

Tutorial: Making Your Own Blog

One way to express yourself, showcase your creativity, or simply write down your thoughts is through a blog. Blogger is a simple and powerful tool that is easy to use and dependable. This tutorial will guide you through the process of making your own blog.

I. Making a Google Account

In order to make a blog using Blogger, you must first have a Google (or Gmail) account. If you already have one, make sure you are signed in, then skip to step II below.

1. In your internet browser, go to www.google.com.
2. Click the “Sign In” button in the upper-right corner of the web page.
3. Click “Create an account” below the sign-in box.
4. Fill out the form to make your account, following the directions given by Google.
5. When you are finished, ensure you are signed in by checking the upper-right corner of the Google homepage. If there is no “Sign In” button, then you are signed in and ready to make your blog.

II. Creating a New Blog

1. Go to www.blogger.com.
2. If this is your first time using Blogger, Google will ask how you want to be seen when you post on your own or others’ blogs. You can choose to use your Google+ account or create a limited Blogger profile. Unless you want to have an alias when posting, it is simplest just to keep your Google account information. Click “Continue to Blogger.”
3. Click “New Blog.” This will open a window asking you to come up with a title for your blog, as well as an address ending in “.blogspot.com” so people can find it. These can be changed later, so don’t worry if you end up changing your mind on these details. Fill in the information as directed and click “Create blog!”

4. Once created, the blog will appear in a list form at the top of your page next to “<your name>’s Blogs.” This page is called the *Dashboard*, and will be used to regulate all of the blogs you make. Congratulations, you now have a blog!

III. Exploring Blogger

Your blog is created, but it is completely blank and featureless. You can see what the default blog looks like by clicking “View Blog,” and you could even start writing on it now by clicking the orange pencil button, but let’s see what features Blogger has to help you spice things up.

1. Click the name of your blog to bring up your blog overview. This is the place where you can check your blog’s statistics, edit posts, and otherwise maintain your blog. The following is a simple description of the tabs you see at the left.
 - a. **Overview** – The main menu. Shows you how many pageviews you’ve had the past few days, any news from Blogger, and any updates that have come since the last time you logged in.
 - b. **Posts** – Where all the blog posts you have written are. You can edit them if needed. The page is organized similarly to your Gmail account.
 - c. **Pages** – Shows any Pages you might have, which are permanent web pages aside from blog posts.
 - d. **Comments** – Shows comments others have left on your blog. You can delete them, or edit your preferences, choosing whether Blogger asks you for permission before publishing them.
 - e. **Google+** – Allows you to connect the blog to your Google+ account. If connected, your posts will appear in your Google+ news feed for others to see.
 - f. **Stats** – Displays statistics about pageviews, popularity, traffic sources (such as Internet searches), and where in the world your blog is being accessed from.

- g. **Earnings** – Allows you to have ads displayed on your blog so that you earn revenue when more people access it.
- h. **Layout** – See “Laying Out Your Blog” below.
- i. **Template** – See “Customizing Your Blog” below.
- j. **Settings** – Lets you change the title or address of your blog, add a description, change privacy settings, and set permission rules.

IV. Laying Out Your Blog

Now that you know your way around, it's time to organize the features of your blog.

1. Click the “Layout” button.
2. Here you can see the way your blog is set up and proportioned. Each white box represents a space allotted to an aspect of your blog. If the box has a gray sidebar on it, you can click and drag it to a different location. You can also click the word “Edit” in the corner of a box to change or delete it.
3. To add a new feature to your blog, click “Add a Gadget” on any dotted-line box. This will add a gadget to the location where the box is on your blog.
4. Gadgets are blog elements that can help your viewers navigate or experience your blog more easily. There are many gadgets made by both Blogger and many online users, and you are free to choose any of these, depending on the purpose and audience of your blog. To choose a gadget, click the blue “+” sign next to the one you want and follow the directions afterward.
5. Playing around with these elements and their positions will help you decide how best to make your blog organized and accessible. You can click the “Preview” button at any time to see how your blog will actually look.

V. Customizing Your Blog

Finally, it's time to make your blog stand out.

1. Go back to the dashboard and click “Template,” then “Customize.”
2. Here on the Templates tab, you can choose a preset for your blog’s look. Each preset has several different color settings to choose from as well.
3. If you want to further customize your blog’s appearance, try the other tabs.
 - a. **Background** – The image behind your blog text and windows. You can choose a preset, or upload an image from your computer. You can also choose the image’s alignment, whether it will be tiled or centered, and whether the image will scroll with the page.
 - b. **Adjust widths** – Adjusts the width of your individual blog elements, including the area where you post.
 - c. **Layout** – Contains different presets for layouts (See “Laying out Your Blog” above).
 - d. **Advanced** – Contains advanced functions, such as changing the font or color of individual blog elements.

Congratulations! You now have your own online blog. As you experiment more with Blogger’s features, your blog will evolve and become more and more suited to your personality. So what are you waiting for? Click the orange pencil button and get posting!