Blogging for Beginners

Welcome to Blogging for Beginners!

Today you'll learn what a blog is, how to create an account with Wordpress.com, and the basics of creating a blog post.

What is a blog?

"Blog" is short for "weblog." Weblogs began in the mid-90s as online diaries, in which people wrote about and shared aspects of their daily lives. Many people still keep blogs as diaries, but others post a variety of things on their blogs, including:

- Recipes or crafts
- Photos or videos
- Political commentary
- Humor
- Interesting links
- Professional materials (résumés, etc.)
- Reviews (film, books, restaurants, etc.)

Creating a blog can also be a quick way to put information online. For example, many engaged couples put their wedding details and registries on blogs, rather than creating a website from scratch. New parents often use blogs to share baby pictures with their family and friends.

Today we'll only be working with Wordpress.com, but other blogging sites include Blogspot.com, Tumblr.com, and Livejournal.com. All these sites allow you to create a blog for free.
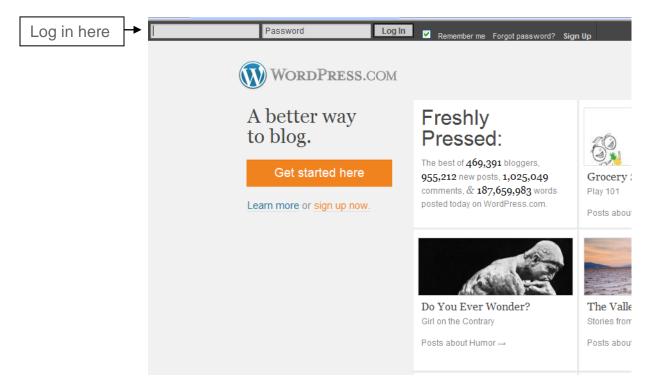
Creating an Account and Logging In

To create a new account:

1. Go to www.wordpress.com.
2. Click the orange button that says "get started here."
3. Fill out the form. Whenever the site asks if you'd like to pay for an upgraded service, you can always select the free version instead.
4. Click "create blog."
5. Check your email within half an hour. When you get an email from Wordpress, click on the link to activate your account.

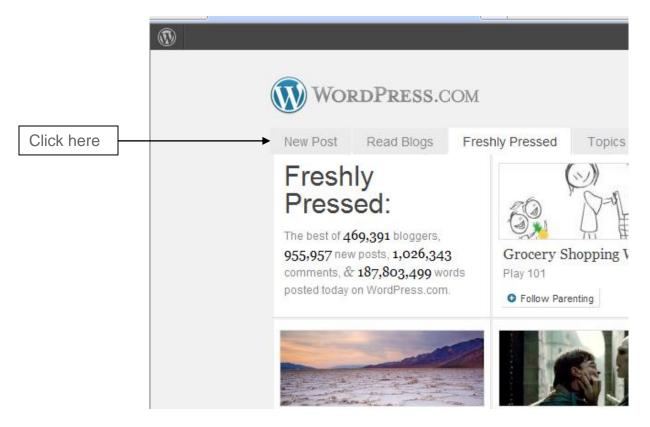Once you create your username and password, **don't forget them!**

To log in to your blog:

1. Go to www.wordpress.com.
2. At the top left corner of the page (inside the black ribbon), enter your username or email address, and then your password. Click "log in."
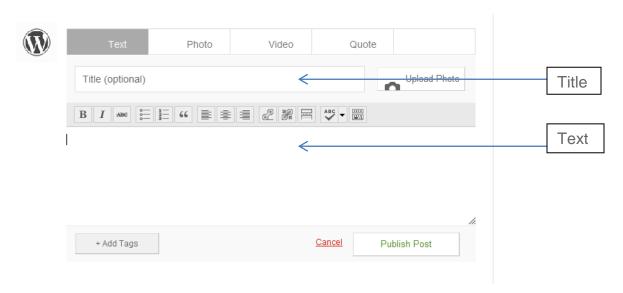
Creating a Post

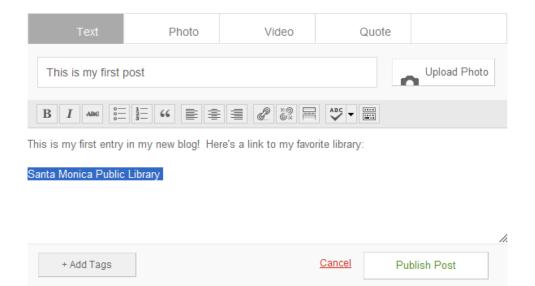Once you log in, you'll be taken to a page that looks like this:

Click here →

To create a new post:
1. Look for the tab that says "New Post" and click on it.
2. On the "New Post" page, enter a title for your post in the thin white bar and the text of your post in the large white space below the menu bar. The title and post can consist of whatever you want—it's your blog!
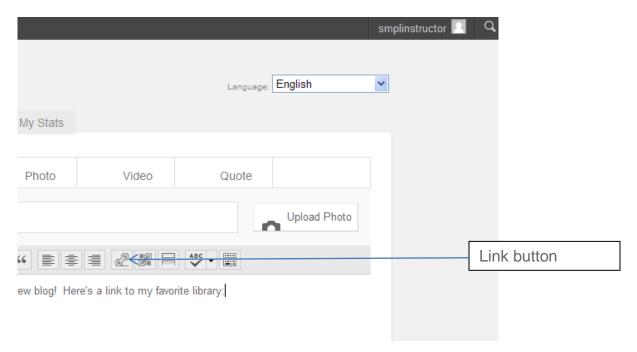

Title
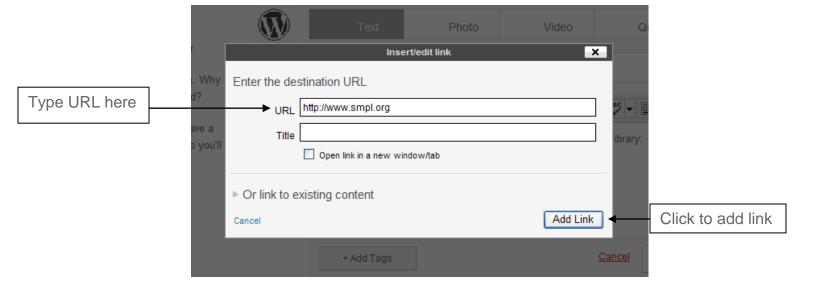
Text

Adding a Link

To add a link to another website to your post, type the text of your link (for example, "click here") and then highlight it.

Look for the picture of the chain above the text of your post (it looks like an infinity symbol) and click on it.
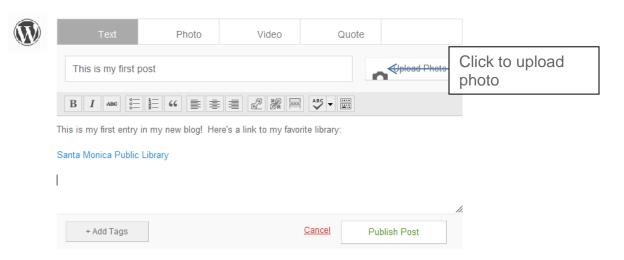
The screen will go dark and a small box will appear. Type the address, or URL, of the website to which you want to link in the box, and click "add link."
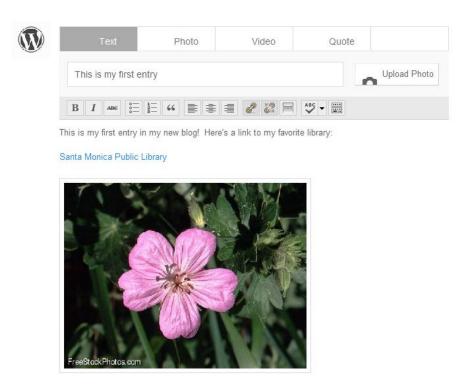

Adding a Picture

To upload a picture from your computer to your blog, click the button that says "upload photo."

Find the picture on your computer and click "open." The file will automatically upload, although the process may take a few minutes. The "upload photo" button will say "uploading…" until your picture appears in the post. You can resize the photo by clicking on it and dragging the corners in and out.

When you're finished, click "publish" to put the post online. Congratulations—you've created your first post!

Click to publish

You can always see how your blog looks by typing in its URL: http://your_username.wordpress.com.

Beyond the Basics

Commenting
Once you've begun posting, readers can leave comments at the bottom of each of your posts. You can also visit other blogs and comment on their posts. To leave a comment, look for the "comment" link at the top or bottom of a post. Click on it, and you should see a small box where you can type and post a comment. If there's no comment link, try clicking on the title of the blog post, then scrolling to the bottom of the post.

Changing your theme
In Wordpress, the "theme" refers to what your blog looks like—*not* what topics you write about). Every blog starts out with a plain, default theme. To choose a new theme, type "http://your_username.wordpress.com/wp-admin" into your browser's address bar. This will take you to your dashboard, where you can perform more advanced functions (along with all the basics, like creating a post).

From your dashboard, hover your mouse over "Appearance" in the left sidebar, and then click on "themes." On the themes page, scroll down to browse through the available themes. Click "activate" to change your theme, or "preview" to see how it would look on your blog. (Hint: if you see another blog with a theme you like, scroll to the bottom of the page and look for the name of the theme.)

Creating multiple blogs
You can create more than one blog using the same account (i.e., one blog for your movie reviews and another for baby pictures). To register another blog, go to your dashboard, and then click on "my blogs" in the left sidebar. You'll see a chart with a list of all your blogs, even if you only have one so far. Look in the bottom right-hand corner of the page, just below the chart, and click on the button that says "register another blog." The instructions will be almost identical to the instructions you followed when you created your first blog.