text with visual elements to make your blog more readable. Audio and visual interest helps grab a reader's attention. Blogs give writers the opportunity to use design, images, audio, and video to supplement their writing. Take advantage of these innovative ways to enhance your presentation!

Tips To Maintain a Successful Blog

- Make post titles eye-catching but also reasonably accurate. Example: “On Top of the World” is a post about camping in a fire lookout.
<https://www.seasonedvagabond.com/on-top-of-the-world>
- Consider using the tag function in each post. This will help guide readers through your content thematically instead of chronologically. Keep tags consistent, including punctuation. For example, “African-American” and “African American” would be regarded as two different tags because of the hyphen.
- If your hosting platform allows, link to similar blogs in order to increase your traffic.
- Unlike other writing contexts, you may find it difficult to identify your audience when you are composing blog posts. If your blog is public, you could have a large, diverse, and even global readership. Be aware that you are potentially addressing people with very different knowledge bases and cultural assumptions than yours.
- Handle comments with care. As the blog’s creator, the way you handle dissenting or inflammatory voices sets the tone for your readers. Consider adjusting your platform’s comment settings if you need to regulate the conversation. For instance, requiring minimum identification to post a comment can address the problem of inappropriate posts by increasing a writer’s accountability.

Being Yourself

Your Digital Footprint and The Ethics Of Blogging and Social Media

Every time you go online you leave a Digital Footprint that can be searched, copied, shared widely and is permanent. Think carefully before posting and sharing information. Your digital footprint is any information you leave about yourself online, from comments on social media, pictures and posts to app use, emails and the websites you visit. It's important to be aware of the online trail you leave.

In today's world, your digital footprint matters. To build a positive digital footprint, consider what you publish online. At some stage, someone will search for you online. It could be your future boss, teacher, lecturer or parent. We've listed some tips to help you.

Set your privacy settings

Knowing what should be public is just as important as knowing what should be private. When posting on any platform or visiting websites, make sure the privacy settings suit your needs.

Consider your future

When applying for jobs or promotions, you need to be mindful that employers may search for information about you online. Any information that contributes to a negative digital footprint, such as racist or sexist content, may impact the final decision of whether the employer offers you the job or not.

Taking steps to build a positive digital footprint will help represent the person you aim to be to achieve your career goals.

Posting positively online

Depending on the platform, you can use words, photos, videos or a mix of these to tell stories about your interests, skills, achievements and experiences.

Some examples of ways to showcase yourself positively online include:

- Write a blog post about a book you read.
- Create an online sponsorship page for a specific fundraising activity that you're involved in.
- Write an article for your school about your experience on a camp, excursion or student exchange program.
- Upload digital artworks to your blog.

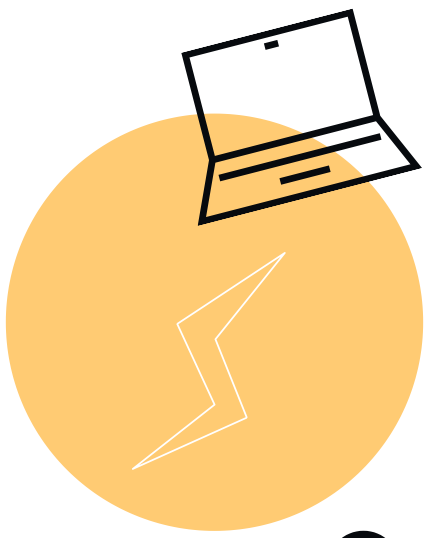
Think before you post

After a stressful day, you may want to jump online to vent about a class, teacher or colleague. While it may be difficult to overcome this strong internal drive, stopping yourself from acting on this impulse will be helpful in the long run.

Self-regulation is knowing when something you want to post online is or isn't appropriate.

A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself whether you would want your parents or colleagues seeing the content. If people you look up to wouldn't approve, you can consider that an employer or your colleagues may not either.

By adopting these four tips, you'll be on the path to building a positive digital footprint that is an asset to your career.



Activity

1. Ask: How would you describe your experiences with social media, either for yourself or for people you know? Good, bad, or in the middle?

Invite students to share their reactions with a thumbs up, down, or to the side.

2. Share the trends you observe in the classroom by saying, It looks like most people's experiences have been ... and There are a handful of people whose experiences have been ...

3. Invite students to share why they feel that way.

4. Lead a class discussion exploring the discussion questions below.

Discussion Questions

Why do you think it is common for people to overshare on social media?

***Sample responses:** You might feel pressure to make your life seem cool/exciting if you see others doing the same.*

If you are used to connecting and getting attention from others online (with likes, views, etc.), you might feel pressure to post more content or share more about yourself.

If you are used to using social media as an outlet for your emotions or to express yourself, you might feel comfortable sharing anything that comes to your mind.

Think about your own experience on social media. Have you ever overshared or seen others overshare? How do those experiences make you feel about yourself?

When you witness others oversharing you may feel:

- o Sad that you are missing out*
- o Self-doubt about who you are or what you are doing in your life*
- o Jealous of others*

When you overshare you may feel:

- o Frustration at focusing more on capturing a moment rather than living it*
- o Regret for saying/sharing something that might have been inappropriate*
- o Anxious for revealing or sharing sensitive information*
- o Conflicted about how you present yourself online and who you are in real life.*

What are ways you can reduce the negative impact that oversharing could have in your life?

Answers will vary, but be sure to highlight both mindset and platform-specific strategies.

Mindset strategies:

- o Consider how what you share online can impact you and how others view you.*
- o Keep your posts positive.*
- o Reflect on when and why you post something online.*
- o Be mindful of how what you post makes you feel.*
- o Talk to your friends about your boundaries for tagging or posting about each other.*

Platform-specific practices:

- o Share only certain information with close friends.*
- o Use your device settings to limit the amount of time you can spend on social media.*
- o Manage your notification settings to avoid being tempted to go online.*
- o Block or Mute posts of people who cause you to have negative feelings.*

How does it make you feel knowing that everything you do online is stored and can be searched for, shared, or even broadcast?

Answers will vary.

What does it mean to have a positive digital footprint?

Emphasize that a positive digital footprint is one that portrays the real you that you are proud of and would be OK with other people seeing.