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# Blogging with Blackboard & WordPress

## Quick Start Guide

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### Welcome

The purpose of this guide is to familiarize you with the general features of two blogging platforms: Blackboard and WordPress, and to walk you through the process of creating and using a blog in each.

While there are some differences between them, both Blackboard and WordPress are versatile, easy to use, and will allow your students to share thoughts and questions any time they want.

For ideas on how to incorporate blogs into your curriculum, please contact the Eberly Center:

eberly-ctr@andrew.cmu.edu  
412-268-2896

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## Choosing Between Blackboard & WordPress

### Blackboard

### WordPress

#### Appearance

The appearance of the blog is fixed.

You choose how your blog appears.

#### Notifications

You must log in to check for replies.

You can be notified of replies via email.

#### Media

You can add media to blog posts.

You can add media to blog posts.

#### Privacy

You cannot adjust privacy settings.

You can adjust privacy settings.

#### Visibility

Your blog is private.

Your blog is public by default.

#### Participation

Students are enrolled automatically via the course roster.

You must invite your students via email.

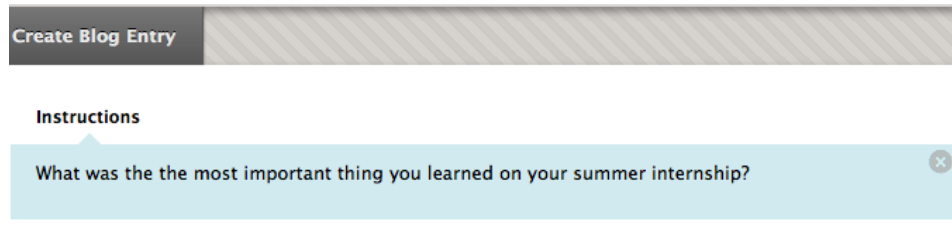
# Blogging in Blackboard

## A. Creating a Blog in Blackboard

This section describes how to create a new blog in Blackboard, and will guide you through some of the basic choices you have when setting up a blog. In the steps that follow, we will be creating an example blog that looks like this:

What a new blog looks like

Note: in Blackboard, you must first make a Blog before you can post an Entry to it. To post a Blog Entry, see p. 4.

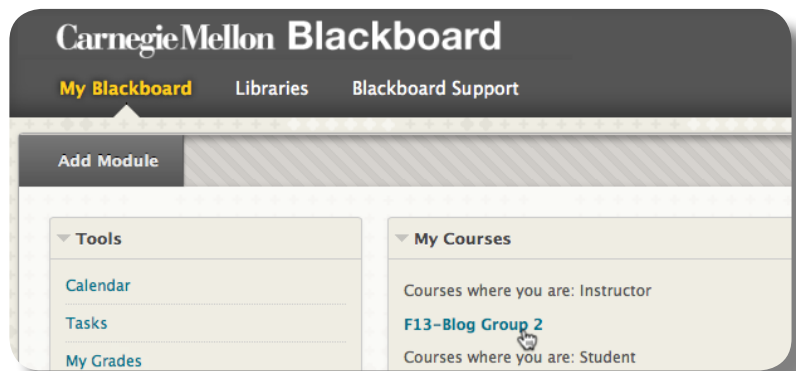


- 1 Open your web browser and navigate to [cmu.edu/blackboard](http://cmu.edu/blackboard).** Locate the “Login” button and click to login. You will be taken to CMU’s Web Login page.

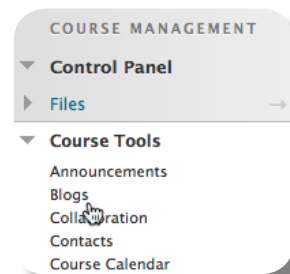


- 2 Enter your AndrewID and password. Click “Login.”** You will be taken to your Blackboard homepage.

- 3 Locate the “My Courses” module and click the name of the course you wish to create a blog for.** You will be taken to the course’s homepage. In these instructions, we will create a new blog for the course F13-Blog Group 2.



- 4 Locate the Course Management pane on the left of the screen and click “Course Tools.”** In the dropdown menu, click “Blogs” to open Blackboard’s “Blogs” page. From here, you will be able to create, edit, and manage your course’s blogs.



- 5 Click the “Create Blog” button.** You will be taken to the “Create Blog” page.



# Blogging in Blackboard

## 6 The “Create Blog” page allows you to control the blog’s various attributes, such as its name and any instructions you wish to provide to students.

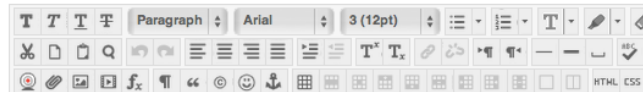
**6.1** Enter a name for your blog and provide any instructions your students might need for the assignment. In our example, we will create a blog called “Summer Internship Reflection.” Under “Instructions,” we ask students about their summer internship.

\* Indicates a required field.

### 1. Blog Information

\* Name

Instructions



What was the the most important thing you learned on your summer internship?

Path: p

**6.2** “Blog Availability” determines if students can see the blog. Choose “Yes” to make the blog immediately available to your students, “No” to keep it hidden. We want our example blog available immediately, so we select “Yes.”

**6.3** To limit a blog’s availability to students to a certain length of time, fill in this section. Our example has no date or time restrictions, so we leave it blank.

### 2. Blog Availability

Blog Availability  Yes  No

### 3. Blog Date and Time Restrictions

Limit Availability  Display After     
 Display Until

**6.4** Choose your blog’s participants and set their posting privileges. “Individual to All Students” allows only the blog’s creator (e.g., the instructor or TA) to post entries. “Course” allows all of your students to post entries and comment on the blog. “Allow Anonymous Entries and Comments” enables students to post anonymously.

**6.5** Blackboard indexes all blog entries posted throughout the semester. Choose between “Weekly” or “Monthly” indexing. For this example, we have selected “Weekly.”

### 4. Blog Participation

Blog Type  Individual to All Students  Course  
 Allow Anonymous Entries and Comments

For this example, we would like anyone enrolled in the course to post, so we have selected “Course.” We will also leave “Allow Anonymous...” unchecked.

### 5. Blog Settings

Index Entries  Monthly  Weekly  
 Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries  
 Allow Users to Delete Comments

**6.6** Will students be graded on this blog? Choose “Grade: Points possible” if you want to grade students’ entries. Otherwise, choose “No grading.” No entries in our example will be graded.

**6.7** When you are finished, click “Submit.” Congratulations! You have created your course blog!

### 6. Grade Settings

Grade Blog  No grading  
 Grade : Points possible :

### 7. Submit

Cancel

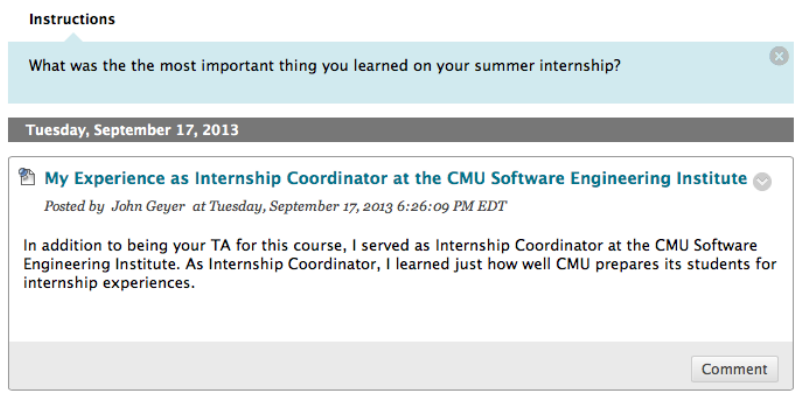
Submit

# Blogging in Blackboard

## B. Creating a Blog Entry in Blackboard

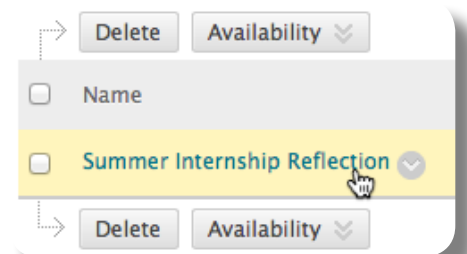
This section describes how to create a blog entry on Blackboard. In the steps that follow, we will be creating an example blog entry that looks like this:

What a new Blog Entry looks like



**1** Locate the Course Management pane on the left of the screen and click **“Course Tools.”** From the list of tools, select **“Blogs.”** You will be taken to a list of the blogs you have created

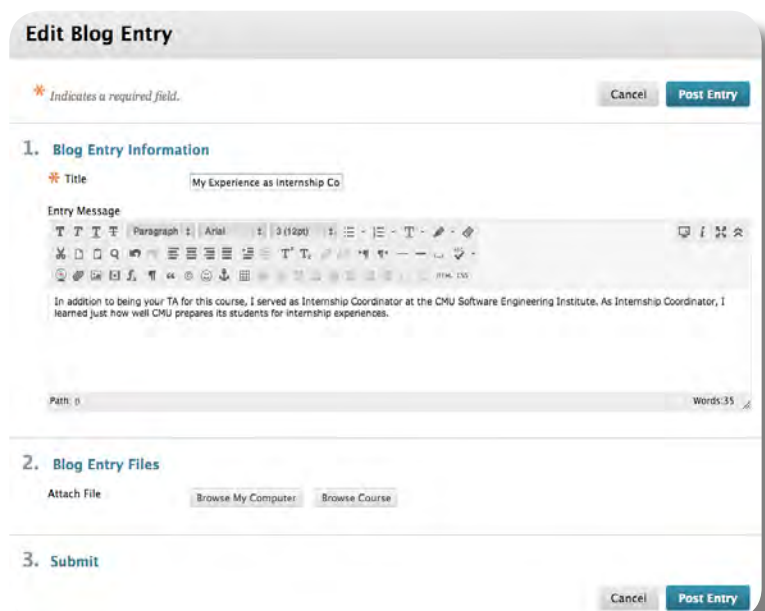
**2** From your list of available blogs, select the blog where you want to create a **Blog Entry.** For this example, we will create a new blog entry under **“Summer Internship Reflection.”**



**3** Click the **“Create Blog Entry”** button on the left of the screen. This will take you to the Blog Entry editor.

**4** Title your **Blog Entry** in the **“Title”** field. For this example, we will title our Entry **“My Experience as Internship Coordinator at the CMU Software Engineering Institute.”**

**5** Add content to your **Blog Entry** in the **“Entry Message”** field. Here, you can format text just as you would in a word processor (adjustable typeface, font size, alignment, etc.). For this example, we will keep the default settings.



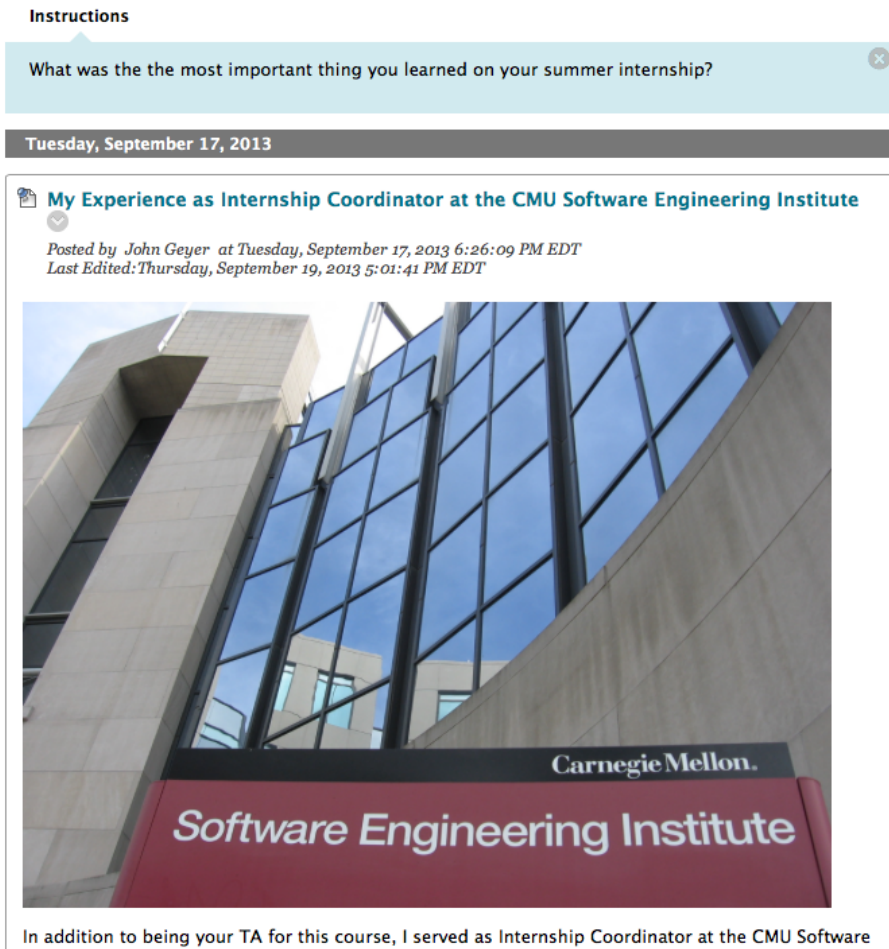
# Blogging in Blackboard

- 6** If you are ready to post your **Blog Entry**, click **“Post Entry.”** If you want to leave and return to your Blog Entry later, click **“Save Entry as Draft.”** In this example, we will go ahead and post it. Congratulations! You have successfully created a Blog Entry!

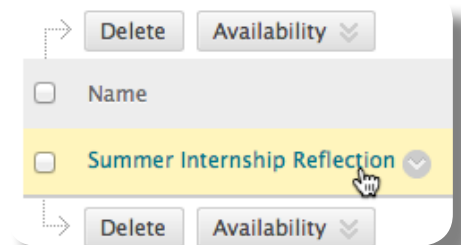
## C. Adding Media to a Blog Entry in Blackboard

This section describes how to add media, including photos and videos, to a Blog Entry in Blackboard. We will be adding a photo to the Blog Entry we created in the previous section:


What a posted Blog Entry with a photo looks like




- 1** Locate the **Course Management** pane on the left of the screen and click **“Course Tools.”** From the list of tools, select **“Blogs.”** You will be taken to a list of the blogs you have created.
- 2** Select the **blog that contains the entry where you wish to add media.** In this example, we will be updating the entry we created for the blog **“Summer Internship Reflection.”**
- 3** Locate the **entry where you wish to add media.** For this example, we will be adding a photo to our previous entry called **“My Experience as Internship Coordinator at the CMU Software Engineering Institute.”**

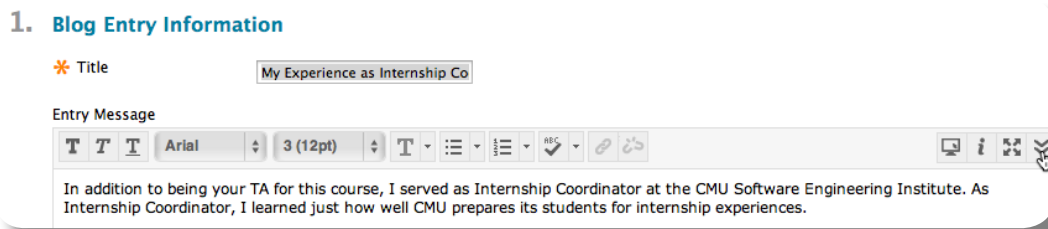




# Blogging in Blackboard

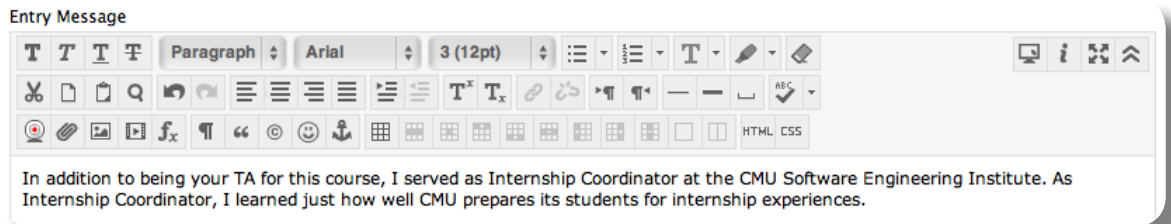
- 4** Click the  icon beneath the title of the **Blog Entry** to reveal a dropdown menu. From the available options, click “Edit.” You will be taken to the Blog Entry editor.



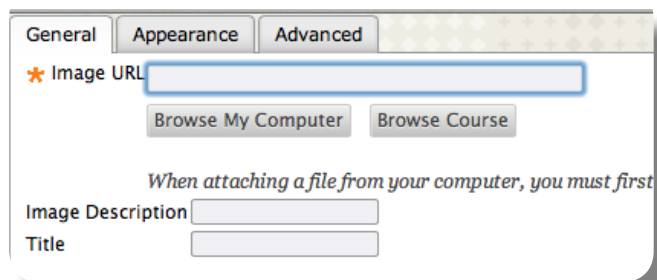
- 5** Locate the  button on the far right end of the “**Blog Entry Information**” toolbar. This will reveal an expanded menu we can use to edit blog content.



- 6** To add a picture to the blog entry, locate and select the  icon. To add a video to the blog entry, locate and select the  icon. For this example, we will add a photo of the Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute above the text we have already written. A pop-up window will appear.

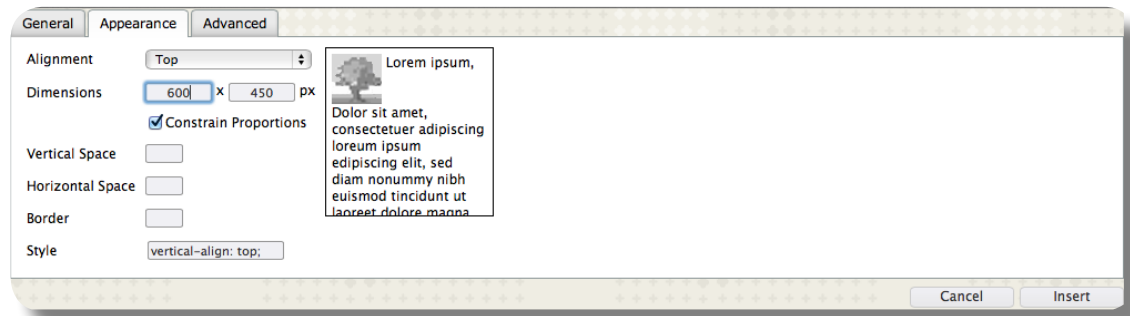


- 7** Click “**Browse My Computer**” and navigate to the location of the media you wish to insert. When you have located the file, click to highlight it and then click “Choose.” For this example, we are selecting a photo entitled “CMU Software Engineering Institute” that has been saved to the desktop.



# Blogging in Blackboard

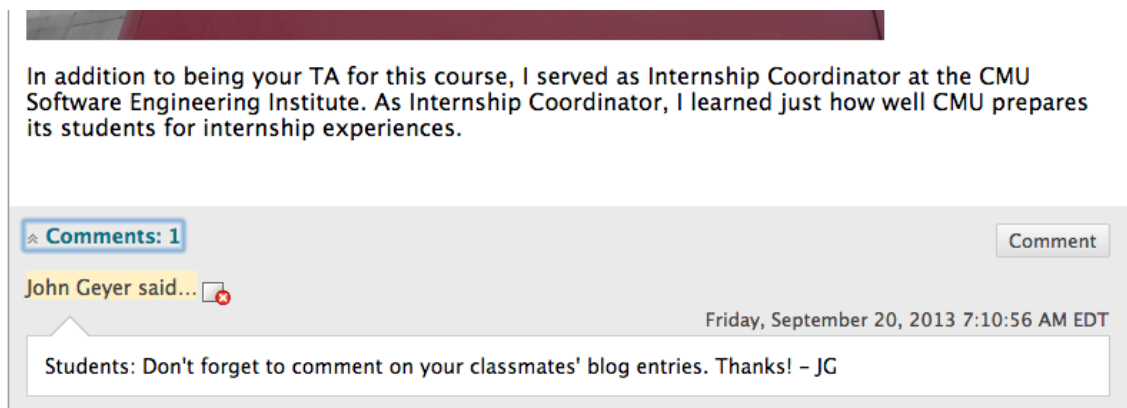
- 8 **Click the “Appearance” tab and adjust your media as necessary.** If you do not adjust this setting, the media will be inserted in its original dimensions at the location of your cursor in the Blog Entry editor. In this example, we will adjust our photo by setting Alignment to “Top” and the Dimensions to 600 x 450 px.



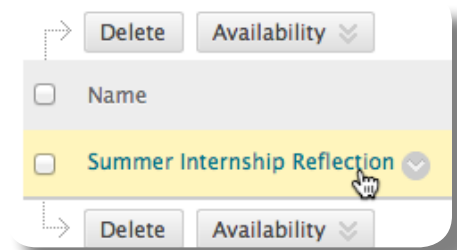
- 9 **When finished adjusting, click “Insert” to place the media into your Blog Entry.** You will be returned to the Blog Entry editor, which will preview how the media will finally appear.
- 10 **If you are satisfied with your file’s appearance, click “Post Entry.”** Congratulations! You have successfully added media to your blog entry!

## D. Commenting on a Blog Entry in Blackboard

This section describes how to add a comment to an Entry in Blackboard. In the steps that follow, we will be adding a photo to the blog entry we created in Section C (“Adding Media to a Blog Entry in Blackboard”) of this guide:



- 1 **Locate the Course Management pane on the left of the screen and click “Course Tools.” From the list of tools, select “Blogs.”** You will be taken to a list of the blogs you have created.
- 2 **Select the blog that contains the Entry you wish to comment on.** For this example, we will be adding a comment to the blog “Summer Internship Reflection.”

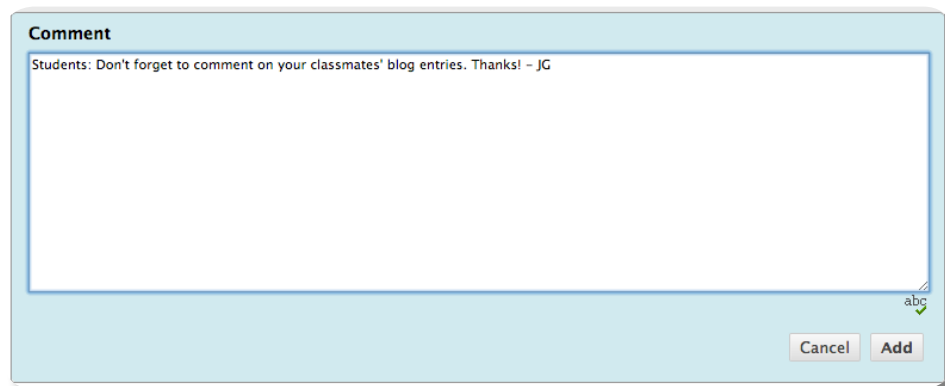
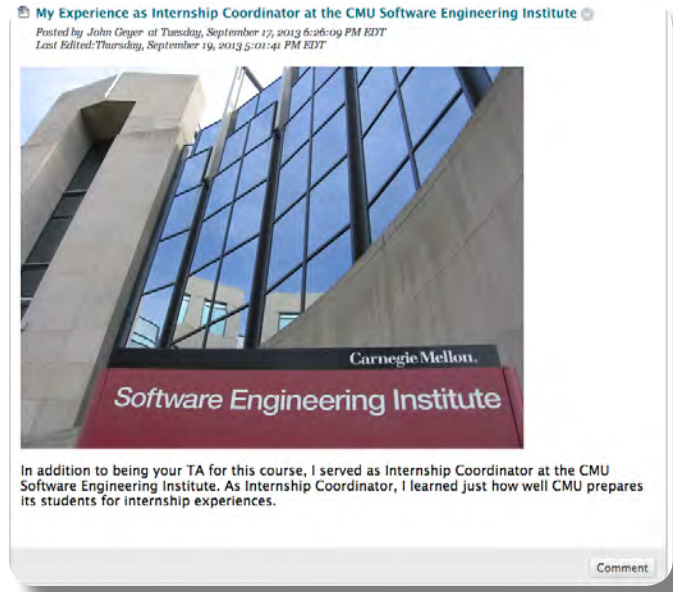


# Blogging in Blackboard

**3 Locate the Entry where you wish to add a comment.** For this example, we will comment on our “My Experience as Internship Coordinator at the CMU Software Engineering Institute” Blog Entry.

**4 Click the “Comment” button at the lower righthand corner of the Blog Entry.** You will be taken to the comment editor.

**5 Type your comment into the comment editor.** For this example, we will add a reminder to students to comment on their classmates’ blog entries.



**6 Click the add “Add” button located at the lower righthand corner of the comment editor.** You will be returned to the blog entry.

**7 To view your comment, click the “Comments” link located at the lower lefthand corner of the blog entry.** Congratulations! You have successfully added a comment to a blog entry!

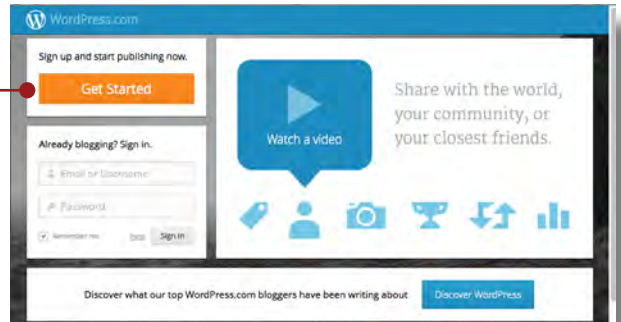


# Blogging in WordPress

## A. Sign Up for a Free WordPress Account

This section describes how to create an account and a free blog in WordPress, and will guide you through some of the basic choices you have when setting up a blog.

**1** Open your web browser and navigate to **wordpress.com**. Click the “Get Started” button in the browser window to setup your account and blog. You will be taken to a page where you will fill out a form to create your account.



**2** Enter the requested information.

### Email Address

note: WordPress will send an email to this address in the next step

### Username

### Password

### Blog Address

Get started with WordPress.com by filling out this simple form:

E-mail Address	We'll send you an email to activate your account, so please triple-check that you've typed it correctly.
Username	Your username should be a minimum of four characters and can only include lowercase letters and numbers.
Password	Great passwords use upper and lower case characters, numbers, and symbols like !@#%&. <a href="#">Generate strong password</a>
Blog Address	Choose an address for your blog. You can change the WordPress.com address later. If you don't want a blog you can <a href="#">signup for just a username</a> .

**3** In the “Thinking about upgrading?” section, Click “Create Blog” to create your account.

You will be taken to a page telling you to check your email.



Thinking about upgrading?

Save some cash with WordPress.com Premium.

Free Blog	✓	✓
Domain Name & Mapping	✗	✓
10GB Space Upgrade	✗	✓
No Ads	✗	✓
Custom Design	✗	✓
VideoPress	✗	✓
Free		\$99.00 instead of \$166.00 per year

You agree to the fascinating [terms of service](#) by submitting this form.

[Create Blog](#) [Upgrade](#)

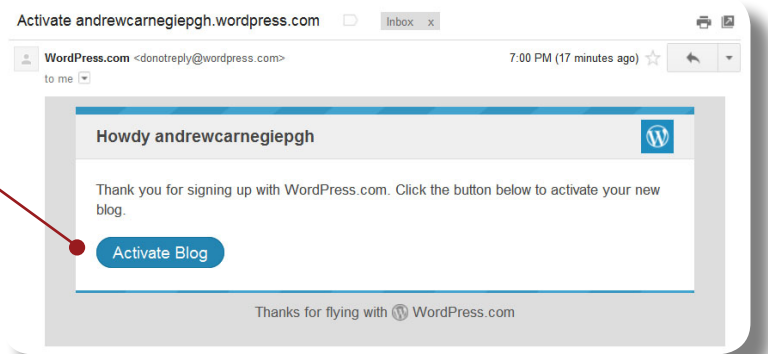
Save 41%!

# Blogging in WordPress

## B. Create a Free Blog in WordPress

Once you join WordPress through the activation email, you can begin setting up the actual blog.

- 4 Check your email account and open the email from WordPress.com.** Click “Activate Blog” in the email. You will be taken to a page where you will fill out a form to create your blog.



- 5 Fill in the information requested on the form.**

**Blog Title**

**Tagline (optional)**

**Language**

A screenshot of the WordPress "Set up your blog" form. The form is titled "Set up your blog" and is labeled "Step 1". It contains three input fields: "Blog Title" with the text "Andrew Carnegie In Pittsburgh", "Tagline (optional)" with the text "forming the steel city", and "Language" with a dropdown menu set to "en - English". Below the language dropdown, there is a small text prompt: "Which language will you be blogging in?". A blue "Next Step" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

- 6 Click “Next Step” and select a free theme.** A theme is a combination of default settings for the layout, color, typeface, etc. You have an option to customize some of this later, but to make it easier on you, select a free theme for your blog. When you have made your selection, click on that theme. This will bring you to a page where you can customize your theme.

- 7 These instructions ignore the next 3 pages, where you have the option to customize your theme, connect to social media, and create your first post.** For now, click “Next Step” twice to advance. Click “Finish” on the “Create your first post” page to create your blog.

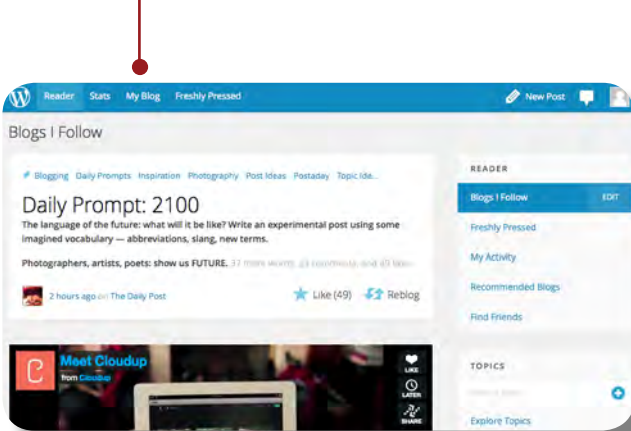
**Yay! Your free WordPress account and blog are now set up.  
Now we can adjust a few more final settings and get posting.**

# Blogging in WordPress

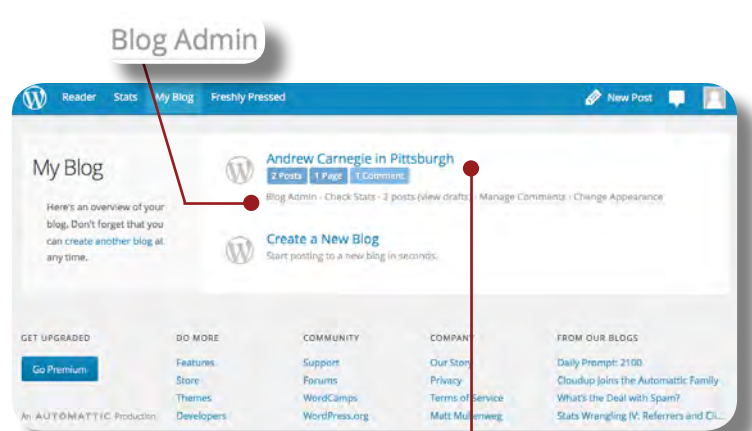
## C. How to Get to a Blog's Dashboard after Logging In

Each WordPress blog has its own Dashboard (you can create multiple blogs under your free WordPress account). From your blog's Dashboard, you can set your blog's privacy (your blog's visibility to search engines), invite new users, and control user privileges.

**1** Once you log in, you'll be taken to the Reader page. Click "My Blog" at the top of the screen.



**2** At the My Blog page, click "Blog Admin" below your blog's name to get to its Dashboard.



**QuikTip:** Click your blog's name to go straight to its homepage.

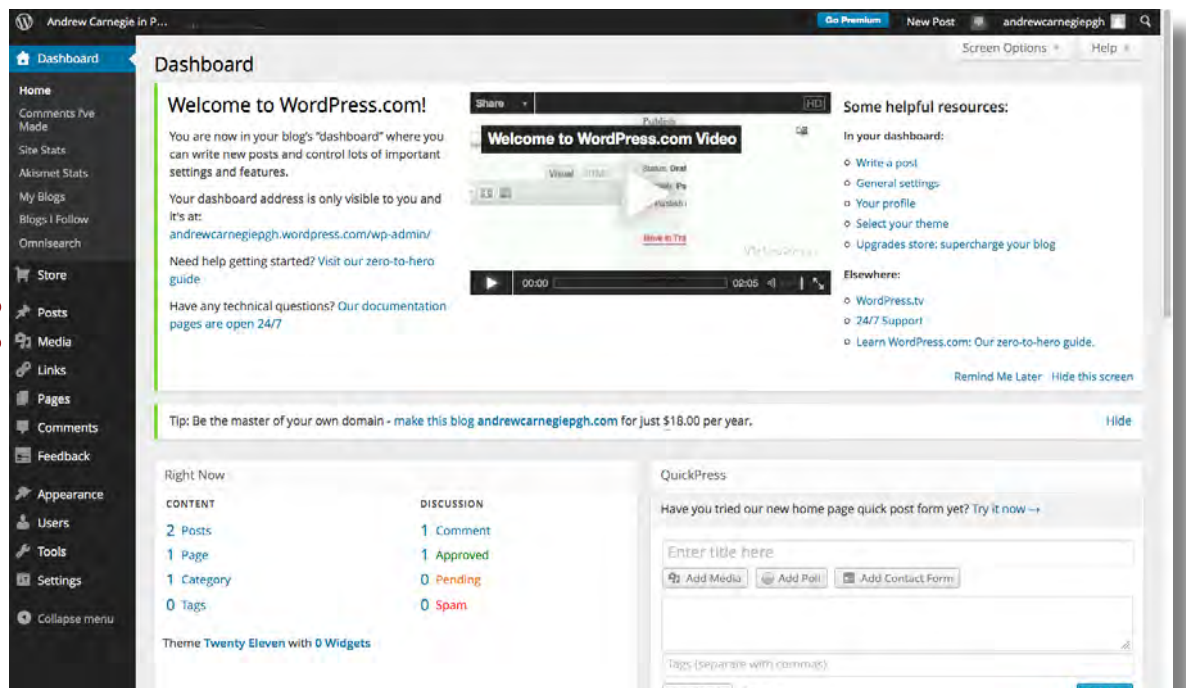
**3** Welcome to your blog's Dashboard. We are primarily concerned with some items in the sidebar: Posts, Media, Users, and Settings. We explore these further in later sections.

**Posts** —

**Media** —

**Users** —

**Settings** —



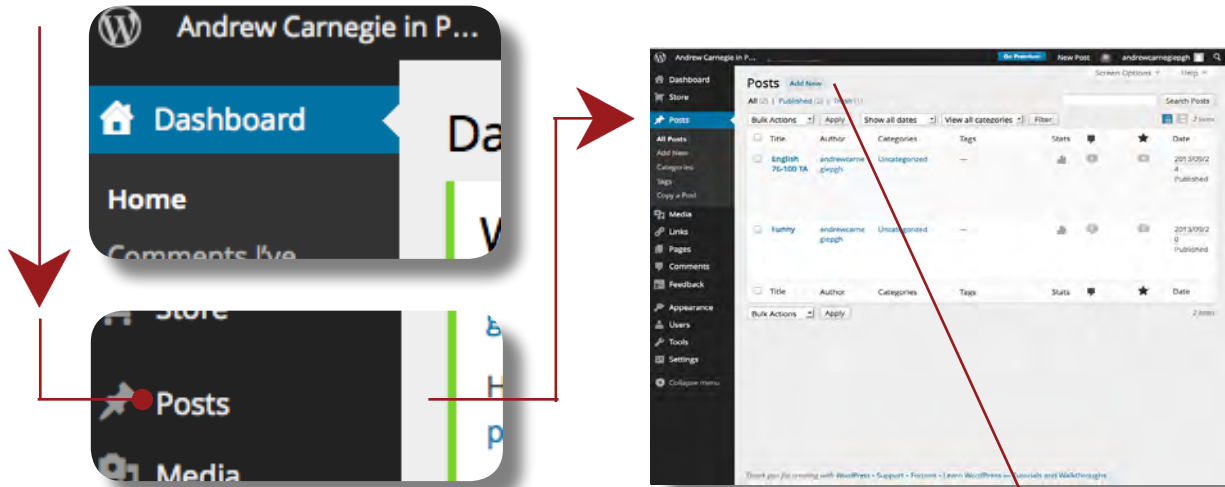
# Blogging in WordPress

## D. Post to Your WordPress Blog

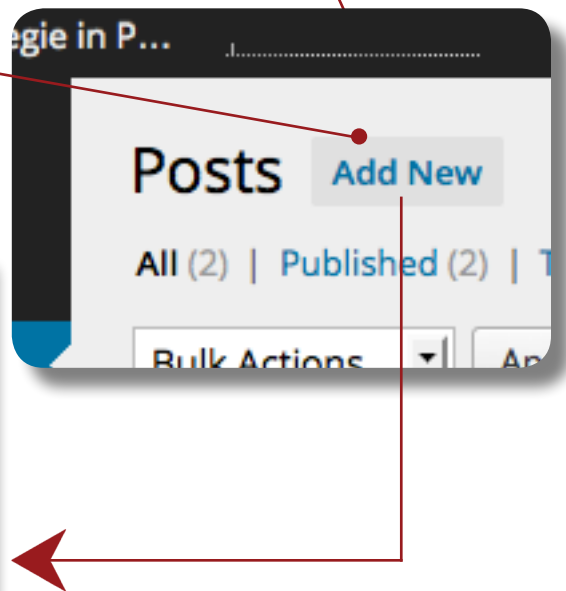
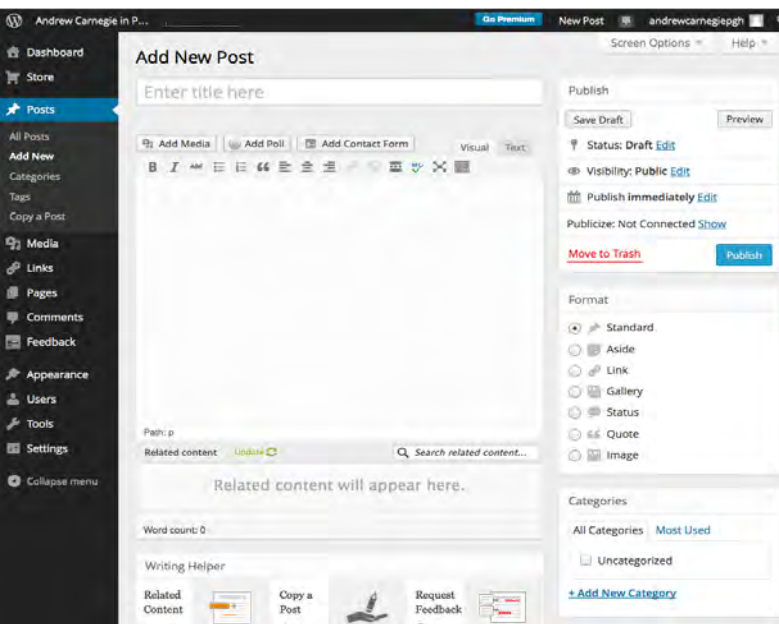
Let's post to our WordPress blog.

QuikTip: Need help finding the Dashboard? Visit p. 11, "How to Get to a Blog's Dashboard after Logging In"

**1** In your blog's Dashboard sidebar, click "Posts." You will be taken to the Posts page.



**2** Click "Add New" at the top of the page. You will be taken to the Add New Post page.

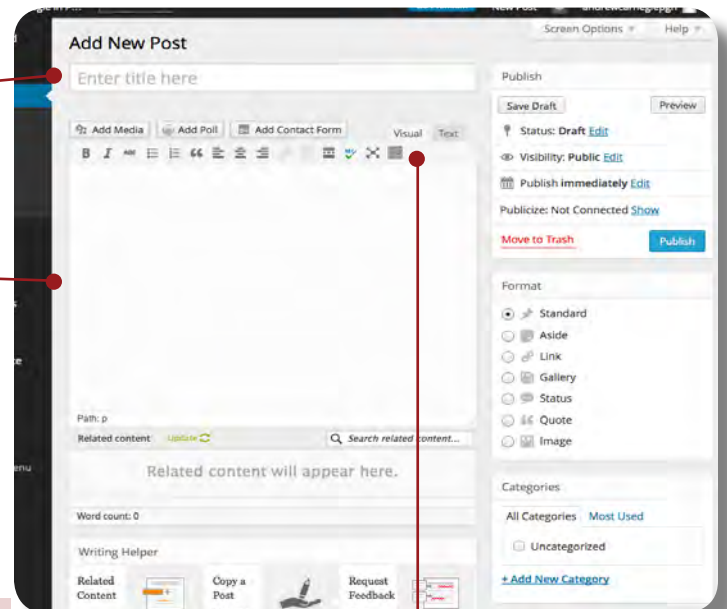


# Blogging in WordPress

**3** Type your title for your blog post in the “Title” field.

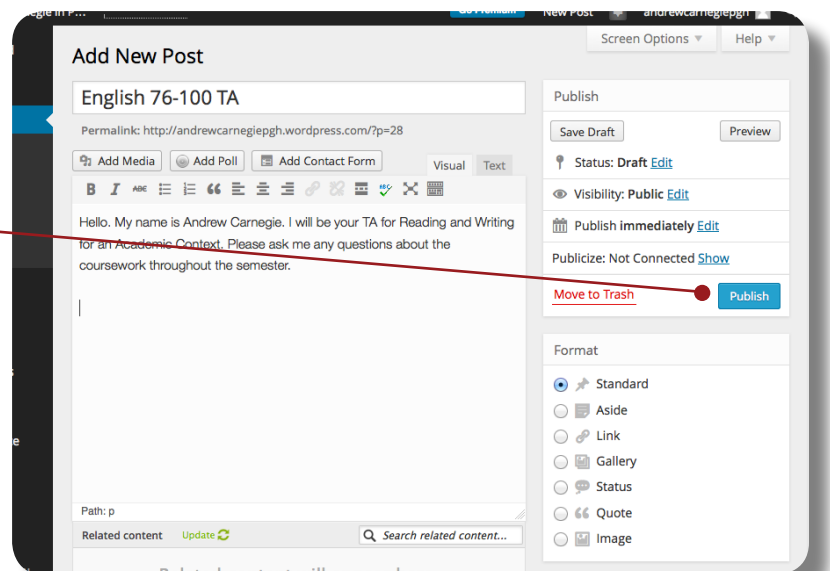
**4** Type your post in the next empty field. You have the option to format the text by using the menu above this field. It will let you adjust the font, the alignment, add bullets, add numbers, etc.

QuikTip: To expand a list of advanced word processing options, click the “Kitchen Sink” icon.



**5** If text is all you want in this post, click “Publish” on the right-hand side to finish.

Publish



**Yay!** The body text of your blog post is now ready to go. Want to embed a picture or video? Proceed to the next section.

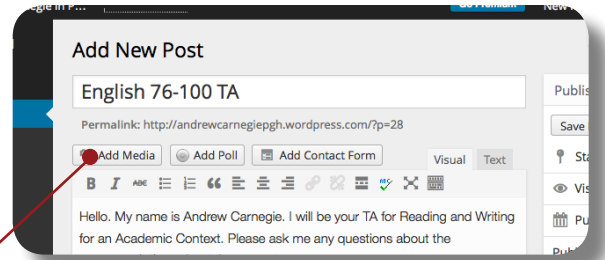
# Blogging in WordPress

## E. Add Media to a WordPress Post

This section describes how to add photos and embed YouTube videos to a WordPress blog post.

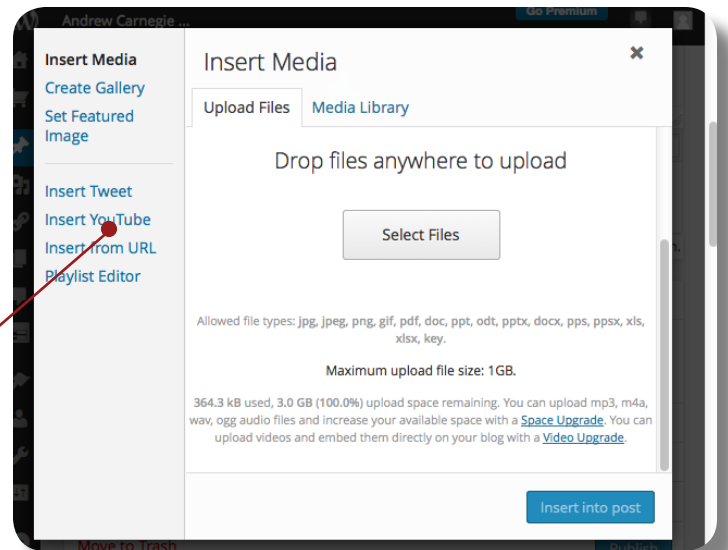
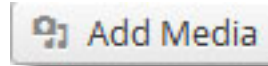
### Add a Photo

**1** At the Add New Post page, click "Add Media."

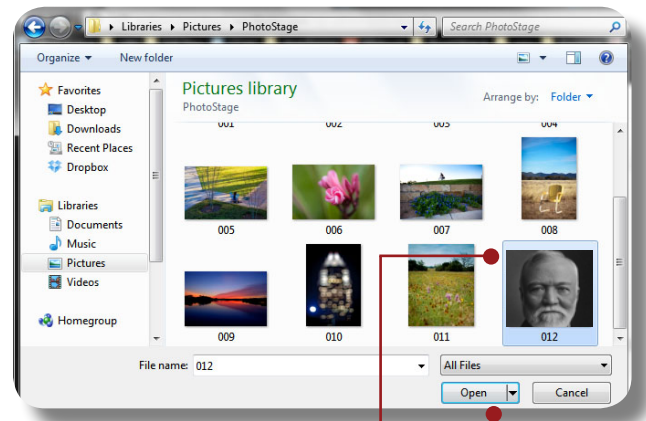


QuikTip: Need help finding the Add New Post page? Visit p. 12, "Post to a WordPress Blog"

A box will pop up on your screen. This is your Media Library. Any file you add to a post must be in the Media Library first.



**2** Click "Select Files" on the Insert Media page. You will have a box pop up to upload your files. Use the pop-up box to locate where the picture is saved.



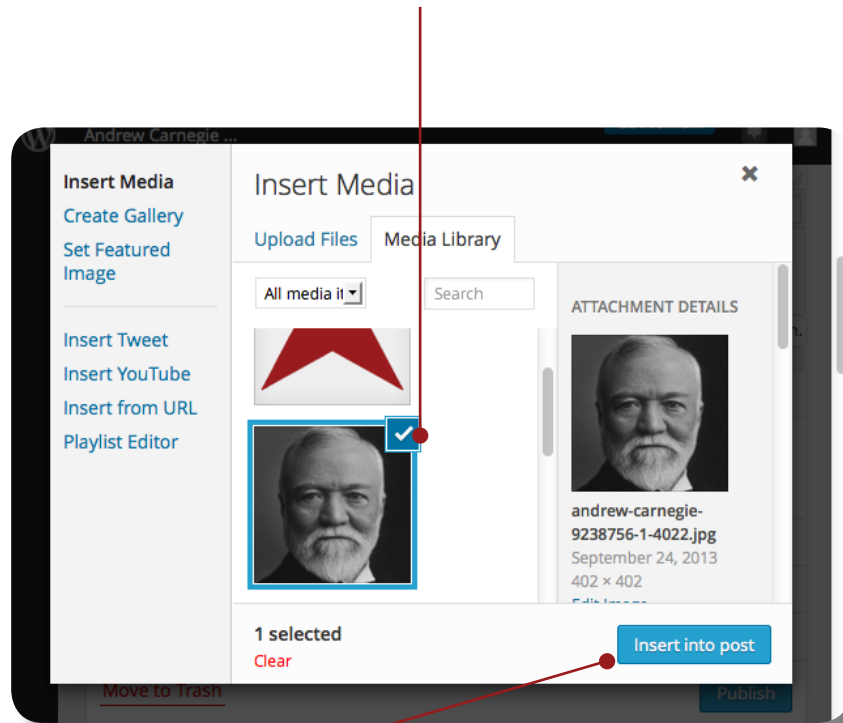
**3** First click the file, then click "Open." You will be taken back to the Media Library page where your file is now uploading.

1

2

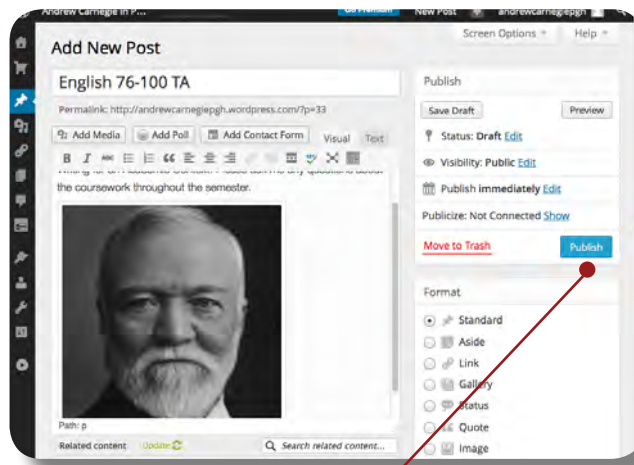
# Blogging in WordPress

4 Click on the photo in the media library so it has a blue checkmark.



QuikTip: Free WordPress accounts cannot directly upload audio or video files. However, you can still embed YouTube videos in your post.

5 Click "Insert into post."



Publish

6 Finish editing your post. When done, click "Publish" to finish your post.

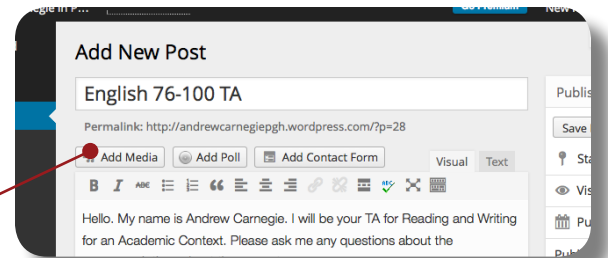
Yay! We added a photo.

# Blogging in WordPress

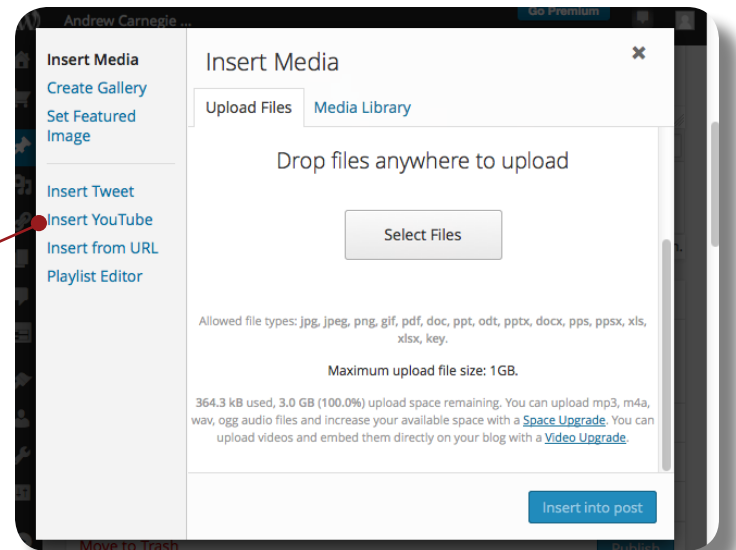
## Embed a YouTube Video

**1** At the Add New Post page, click "Add Media."

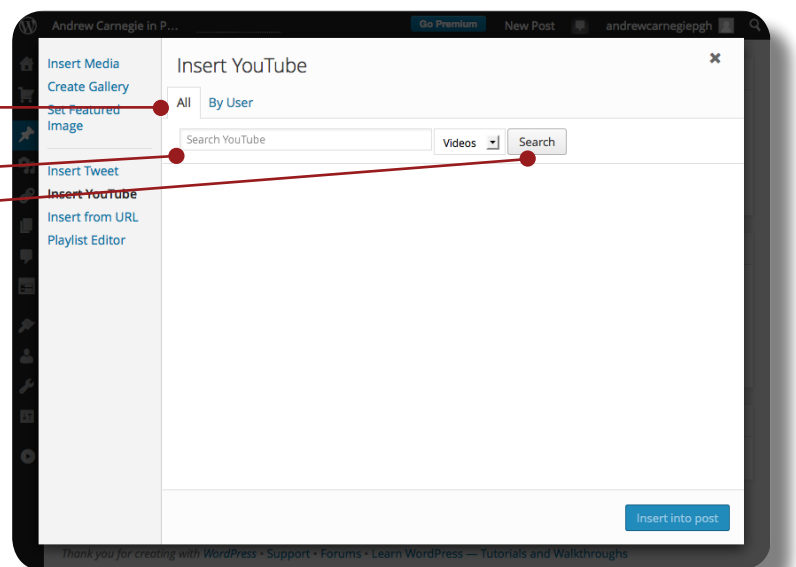
QuikTip: Need help finding the Add New Post page? Visit p. 12, "Post to a WordPress Blog"



**2** Click "Insert YouTube."



**3** Select your searching method ("All" or "By User"), enter your search phrase, and click "Search."



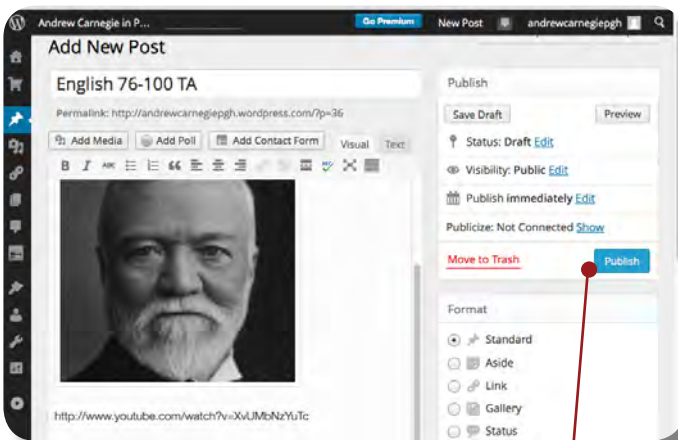
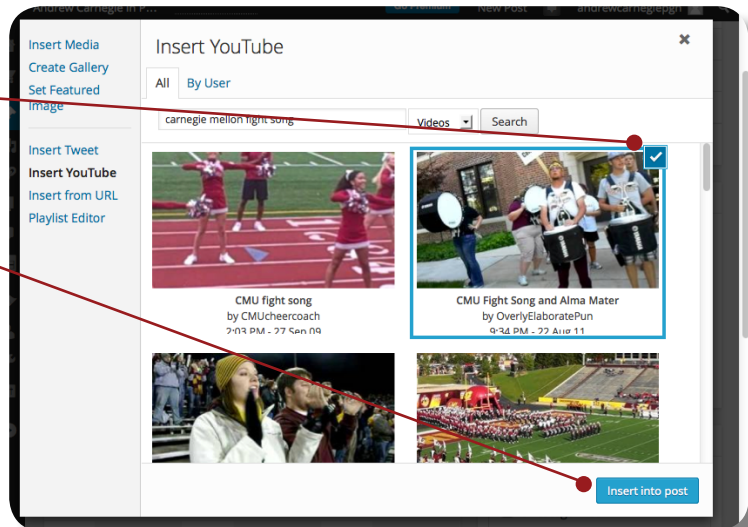


# Blogging in WordPress

4 Click on your chosen YouTube video so it has a blue checkmark.

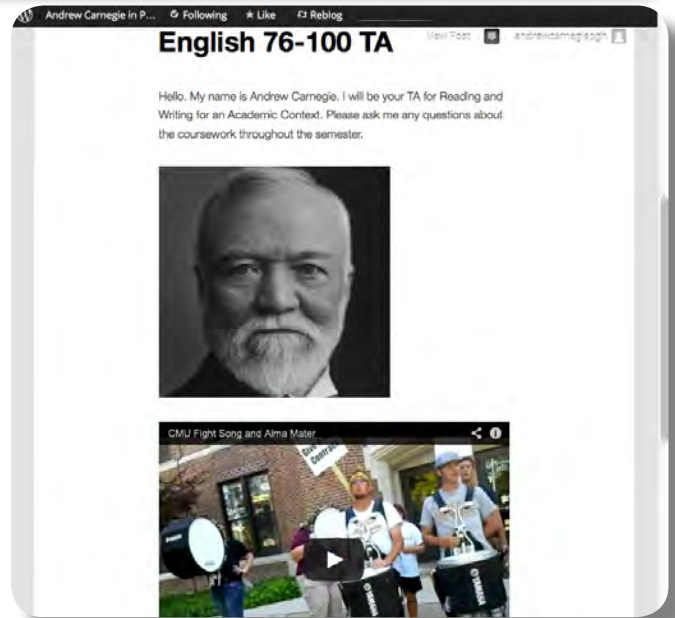
5 Click "Insert into Post" to add a link of this video into your post.

Insert into post



6 Finish editing your post and then click "Publish" to finish your post.

QuikTip: When you enter a YouTube URL into the Add New Post page, WordPress automatically embeds the corresponding video for you when you publish the post.

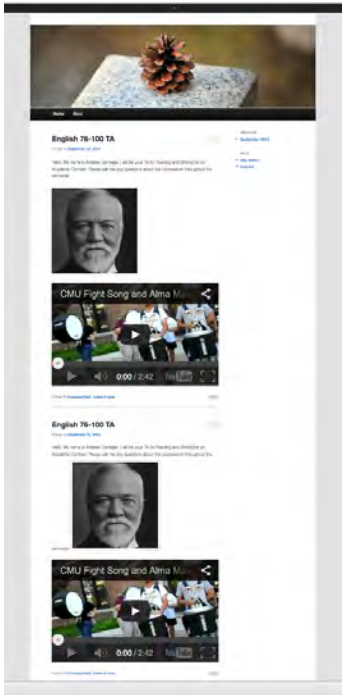


Yay! We embedded a video.

# Blogging in WordPress

## F. Comment on a WordPress Blog

This section describes how to comment on a post in a WordPress blog.



**2** Click “Leave a reply” or “Reply” at the bottom of the post. You will be taken to a page for that post. A “Leave a reply” field will be present.

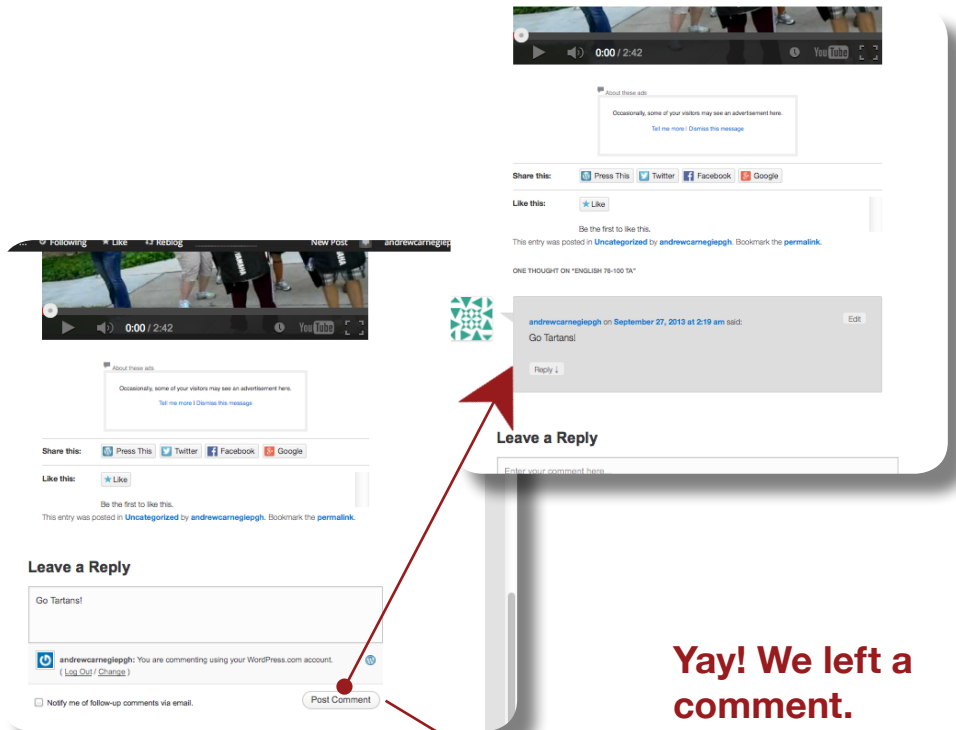
Leave a reply

QuikTip: You can also click a post’s comment bubble icon (top-left) to get to leave a comment.



**1** Begin at a blog post (or someone else’s blog page). Scroll down the page to find the post you want to comment on.

QuikTip: Need help finding the Add New Post page? Visit p. 12, “Post to a WordPress Blog”



Yay! We left a comment.

**3** Enter your reply into the “Leave a Reply” field and click “Post Comment.”

Post Comment

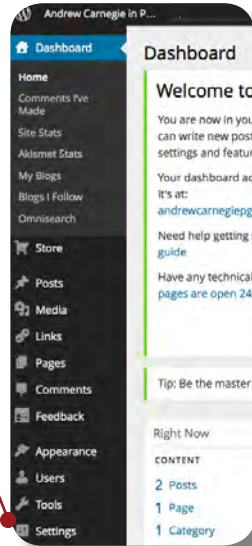
# Blogging in WordPress

## G. Find and Change Your Blog's Privacy

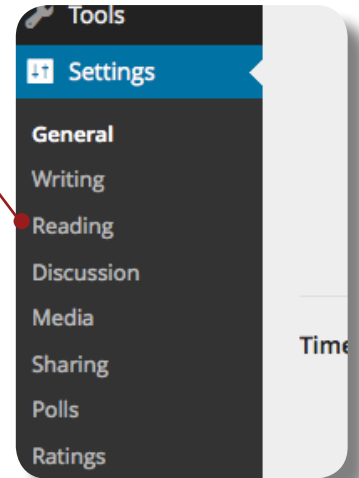
In order to protect the privacy of your students' and your own work, it is highly recommend that you make your WordPress Blog private. They are set to public by default.

**1 Click "Settings."**

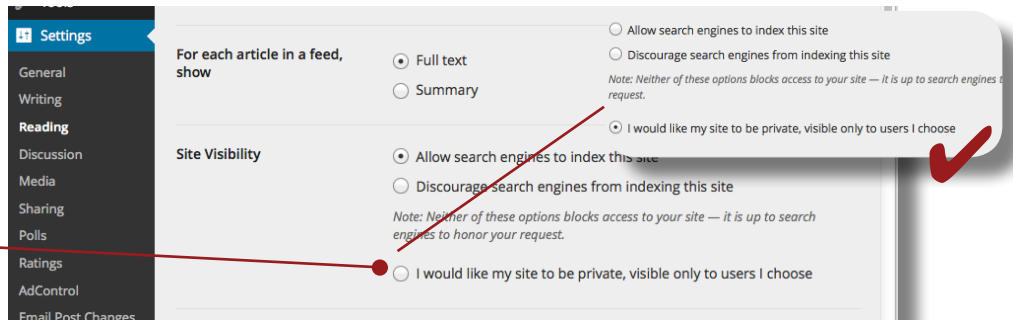
QuikTip: Need help finding the Dashboard? Visit p. 11, "How to Get to a Blog's Dashboard after Logging In"



**2 Click "Reading."**

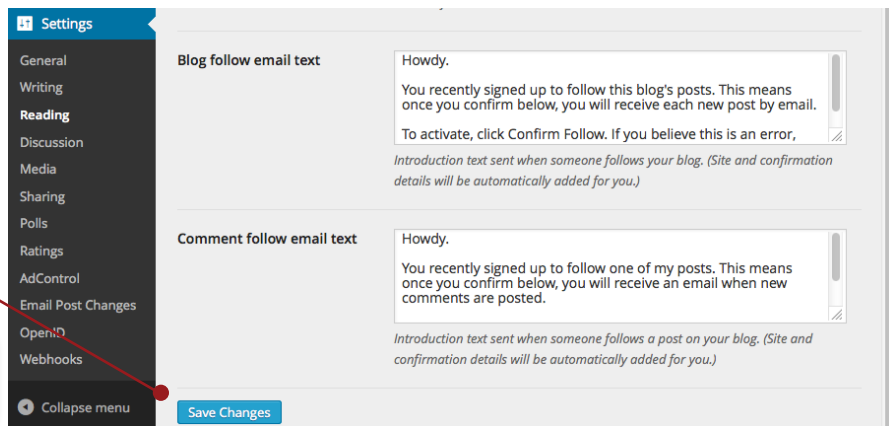


**3 Select "I would like my site to be private..."**



**4 Scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Save Changes."**

**Save Changes**



**Done! Your blog is now private.**

# Blogging in WordPress

## H. Select Roles for your Students

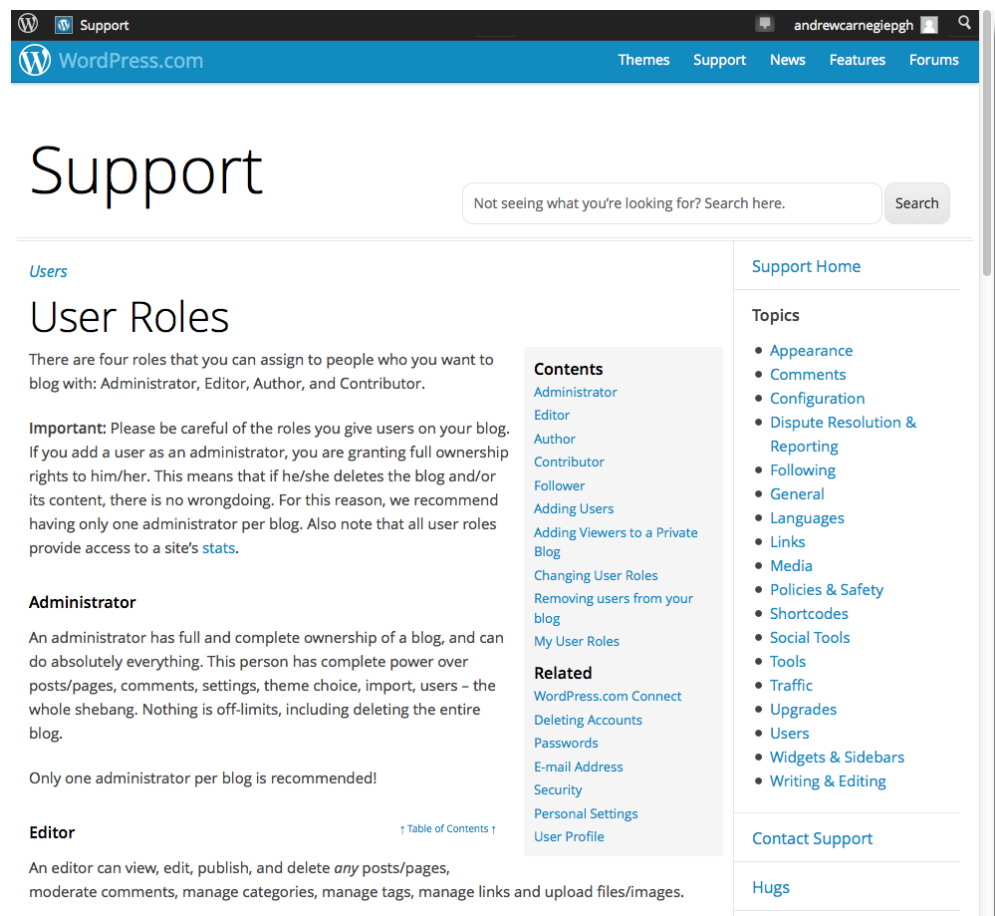
Prior to inviting your students to be users on your WordPress blog, you should know how you can permit them to interact with your blog. These user permissions are controlled through presets called User Roles. You can change your users' User Role at any time.

The most likely User Role you'll want for your students is **Author**, but ultimately you know best.

- 1 **Open your web browser and navigate to [en.support.wordpress.com/user-roles](https://en.support.wordpress.com/user-roles)**

Here you can quickly learn about the five User Roles you can grant participating users:

- **Administrator**
- **Editor**
- **Author**
- **Contributor**
- **Follower**

A screenshot of the WordPress Support website. The page title is "Support" and the main heading is "User Roles". The content explains that there are four roles: Administrator, Editor, Author, and Contributor. It provides detailed descriptions for the Administrator and Editor roles. The Administrator role is described as having full ownership and control over the blog. The Editor role is described as being able to view, edit, publish, and delete posts/pages, moderate comments, and manage categories and tags. A sidebar on the right contains a "Contents" list with links to Administrator, Editor, Author, Contributor, Follower, Adding Users, Adding Viewers to a Private Blog, Changing User Roles, Removing users from your blog, My User Roles, and Related topics like WordPress.com Connect, Deleting Accounts, Passwords, E-mail Address, Security, Personal Settings, and User Profile. There is also a "Support Home" sidebar with various topic links and a search bar at the top.

- 2 **Read all 5 role descriptions and decide which roles you would like your students to have on your blog.** Again, the most likely setting you want is **Author**.

- 3 **Proceed to the “Invite Users” section to add your students to your blog.**

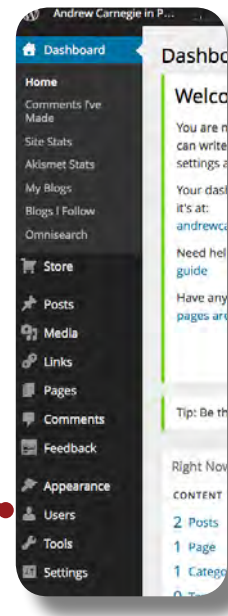
# Blogging in WordPress

## I. Invite Users

Once you know what User Role you want for your students, let's invite them to view and comment on your free WordPress blog.

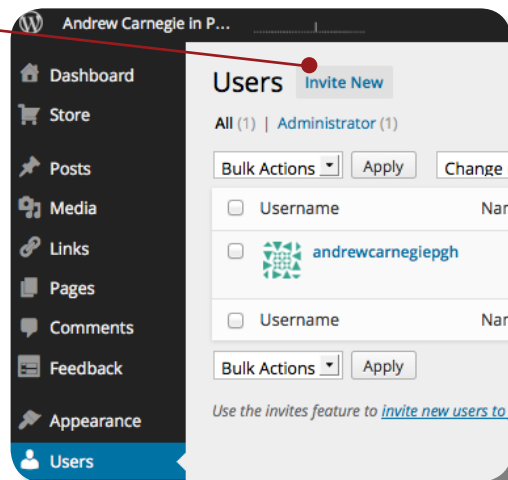
- 1 At your blog's Dashboard sidebar, click "Users."** If this is your first blog, you should be the only user listed.

QuikTip: Need help finding the Dashboard? Visit p. 11, "How to Get to a Blog's Dashboard after Logging In"



- 2 Click "Invite New" at the top of the page.** You will be taken to the Invite New Users to Your Blog page.

Invite New



# Blogging in WordPress

## 3 Enter the requested information into the form.

Enter your students' **WordPress Usernames** or their preferred **Email Addresses** where you can email their invite.

Select their **Role** (refer to the Choose User Roles section for more info).

Include an optional **Message** your students receive with their invite ("Come check out my blog!" is the default).

Andrew Carnegie in P... [Go Premium](#) [New Post](#) andrewcarnegiepgh

### Invite New Users to Your Blog

Usernames or Email Addresses: yourfriendusername, yourfriend@wordpress.com

Role: Follower [Learn more about roles](#)

Message: andrewcarnegiepgh invites you to follow [Andrew Carnegie in Pittsburgh](#): Come check out my blog!

(Optional) You can enter a custom message of up to 500 characters that will be included in the invitation to the user(s).

[Send Invitation](#)

[Send Invitation](#)

## 4 Click "Send Invitation." You can return to this screen to monitor the response to your invitations under the Past Invitations section.

**That's it! Your free WordPress blog is now up and running. And remember, if you ever get stuck, you can always contact**

**The Eberly Center**

**eberly.cmu.edu  
eberly-ctr@andrew.cmu.edu  
412-268-2896**