

Expository Writing -- Writer's Blog



WHAT IS A BLOG?

A blog (from a mash-together of the words *web log*) is a website that posts commentary and news on a particular subject. Very often, blog entries contain images, links, embedded videos, or other media related to the topic, creating an interactive reading experience for the audience. Blogs are maintained and entries are added on a regular basis. Blogs can be personal, technical, descriptive, narrative, persuasive, or – very often – a combination of all of these purposes of writing.

WHY WRITE A BLOG?

There are many reasons to blog, but mostly bloggers seek to entertain, to educate, or to inform their audience. Blogging is also an excellent way to hone writing skills; because bloggers must draft, revise, and edit their entries before posting them, blogging is an excellent way to practice use of the writing process and attention to audience.

Our blogging for this course will support these Common Core Standards for writing:

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

WHAT DO I BLOG ABOUT?

Your blog for this course will focus on issues and topics related to writing. I will provide you with a variety of possible topics on which to write, but you may add additional writing-related entries to your blog at any time.

WHO WILL SEE MY BLOG?

I will be reading and assessing your blogs regularly and other students in our class will be subscribing to and reading your blog. It's up to you to decide who has access to your blog beyond that. You may decide to keep your readership small, or to include your blog in a variety of search engines on the internet. The control is yours!

WHY SHOULD I READ OTHER BLOGS?

Reading other blogs, specifically blogs about writing, has a twofold benefit to you. First, you are able to see examples of how other writers create and maintain their blogs. Reading and studying other blogs may inspire you or assist you in writing your own. Second, following a small number of blogs about writing will help you improve your own writing and knowledge of writing as a skill. You will be able to gather tips, study common writing errors and their solutions, explore various writing outlets, learn about editing and publishing, solidify your understanding of grammar, and react to others' ideas about writing. All of these experiences will make you a better writer.

WHERE CAN I FIND OTHER BLOGS?

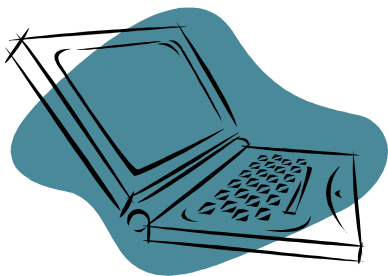
There are a variety of ways to find and follow blogs in the internet. For this class, students will be creating a Google Reader account and subscribing to a small number of writing-themed blogs, including blogs by fellow students. Students will be provided detailed directions on how to use Google Reader.

HOW WILL MY BLOGS BE GRADED?

Blogs will be assessed using the attached rubric. Please study it carefully and consider each measurement before you post your blog entries. All blog grades will be considered summative; at the end of the semester, your lowest three blog scores will be marked formative and dropped from your grade calculation.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Are you ready? You'll first need to think of a title for your blog. Remember that it is writing-focused. Can you come up with something clever? Creative? Once you've established that, consult the detailed directions to create your blog and to begin writing!



Blogs!

When given a prompt for your blog, you can respond in many ways! Consider the options on the following list, but keep in mind that these are not the only ways to blog on a particular topic.

- Write a personal response. Tell a story about an experience you've had that connects to the topic. Be specific and provide a lot of imagery.
- Get multidimensional. Find a link, video, or image that connects to the topic, include it in your blog, and respond to it in a way that reveals your understanding or perspective on the topic.
- Do some research. What do the experts say on this topic? Respond to the research and cite your sources. Use specific quotes and paraphrasing as support.
- Be a teacher. Make your blog a lesson about the topic. What problems generally arise for writers on this particular topic? Generate examples and anticipate what questions "students" may have and answer them.
- Make connections. What connections do you see between the topic and other topics in class? In other classes? In the news? Be specific and analyze the connection; don't just point it out.
- Find examples. Find a specific example (or more than one) of the topic and dissect it. Explain how the topic is presented in the example and evaluate it for effectiveness.
- Get creative. Write a song, rap, short story, or poem about the topic. Pay attention to what you know about plot, character development, symbolism, foreshadowing, imagery, mood, irony, and all of the other literary devices you've studied.
- Quote someone. Find a quote that relates to your topic and examine it or respond to it. Don't just tell what the quote means; rather, analyze it and its relevance to the topic.
- Link to another blog. Find someone else's blog on your topic and respond or react. Be specific in your reaction and include the link in your blog.

Writing Blog – Rubric



Name: _____

Date: _____

Blog Topic: _____

Categories	5	3	1
Content & Accuracy	Covers topic in-depth with details and examples. Subject knowledge is excellent. All blog content is factually accurate.	Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Subject knowledge appears to be good. Most blog content is factually accurate.	Does not include essential knowledge about the topic. No subject knowledge is evident. Most blog content is not factually accurate.
Organization	Writing is coherent and cohesive; transitions incorporated smoothly within paragraphs and at the beginning of paragraphs; no digressions; opening and closing are organized and not repetitive.	Structure is evident; some transitions noticeable; major points are appropriately paragraphed; opening and closing are organized, but may be repetitive; minor digressions evident.	Confusion prevails; no attempt at structure is made; writing is one long paragraph, or a series of unrelated sentences.
Multimedia	Links, images, embedded videos, or other multimedia elements serve to explore the topic in depth or provide an alternative perspective on the topic. All multimedia aspects work correctly. Multimedia elements are incorporated in a way that creates coherence.	Links, images, embedded videos, or other multimedia elements are clearly related to the topic, but may not necessarily provide depth or an alternative perspective. All multimedia aspects work correctly. Multimedia elements are added at the end or in a way that does not create coherence.	Links, images, embedded videos, or other multimedia elements are unrelated to the topic. Multimedia aspects do not work correctly. No multimedia elements present.
Attention to Audience	Product shows a large amount of original thought. Ideas are creative, inventive, and reveal a distinct perspective on the topic. Writing has personality. Tone is consistently appropriate for subject matter. Clear effort is made to engage the audience with high-interest information and style.	Product shows some original thought. Ideas reveal a perspective on the topic, but writing lacks a distinct personality. Tone is inconsistently appropriate for subject matter. Some effort is made to engage the audience with high-interest information and style.	Product shows minimal or no original thought. Ideas reveal no perspective on the topic topic, or writing lacks a distinct personality. Tone is not appropriate for subject matter. No effort is made to engage the audience with high-interest information or style.
Citation	All outside sources or research are appropriately cited with MLA format.	All outside sources or research are cited with MLA format. One or two format errors, but no citation errors.	Outside sources or research is not cited with MLA format. More than two format errors.
Grammar & Mechanics	Sentences are complete, well-constructed, and of varied structure; no spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors.	Most sentences are complete, well-constructed, and demonstrate some variety; few spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors exist, but do not interfere with understanding the writing.	Sentences are incomplete; many spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors; errors interfere with understanding the writing.

Content _____
 Organization _____
 Multimedia _____
 Attention to Audience _____
 Citation _____
 Frequency _____
 Grammar & Mechanics _____
 Total _____/30

Comments:

How to Use Google Reader

Google Reader is a tool to organize and follow your subscriptions to blogs and feeds. For the purposes of this class, you'll be subscribing to and following a small number of writing-themed blogs. You may find, however, that you are soon using Google Reader to follow blogs on your favorite topics or hobbies!

1. From your email inbox, in the upper-left corner, click on "more" and then "even more."
2. Scroll down and click on "Reader."
3. This is your Google Reader page, a central location from which you can follow and read all of the blogs and feeds you enjoy.
4. You can add a subscription in two ways.
 - a. In the upper-left corner, click on "Add a Subscription," then type or paste in the url of the blog or feed, then click "add."
 - b. Go to your favorite blog or feed and look for the RSS feed icon. Click it and follow the prompts to add the blog to your reader.



How do I search for blogs to follow?

To search for blogs on a particular theme or topic, try one of the following blog search engines:

- ☐ <http://blogsearch.google.com/>
- ☐ <http://technorati.com/>
- ☐ <http://www.blog-search.com/>
- ☐ Or, try other search engines like Yahoo! or Bing.

For this class, you should select and subscribe to **at least three** writing-themed blogs. You should also subscribe to **at least three** classmates' blogs.

Consider these potential search terms (all followed by "blog"):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> College writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Essay writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Favorite author's name |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel writing | <input type="checkbox"/> A genre of literature (science fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-fiction writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Blogging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poetry writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Screenplay writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Great books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing tips | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Journal writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editing | <input type="checkbox"/> Workplace writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing style | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing problems | |

