Setting up a website using Blogger

A guide for writers

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About this user guide

These documents are a walk-through of how to set up a website on Google's Blogger platform, for a writer with minimal technical knowledge. Blogger's help docs are very general, and the point of this user guide is to help a very specific audience achieve a specific goal: to set up and configure a free (and ad-free) writer's website that will be easy to maintain and will fulfil basic online promotional needs.

The intended users are the technically wary. If you are happy to follow a recipe but think you would never be able to set up your own website, this guide is for you. Writers can jump in at different points of the guide, depending on confidence and experience. An Advanced Customisation section provides links to online help guides so you can take advantage of further functionality available within Blogger.

To see a test website created using Blogger, visit writingwithceleste.blogspot.com.

Note: Read through the instructions carefully before attempting the set-up. Also, confirm that you have all the prerequisites to hand.

Creating a blog with Google

Before you begin, you will need a Google (or Gmail) account.

Open your internet browser and go to www.blogger.com.

1. Sign in using your Gmail or Google account.
2. On the Confirm Your Profile page, enter your display name (for example Celeste), which will appear as the author of the website. Click **Continue to Blogger**.
3. Click **Create new blog**.
4. Enter the following details:
   a. Website title (for example, Celeste Writes).
   b. Address name, which can be your website title without spaces and all lowercase (for example, celestewrites.blogspot.com). This will be your blogger website address until you add a third-party address (for example, www.celestewrites.com). Note: If your first choice is unavailable, pick a few words that describe you or your site, for example celestewritestoomuch.blogspot.com.
   c. Select template: **Soho**. This can be changed at a later time.
5. Click **Create blog!**

You will be brought to the dashboard (control panel) of your new blogger site.

Setting up Blogger

Before you begin, you will need:
- A fully completed Writer Website template.
- Optional, Advanced: A website address, known as a domain, for example www.celestewriter.com. This may be purchased from any domain name provider. See Step 2: Set up your domain with your blog > Connect to your non-Google domain from Blogger.

1. Click **Settings** in the menu on the left-hand side of the dashboard. Select **Basic**.
2. Make the following changes:
   a. Change HTTPS Redirect to **Yes**.
   b. Optional, Advanced: If you have purchased a third-party website address, click on **Set up a third-party URL for your blog**, and enter your website address (exactly as registered with your domain name provider). For a full guide to setting this up, click on **View settings instructions** below the domain name input box. When you have finished, click **Save**.
   c. Under Description, paste the website description entry from your Writer Website template. This will appear as your website header.
3. Under Settings, select **Posts, comments, and sharing** and make the following changes:
   a. Show at most three posts on the main page.
   b. Change Comment location to **Hide**.
   c. Change Who can comment to **Only members**.
   d. Change Comment moderation to **Always**.
   e. Click **Save settings** at the top right-hand corner.
4. Under Settings, select **Language and formatting**.
   a. Set your preferred language (for example, UK English), Time Zone, Date Header and Timestamp (date) Format.
   b. Click **Save settings**.
5. Under Settings, select **Search preferences**.
   a. Enable **search description**. In the box beside **Description**, paste the website description entry from your Writer Website template. This text will appear in web searches.
   b. Under Settings, select **Other** and change Allow blog feed to **None**.
   c. Click **Save settings**.

Click on the (?) icon beside any option in Blogger if you would like more information.

If a button, selection, or menu is visible but not mentioned during a step, ignore it. If it has been left out, there is no need to take action.

Changing the layout of your Blogger website

Before you begin, you will need:
- A fully completed [Writer Website template](#).
- The images for your website, formatted as specified in the Writer Website [list of required images](#).

1. Click **Layout** in the menu on the left-hand side of your dashboard (above **Settings**).
2. In the Favicon box, click **Edit**. In the Favicon dialogue box, select **Browse** and navigate to your favicon image file (as specified in the Writer Website [list of required images](#)). This will replace Blogger's orange logo in a browser's web address bar. It might take one or two days to show up in your browser.
3. In the Sidebar box, do the following:
   a. Click **Add a Gadget**. Click the plus sign beside Pages, then tick the **Select All** option and save.
   b. Click on the pencil icon beside Blog Archive to open the dialogue box.
   c. Click on the **Remove** button. Click **Okay** to remove the Blog Archive from your website.
   d. Repeat these steps for Labels.
4. Click on the pencil icon next to Report Abuse to open the dialogue box, untick **Show Report Abuse**, and save.
5. Open the Blog Posts dialogue box, untick **Labels** and **Location**, and save.
6. Open the Popular Posts dialogue box, untick **Show Popular Posts** and save.
7. If the eye icon beside the Pages List (Top) is crossed out, open the dialogue box and select **Show Pages**.

Click **View blog** at the very top left corner (below your blog name) to see how your website looks now.

Note: If a button, selection, or menu is visible on your screen but not mentioned during a step, ignore it. If it has been left out, there is no need to take action.

Using Theme Designer to customise your website

Before you begin, you will need the images for your website, formatted as specified in the Writer Website list of required images.

1. Click **Theme** in the menu on the left-hand side (above Settings), then click the **Customize** button below the theme preview.
2. In Gadgets (in the top menu), tick the **Show Pages** box to display the website's page links in the side menu.
    a. Click **Configure** and in the dialogue box that opens, select all the pages you wish to show in the side menu. Make sure the **Show Pages** option is ticked.
    b. Under **List Order**, drag and drop the pages to change the order in which they appear.
    c. Delete whatever appears in the **Title** text box.
    d. Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the dialogue box.
3. In Background (in the top menu), click inside the background image to open a dialogue box.
    a. Select a new background image from the ones provided, or click **Upload Image** to select your background image as specified in the Writer Website list of required images.
    b. Click **Apply to Blog** to save these changes.
4. Click **Back to Blogger** in the top right hand side to return to the main menu.

Click **View blog** at the very top left corner (below your blog name) to see how your website looks now. It will open in a new window.

Adding content to your website

Create **Pages** for static content, that is, pages that you want to remain in the same place on your website. Pages are useful for author info, contact details, listings of books published or links to your writing online. (Check links to external sites regularly, the internet is a changeable thing.) Links to each page will appear in the main menu of your website. Make sure the titles of your pages are short and logical, to help visitors easily find what they're looking for. Use the content of the Pages section of the Writer Website template for the three most important pages on a writer's website: About Me, Contact Me, and My Writing.

Create **Posts** for news-style content that will change or become redundant. For example: an upcoming reading, a review of your latest book, a new poem published, or anything you have written that might be of interest to your readers, from a review of your favourite book to a day-in-the-life piece to a photo of your writing desk. (Refer to the Writer Website template for a list of blog post suggestions.) Posts will appear on your home page. The newest post you have published will appear below your background image as a Featured Post. Below this, a brief preview of a further three posts (most recent first) will appear.

Creating a page

To create a new page for your website, visit the following link: Add pages to your blog. See Step 2: Create, edit, or delete pages.

Creating a post

To create a new post on your website, visit the following link: Create, edit, or delete a post. If you would like to add a photo to your post, visit: Add images and videos to your blog.

For more details on how to manage your Blogger website, for example how to view visitor statistics, visit Blogger Help.

Advanced customisation

After you have created, set up, and changed the layout of your website, the following customisations will improve your website and expand your online presence. They are suitable for writers who are more comfortable working with online tools, or for someone who has become competent with the Blogger platform.

- Remove the Blogger logo from the bottom of each page.
- Backup your site or a copy of your theme, if it has been significantly customised.
- Change theme. You'll probably need to change the layout of your gadgets too.
- Allow readers to be notified of new posts via Subscription.
- Add a Text Gadget to Soho theme's sidebar, where you can add a call to action or some inspirational/mischievous text.
- Add a Contact Form to the sidebar.
- Create a Mailchimp newsletter sign-up.
- Insert a selection of direct links to your social media accounts on the home page.