

Blogs & Blogging:

A Homerun for Teaching and Learning
<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/>



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Blog Basics

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/basics.htm>

Blog Characteristics

- ❖ Web-based journal, log, diary
- ❖ Single author
- ❖ Short entries or postings
- ❖ Links to documents, websites, additional information
- ❖ Opportunity for commenting on entries
- ❖ Hierarchical structure; generally reverse chronological organization
- ❖ Generally public, but sometimes password accessed
- ❖ Sometimes contain graphics, audio, or video
- ❖ Entries are archived and often categorized
- ❖ Entries have permalinks
- ❖ RSS, aggregation, and permalinks allow quick and easy access

Blog Popularity

- ❖ Free or low cost with upgrades
- ❖ Easy entry, unlimited high-end options with upgrades
- ❖ Ease to set-up and create using templates
- ❖ No special software or skilled required
- ❖ Available anywhere, anytime
- ❖ Simple to post new entries or make comments
- ❖ Automatic archiving
- ❖ No technology maintenance or issues

Teachers and Blog Popularity

- ❖ Easy for teacher to provide written feedback
- ❖ Much easier for students and teachers to maintain than web pages
- ❖ Time stamps show when students made entries
- ❖ Multiple blogs for many purposes
- ❖ Students have ownership and access beyond the school setting
- ❖ Student enjoy the writing experience
- ❖ Students don't get lost in the "glitz" of the technology
- ❖ Teachers can add password protection and membership restrictions as needed
- ❖ Communication with the community and parents is essential, blogs are the tool
- ❖ Extends learning beyond the period or school day (i.e., guest e-speakers, questions and answers)

Blog Missions

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/missions.htm>

Explore Options

- ❖ About This Site, FAQs, Contact Information
- ❖ Ask yourself:
 - What's the motivation of the author?
 - Who reads the blog?
 - How did the author envision the blog being used?
 - How credible is the information found and what questions should I be asking as I explore the blog?

Bloggers As

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/bloggers.htm>

- ❖ Bloggers as Diarists
- ❖ Bloggers as Enthusiasts
- ❖ Bloggers as Institutional Outreach
- ❖ Bloggers as Journalists and News Reporters
- ❖ Bloggers as News Pundits, Advocates, and Columnists
- ❖ Bloggers as Stars
- ❖ Bloggers as Promoters
- ❖ Bloggers as Specialists

Blog Organization

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/organization.htm>

- ❖ Blog Links
 - Blog rolls, blog bookmarks, blog pages
- ❖ Blog Readers
 - Web-based readers – Bloglines, Blogrolling
 - Browser-based live bookmarks – Firefox
 - OS-based readers – NewzCrawler, Newsfire
 - Customized portals – MyYahoo

Go to Blogline at <http://bloglines.com/>

Create your own bloglines page like <http://www.bloglines.com/blog/eduscapes>

Blogs in Teaching & Learning

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/tl.htm>

- ❖ **Activate.** Motivate with blogs. Use a blog as a catalyst to generate interest in a new topic. Help students see the excitement and energy that can be found in a subject. For example, show the enthusiasm of mathematicians.
- ❖ **Connect.** Provide a context or establish a connection. Bring relevance to the discussion by using a "real world" situation or example found in a blog.
- ❖ **Critique.** Critically evaluate an idea or perspective by using examples to support a position. Many of these examples can be found in professional blogs.
- ❖ **Deepen.** Add depth to a learning situation by providing a detailed explanation, thoughtful observation, or new resource that provides additional information or insights. For example, use a law blog to learn more about law and ethics.
- ❖ **Expand.** Broaden thinking by providing an alternative perspective or different point of view. For example, use blogs from different countries to examine cultural differences.
- ❖ **Fresh Look.** Use blogs to provide current, immediately relevant examples. For example, get the latest science or fashion news.
- ❖ **Inform.** Provide primary sources or data that help explain an idea already presented. For example, you can track earthquakes and volcanoes. Consider a statistic or graph that illustrates a point.
- ❖ **Launch.** Look for blogs as a place for new, innovative ideas. Be the first to present a new idea rather than simply commenting on the work of others. Ask questions to keep the new idea going.
- ❖ **Synthesize.** Bring a number of ideas together. For example, consolidate these comments and draw a new conclusion.

Explore Blogs or News Feeds. Brainstorm ways they could be used in a classroom:

Blog Posting Starters

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/starter.htm>

Start with a(n)...

- ❖ **Action.** Use verbs to bring a posting alive. Start with an event, disaster, or other activity. Then ask a question.
- ❖ **Announcement.** Then, suggest a reading.
- ❖ **Challenge.** Challenge participants with a bold statement that might cause controversy such as one side of an argument or an opinion.
- ❖ **Choice.** Present options or choices then ask a question.
- ❖ **Current Event.** Present a news item or important local or global event.
- ❖ **Definition.** Provide a word and/or definition. Or, just a word and ask for a definition, illustration or example. Be sure to cite the source. Ask a question that requires a definition.
- ❖ **Emotion or Feeling.** Sleepy, dizzy, frantic, or happy... how does it feel?
- ❖ **Experience.** Share a personal experience or story about yourself. Connect it to the discussion or topic. If possible, include a photograph.
- ❖ **Figurative Language.** A simile (comparison such as or like), metaphor (comparison: this is like that), personification (giving a nonhuman, human qualities), hyperbole (exaggeration).
- ❖ **Opinion.** Take a stand and start with an opinion.
- ❖ **Personal experience.** Then, suggest a reading.
- ❖ **Quote.** The quote could be from a famous person, book, news article, or interview. Be sure to use quotation marks and credit the source.
- ❖ **Question.** Focus on questions about a topic (i.e., main idea, connection to other learning), book or movie (i.e., character, plot, setting), or problem.
- ❖ **Riddle or Puzzle.** Provide the riddle or puzzle, then provide a reading to help solve the problem.
- ❖ **Scenario.** Ask readers to imagine a situation. Consider starting with dialog or conversation.
- ❖ **Statement.** Start with some background information that clarifies an issue or focuses attention on a topic.
- ❖ **Statistic.** How many or how much? Present a shocking statistic or one that people might question. Consider presenting this information in the form of a chart or graphic.
- ❖ **Surprise.** Begin with a shocking or amazing piece of information.
- ❖ **Who, What, When, Where, Why, or How.** Start with a "W" or "H" related to a specific character, problem, or event.

Some of the starters were adapted from the following postings: Blissful Blogging and Blogheads, Kim's Korner: Types of Leads.

Learning Blogs

<http://escrapbooking.com/bloggging/blog1.htm>

Use blogs to:

- ❖ Ask meaningful questions
- ❖ Stimulate new questions
- ❖ Promote sharing of process and products
- ❖ Encourage alternative ideas
- ❖ Promote interaction

The Blogger

- ❖ Will the teacher host the blog or will students direct activities? Will each student host their own blog or will they share the responsibility?
- ❖ Blogger - Class as a whole, Small groups, Individual students

The Audience

- ❖ What's the primary and secondary audience of the blog? Is it intended for use inside or outside the classroom? Are the bloggers writing for themselves or a particular audience?
- ❖ Audience – Themselves, Teacher, Student in class, Students in other classrooms, Parents or local community members, Global audience

The Purpose and Learning Outcomes

- ❖ What's the purpose of the blog? Why is the blog format being used?
- ❖ **Learning Outcome.** What are the specific learning outcomes? What's the objective of the lesson(s)? What standards are being addressed? When used in teaching and learning, the educational outcomes must be clear to the students.
- ❖ **Information.** What information will be shared? Where will this information originate? Most blogs are used to share information including facts, data, statistics, links to other resources, opinions, and much more. In addition to text, the blog could contain audio, video, and visuals.
- ❖ **Process or Product.** Is the blog mostly about process or product? Blogs are often used by teachers as a tool to document the information inquiry process.
- ❖ **Reflection.** Blogs can be used as a metacognitive tool to help people think about their life or learning. These reflections may be intended for themselves, their classmates, or the world.
- ❖ **Interaction.** Some blogs focus on communication between the person posting the entry and the people making comments. The responses may include additional information, expanded ideas, or critiques. Sometimes the most important aspect of the blog is questioning.
- ❖ **Assessment.** Do the learning outcomes match the assessment? Sometimes blogs are used as a tool for assessment to check student understanding.

The Activities

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/blog2.htm>

- ❖ Analyze. Ask students to analyze a book, article, or other posting.
- ❖ Brainstorm. Pose problems and create a collection of ideas.
- ❖ Collaborate. Work collaboratively with another class in the same school or another school.
- ❖ Communicate. Interact with an expert or conduct an interview.
- ❖ Compare. Make a comparison.
- ❖ Discuss. Examine a problem, question, drawing, photograph, or diagram. Then, write captions, analyze elements, speculate, or create.
- ❖ Explain. Ask students to learn and demonstrate their understanding.
- ❖ Imagine. Ask student to imagine a situation or scenario.
- ❖ Observe and Log. Observe human interactions, scientific experiments, or other activities and post a record (i.e., kindness journal, plant growth, survey results).
- ❖ Persuade. Ask students to make a persuasive argument.
- ❖ Predict. Read or watch then predict what will happen next.
- ❖ Problem Solve. Pose a problem and discuss solutions.
- ❖ Question. Get students involved with asking questions.
- ❖ React, Think, Act. Connect in-class learning to blog entries. Transfer learning to new situations.
- ❖ Read and Jigsaw. Read or use online resources and discuss (i.e., quote, website, poem, historical document, problem). Then, analyze, evaluate, and create. Add a comment.
- ❖ Remember and Reflect. Think about an activity and reflect on it.
- ❖ Share Teacher and Student Work. Share materials in a digital format including documents, PDF files, photographs, charts, graphics, written work, audio, video, and presentations.

The Approach

<http://escrapbooking.com/bloggng/blog3.htm>

- ❖ **Collaboration.** Some blogs are used as an environment for cooperation, interaction, and working together toward a joint goal. The students may share the same classroom or work with partners in other places in the world.
- ❖ **Creative Works.** Any type of written work can be the focal point for a blog such as poetry, short stories, or television scripts. However, blogs can also be used to share other creative works such as artwork, musical scores, and video productions.
- ❖ **Critique.** Ask students to write reviews for websites, books, movies, games, local sights, or other topics.
- ❖ **Discussion.** Some blogs focus on interaction, reaction, and discussion of a wide range of topics. While forum software is sometimes used for these, blogs can also be effective. Use the blog format for literature-rich discussions related to award nominated books, literature circles, or community book club connections.
- ❖ **Experiences.** Some blogs focus on a particular shared experience such as an annual event, field trip, or school-wide activity. The blog is used to record the experience. It might also involve connecting with students in other locations for a virtual experience.
- ❖ **Experiments.** Use a blog to track an experiment or post observations.
- ❖ **Expressions of Passion.** Motivation is critical to learning. Sometimes a topical blog can generate passion in students who otherwise find school boring and meaningless.
- ❖ **Inquiry.** Use the blog as a tool for questioning, exploration, and investigation. Individually or in groups, students chronicle the inquiry process and use the blog to share their experiences, reflections, and challenges. The blog is also used to interact and share ideas, provide feedback, and critique ideas.
- ❖ **Journaling.** Keep a journal, log, or diary. Work individually or as a class to compose journal entries or assign groups or individual students.
- ❖ **News Reporting.** Share local or global current events as a class or individually. The student or teacher posts current events articles and invites reactions, thoughts, alternative perspectives, or solutions.
- ❖ **Project Log (plog).** Used to chronicle a project.
- ❖ **Portfolio.** Some blogs are used for maintaining a portfolio of student work.
- ❖ **Report Writing.** Use the blog format to post reports. Students can add web links to web pages, music, or videos. Some blogs also allow photographs. Categories might include key topics or it may be presented chronologically.
- ❖ **Timeline Projects.** Trace a timeline; create a parallel timeline. Use Wikipedia Timelines for ideas.
- ❖ **Vocabulary Blog.** Post a word and definition. Ask students to create sentences or discuss use of the word in context.

The Guidance

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/blog4.htm>

- ❖ **Build the Blog.** Create a title and description that reflects the purpose of the blog.
- ❖ **Guidance.** What guidelines and scaffolding will be provided to assure student success? Discussion guidelines, Practice discussions, Sample postings
- ❖ **Model Use.** Be sure to provide models of well-written postings. Start with some rich prompts that will promote good discussion. Then, debrief the discussion.
- ❖ **Stay Out Of It.** One sure why to stop discussion is by the teacher jumping into the conversation. If you have a concern, email an individual student or post a general class message.

The Assessment

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/blog5.htm>

- ❖ Judge the quality of student work in a variety of areas: writing, grammar, style, postings, replies, promptness, depth. Involve students in self and peer assessment.
- ❖ **Blog Portfolio.** An annotated collection of blog entries demonstrating understanding of course content and intellectual engagement. Examples: American Literature
- ❖ **Evaluating Postings**
 - Use of evidence
 - Substance. Coverage of topics
 - Depth of thinking
 - Engagement with topic

A Dozen Reasons to Blog in Teaching and Learning

- ❖ Authentic learning experiences
- ❖ Easy to create and monitor
- ❖ Motivate and engage learners
- ❖ Differentiate instruction
- ❖ Promote writing
- ❖ Instant feedback
- ❖ Peer interaction
- ❖ Connect with parents
- ❖ Archive student work
- ❖ Promote literacy skills
- ❖ Actively involvement by all students
- ❖ Learn anytime, anywhere

Teaching Blogs

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/teaching.htm>

Teachers can use blogging as a tool for teaching, reflection, as well as communicating with students, parents, or other teachers.

Classroom News

- ❖ Class calendar
- ❖ Homework assignments
- ❖ Photographs of classroom activities
- ❖ Student awards postings
- ❖ Upcoming events
- ❖ Home
- ❖ Periodic review of standards addressed
- ❖ Student work
- ❖ Classroom News and Assignments

Teacher Collaboration

- ❖ Brainstorm teaching strategies
- ❖ Coordinate grant writing activities
- ❖ Discuss student or school issues
- ❖ Work with sick or home bound students

Teacher Reflections

- ❖ Daily reflections
- ❖ Classroom management strategies and "how to's"
- ❖ Teaching activity ideas
- ❖ Key issues in teaching and learning
- ❖ Tips for teachers
- ❖ Funny moments in teaching
- ❖ Personal development - improving writing and teaching skills through reflection

WebQuests

- ❖ WebQuest Design Patterns by Bernie Dodge - use these for ideas. In particular, consider the parallel diary, historical story, or simulated diary format.

Blog Features and Services

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/services.htm>

There are many blog hosting services and resources. Most are for the general public rather than specifically for educators. It's often free for the basic service, but things like graphics and additional services are an additional charge. When selecting blogging software, ask about the following features: HTML Editor, Search Engine, User interaction, File space, Password access, Customization - look 'n feel, Bookmarking and linking

Dedicated Online Hosting Services

Most people start by joining a free or low-cost blog hosting service. The advantage of this approach is that you don't have to deal with any of the technical issues. The disadvantage is that the service may change without notice.

❖ Education Services

- **Blogmeister** - <http://classblogmeister.com/>
- **Edublogs** – <http://edublogs.org/> and learnerblogs, uniblogs, esblogs
- **SchoolBlogs** (very slow) - <http://www.schoolblogs.com/>

❖ General Services

- **Blogger** (Powered by Google) - <http://www.blogger.com>
- **Bravenet** - <http://www.bravenet.com/>
- **LiveJournal** - <http://www.livejournal.com/>
- **Xanga** - <http://www.xanga.com/>
- **tBlog** - <http://www.tblog.com/>

Visuals for Bloggers

- ❖ **BuzzNet** - <http://www.buzznet.com/>
- ❖ **Flickr** - <http://www.flickr.com/>
- ❖ **Fotki.com** - <http://www.fotki.com/>
- ❖ **Photoblogs** - <http://www.photoblogs.org/>
- ❖ **Photobucket** - <http://www.photobucket.com/>
- ❖ **Hello + Picasa 2** - <http://www.hello.com/>

Audio for Bloggers

- ❖ **Audioblogger** – <http://audioblogger.com>
- ❖ **Audblog** - <http://www.audblog.com/>
- ❖ **Audacity** (for recording sound) - <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>
- ❖ **HandyBits: Voice Mail for Kids** - <http://www.handybits.com/vm4kids.htm>

Blog Software

You may prefer to incorporate blog software into your own website. The advantage is that you have more control over your blog environment. The disadvantage is that you need some technical expertise. The following interfaces work well for blogging.

- ❖ **Blog Breakdown** - <http://www.asymptomatic.net/blogbreakdown.htm>
- ❖ **Manila** - <http://manilanewbies.userland.com/>
- ❖ **Movable Type** - <http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype/>

Blog Lingo

<http://escrapbooking.com/blogging/lingo.htm>

If you want to be “cool”, “hot”, or “whatever”, then you need to know the lingo.

- ❖ **Barking moonbat** - someone on the extreme edge of whatever their -ism happens to be.
- ❖ **Bleg** - to use one's blog to beg for assistance like money. Also known as blegging.
- ❖ **Bloiversary** - the birthday of the establishment of a blog.
- ❖ **Blogger ecosystem** - a chart or list showing the links between blogs.
- ❖ **Blogroach** - someone who infests the comments section of a blog with obnoxious postings. Similar to trolls who disrupt discussions by tricking others into reacting.
- ❖ **Blogroll** - a collection of links on the sidebar of a blog linking to other blogs.
- ❖ **Blogosphere** - the totality of the blogging community. Also known as Blogistan or the blogiverse.
- ❖ **Blogstorm** - when a large amount of information, commentary, or activity erupts in the blogosphere.
- ❖ **Blurker** - a person who reads many blogs but leaves no evidence of themselves behind; a silent observer.
- ❖ **Crud** - when a blogger makes an error in programming that results in visible code appearing on the screen.
- ❖ **Comment Spam** - an unsolicited commercial message automatically posted in a blog's comments area.
- ❖ **Dead-tree Media** - anything made of paper such as newspapers and magazines.
- ❖ **Dooced** (pronounced like deuce) - losing your job for something you wrote in an online blog.
- ❖ **Drive-by Blogging** - the sudden rush of blog entries that fill in the gaps and fulfill the requirements of the weblog portfolio assignment.
- ❖ **Edublog** - an education oriented blog.
- ❖ **Event blog** - a blog set up for a particular event.
- ❖ **Feed Reader** - news aggregators that are extensions to web browsers such as Firefox are used to read RSS feeds from blogs and other sources.
- ❖ **Flame** - to make a hostile remark; usually of a personal nature.
- ❖ **Klogs** - also known as knowledge logs are internal blogs often housed on intranets.
- ❖ **Link rot** - when a list of website links contains many dead links; the best solution is to design your website with a permalink system
- ❖ **Permalink** - a web link that takes you to the permanent location of an article in a blog archive.
- ❖ **Podcasting** - using your MP3 player to listen to the audio from a blog.
- ❖ **Plog** - a project log used to chronicle a project.
- ❖ **RDF** (Resource Description Framework) - a web content syndication format.
- ❖ **RSS** (Rich Site Summary) or (Really Simply Syndication) - a web content syndication format; a feed reader is used to check RSS enabled webpages on behalf of a user and display any updated information. Learn more
- ❖ **Thread** - a side discussion taking place within the comments section of a blog. The term is taken for the forum discussion environment.
- ❖ **Vogging** - video blogging
- ❖ **Xenoblogging** - the work you do that helps other people's blogs

Check <http://eduscapes.com/blogging/lingo.htm> for links to sources

Create a Blog in Blogger

To practice using a blog, go to <http://ecomunicate.blogspot.com/>
<http://ecollaborate.blogspot.com/>

To make a blog, go to <http://www.blogger.com>
Click on CREATE YOUR BLOG NOW.



Fill out the form.
Click I accept. Click CONTINUE.
Use any name.
Be sure to write down your username and password for later use.

Add a title for your blog such as Escrapbooking.
Your address will be something like <http://escrapbooking.blogspot.com>
Click CONTINUE.

Choose a template. Click CONTINUE.

Your blog has been created!

Click START POSTING.
Give a title to your first posting. Then, write in the space provided. You can choose to allow people to add to your posting or not by choosing YES or NO.
If you want ANYONE to be able to post comments, click SETTINGS & COMMENTS, then choose the level of acces.
Click PUBLIC POST when you're ready to save it to your blog.

Click View Blog to see it on your screen. Notice, that it goes to your blog page at your personal address such as <http://escrapbooking.blogspot.com>
If you have time, consider editing your profile.

When you're ready to update your blog, go to <http://www.blogger.com>
Enter your Username and Password.

This will take you to your DASHBOARD. This is an area where you can choose to create a NEW POST or CHANGE SETTINGS.
Click the green cross under NEW POST to add another posting.

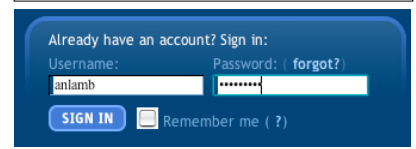
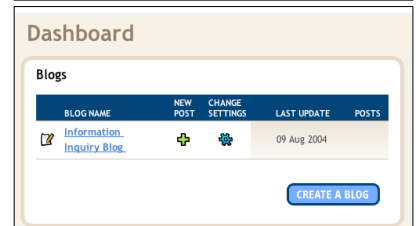
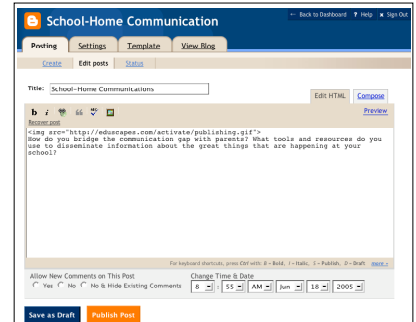
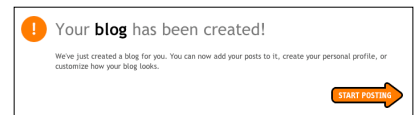
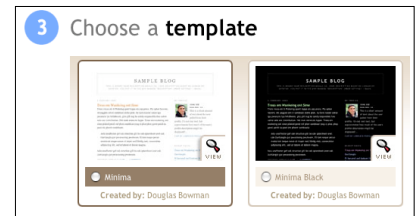
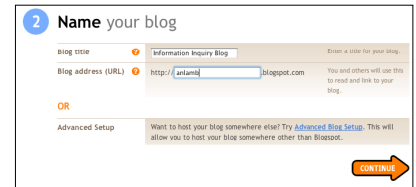
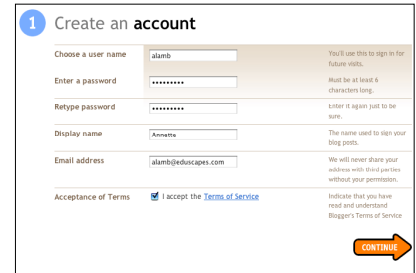
Use this blog for online collaborative projects or personal inquiries.

Be aware that there may be advertising at the top of your blog that you can't control. Also, notice the NEXT BLOG button in the upper right corner, you never know where it will take you.

If you want to add visuals, they can be uploaded to Blogger.
If you want to display a visual already on the web use the following HTML in your text: ``

Or, use additional free webspace at <http://www.flickr.com>

If you want to add a URL, you click the hyperlink took or use the following HTML in your text: `Amazon`



Create a Blogline in Bloglines

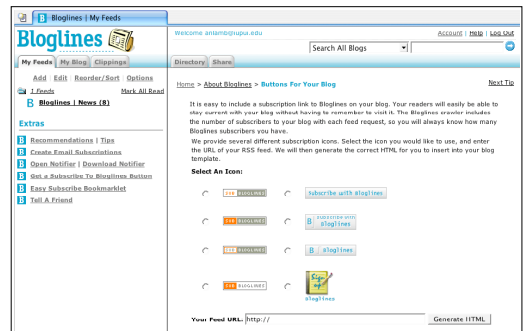
Another alternative to blogger is blog lines.
Go to <http://bloglines.com/>
In the upper right corner, click Register.



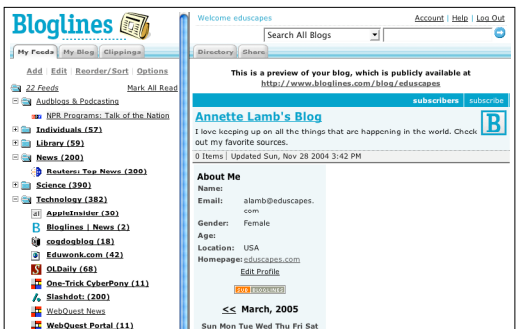
Complete the form.
Be sure to use a real email address.
Click Register.
Be sure to reply to your message to be fully registered.



To add a feed:
Click Add.
Enter the URL of the feed and click subscribe.



To create a blog:
Click My Blog and Edit Account.
Complete the form.



For an example, go to
<http://www.bloglines.com/blog/eduscapes>

Blog Starter Project

Element 1 - Project Blog. Develop a web-based blog to be used as part of a student learning experience. The blog should incorporate specific reading and/or writing activities as well as addressing specific content-related standards. The blog show include:

- ❖ Student or teacher postings.
- ❖ Student or teacher generated comments.
- ❖ Postings containing hyperlinks and visuals.

Element 2 - Evidence-based Project Description in About Section

- ❖ Provide an overview including content area standards, specific learning outcomes, and mini-lesson(s) to facilitate the blog experience.
- ❖ Describe your instructional approach including evidence that this approach is rooted in sound educational practice and research.
- ❖ Describe the learning experience for students including an overview of assignments, activities, and assessments.

Project Self Evaluation.

- ❖ Does the blog function properly?
- ❖ Did the blog contain the required elements?
- ❖ Was the use of blog technology an effective, efficient, and appealing approach to addressing the learning need?
- ❖ Was a unit overview and description of the learning experience provided?
- ❖ Was evidence provided that the project was rooted in sound educational practice and research?
- ❖ Was a report provided with results and conclusions based on the implementation and evaluation?

Project Ideas. Students use a blog to:

- ❖ share insights into each chapter of the book "To Kill A Mockingbird".
- ❖ trace the development of small group research projects focused on ancient civilizations.
- ❖ discuss examples of real-world applications of math.
- ❖ record and interpret the results of a series of science experiments related to insect infestation in the school nature area.
- ❖ conduct and discuss online interviews with local members of the Chamber of Commerce.
- ❖ share interpretations of poetry by Langston Hughes.
- ❖ compare the culture and activities in your small town to a group of students living in a large city.