

Welcome to my unit on introducing blogging to your elementary (K-5) classroom. In the following pages, you will find:

- Instructions on signing up for your class blog on kidblog.org (<http://kidblog.org/home.php>)
- Background information for teachers
- 10 lesson plans, designed for 45-60 minute periods, to introduce blogs to your students
- Connections to technology standards
- Helpful research articles to show the value of blogging to administrators

My background

I have seven years teaching experience at the elementary school level. I was a classroom teacher in grades 3,4, and 5 as well as a school librarian for grades K-5. I am currently a graduate student in the College of Education at the University of Wyoming studying curriculum and instruction. This unit was created as a culminating project in the fall of 2010 for a class entitled Literacy and Learning in a Web 2.0 Environment

My goals in creating this unit

In addition to meeting the requirements of my class, I also wanted to create a unit that teachers could use to integrate technology into their everyday teaching practice with students of all ages. This is an introductory unit; where you go after completing it is up to you and your class.

Standards

For this unit, I chose to use the ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Standards and performance indicators for students. Of course, you may find that these lessons also address standards in your specific content areas. I recommend adding these standards when appropriate.

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Before beginning this unit

Check your district's approved usage guidelines for the Internet to make sure blogging is allowed. If it is not covered in the agreement, check to make sure you can access kidblog.org through your district firewall. You will also need to schedule computer lab times for lessons 2,4,5,6,7,8,9, &10.

To sign up for kidblog.org

1. Go to <http://kidblog.org/home.php> Take some time to explore the site, looking at the "About" and "Support" sections
2. Click on the header, "Create a Class"
3. Fill in the requested information. I recommend using your school email address. This site sends very few messages.
4. They will send a confirmation email to you. Follow the directions in the message and your blog is up and running!
5. You can add students (no student email addresses required) to your class blog so that each of them has his or her own page. The instructions for doing this are available when you login to your blog. Each student will have their own username and password. I recommend that you make each username and password something you can remember since at least three students will forget their information at some point during the unit.

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Overview of unit

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
Standard: ISTE NETS*S 6d: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations. Students transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies. Target: Know what a blog is and how we will use it in our classroom	Standard: ISTE NETS*S 6a: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations. Students understand and use technology systems. Target: Know how to log in to our class blog	Standard: ISTE NETS*S 1b: Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students create original works as a means of personal or group expression. Target: Writing process for blogging	Standard: ISTE NETS*S 3a: Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students plan strategies to guide inquiry. Target: Writing process for blogging	Standard: ISTE NETS*S 5a/b: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology and exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity. Target: “Don’t feed the trolls” responding appropriately to posts

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Lesson 6	Lesson 7	Lesson 8	Lesson 9	Lesson 10
<p>Standard: ISTE NETS *S 4d: Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.</p> <p>Target: Supporting your stance in a blog</p>	<p>Standard: ISTE NETS*S 2a: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.</p> <p>Target: Blogging for a purpose</p>	<p>Standard: ISTE NETS*S 2b: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.</p> <p>Target: Blogging for a purpose</p>	<p>Standard: ISTE NETS*S 2d: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.</p> <p>Target: Blogging for a purpose</p>	<p>Standard: ISTE NETS*S 5c: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.</p> <p>Target: Self-assessment of blogs</p>

Lesson 1: What is a blog?

ISTE NETS*S Standard 6d: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations. Students transfer current knowledge to learning of new technologies.

Learning Target I know what a blog is and how we will use it in our classroom.

Background for the teacher

A **blog** is a type of [website](#) or part of a [website](#). Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. *Blog* can also be used as a verb, meaning to *maintain or add content to a blog*.

Most blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other websites.

A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, [Web pages](#), and other media related to its topic. The ability of readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. Most blogs are primarily textual, although some focus on art ([Art blog](#)), photographs ([photoblog](#)), videos ([video blogging](#)), music ([MP3 blog](#)), and audio ([podcasting](#)).

Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog> on 11/4/10

Time & Location This lesson will take 45 minutes. It is not necessary for each student to have access to a computer for this lesson.

Materials Computer with internet access and an LCD projector to show blog, a picture book about letter writing (see suggested literature list), chart paper (1 headed "Types and purposes of writing" and another headed "Ways people communicate") markers, parent letter

Literature suggestions

Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James

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Dear Peter Rabbit by Alma Flor Ada
Diary of a Spider by Doreen Cronin
Diary of a Wombat by Jackie French

Instructional Plan

- 5 minutes Settle students in their regular listening spots (wherever you usually read to them). Tell them you are going to read a picture book about writing and you want them to listen for the kinds of writing that happen in the story (diary, letters, signs, etc)
- 15 minutes Read chosen story. After reading, have students tell you what kinds of writing they heard about in the book and chart responses, leaving room next to each kind.
- 5 minutes Ask students, "Why did the character write letters?" (To communicate with someone else) or "Why did the characters write diaries?" (To share their thoughts and what happened in their days.) Chart student responses next to types of writing.
- 3 minutes Ask students to brainstorm other types and purposes of writing and add to chart.
- 4 minutes Lead a class discussion about writing letters-does anyone do it anymore? What are some ways people communicate now? Record answers on chart paper.
- 3 minutes Tell students: "We're going to be communicating in our classroom this year using a blog." Ask for student definition of blog and/or tell them what one is using above description.
- 10 minutes Show blog using computer and LCD projector. Have a volunteer read your welcome message to the class. Then ask if anyone has a reply they would like to post to your message. Take a few replies and post them while students watch.
- Closing Tell students that blogging is something new you are trying with the class so you will all be learning it together. Each week, the class will learn another piece of the puzzle. Next week, the class will be going to the computer lab to learn how to log-in and post on the class blog. Pass out letter home to parents

Lesson 2: Logging into our class blog

ISTE NETS*S Standard 6a: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of technology concepts, systems and operations. Students understand and use technology systems.

Learning Target I know how to log in to our class blog and can post a response.

Time & Location This lesson will take 45 minutes. Each student will need the opportunity to practice the skill, so a computer lab will be best. If a lab is not available, add time to the lesson so that each student has a chance to practice logging in.

Materials Computer with Internet access and LCD projector to demonstrate process, take-home cards with login information, anchor charts from previous lesson, chart paper (Heading: How to log in to our class blog) and markers.

Literature Suggestions

Amelia Bedelia by Peggy Parish (any one will do, but if you find one about writing, that's best)

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Remind students of learning in previous session. Refer to anchor charts created (Types and Purposes of Writing and Ways People Communicate)

5 minutes Ask how many students have used a log in to access content in a website before. Introduce vocabulary (login, password). For younger students, you may want to compare a password to a key (you wouldn't want to lose your key or give it to someone else)

5 minutes Ask why websites require you to log in. Possible answers-to keep you safe, to track who is using the site, to make sure only the members of our class can access the information.

5 minutes Demonstrate your login using the computer and LCD projector. Talk through the process; say "this box asks for my

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username so I will type _____ in there. Now I click in this box which asks for my password so I will type _____ here. Now I've got my login information entered so I will click here to go into the site."

- 10 minutes Read Amelia Bedelia book, making sure that students are paying attention to how carefully she follows directions.
- 10 minutes Students practice logging in using class username and passwords. Upper grade students will also need to write instructions on how to login on their take-home cards.
- 5 minutes Bring class back together and complete anchor chart "How to login to our class blog"
- Closing Remind students to keep their usernames and passwords private.

Lesson 3: Writing process for a blog (part 1)

ISTE NETS*S Standard 1b: Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

Learning Target I know how to post on a blog and how to make comments on others' posts.

Before you teach this lesson, you need to

- Create/identify 6 writing prompts for student groups to respond to.
- Divide class into groups of no more than 4 students, but no less than 2.
- Prepare materials (cut strips of paper, locate glue sticks for each student, glue writing prompts on notecards, cut a slit in the bottom of each card)

Time and location This lesson will take 55 minutes. Students will not need access to the computer lab for this lesson.

Materials 3x5 notecards with writing prompts written on them, 2X11 strip of paper (3 per student), glue sticks, pencils

Literature suggestion This is the House that Jack Built (many different versions exist, including holiday versions. Choose one that is easily accessible to you.) This will be part of the extension activity so it is optional.

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Explain that today we are going to do a writing activity since we will be writing on our class blog. It makes sense to practice before we start on the computers. Break class into small groups (no larger than 4, no less than 2).

3 minutes Give activity directions

1. I'm going to give each group a writing prompt. Choose one person in each group to read the prompt out loud.

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2. I'm going to give each person in the group a strip of paper to write on. You will write your response to the prompt on this paper.
3. You will have 5 minutes to read the prompt and write your response to it. When time is up, I will give more directions.

5 minutes Students work in groups, individually responding to the prompts.

3 minutes Get groups' attention and give the rest of the directions. Demonstrate each step so students can see what to do.

4. Now we're going to make a chain with our responses. The person who read the prompt will go first. They are going to read their paper and then put the paper through the slit in the notecard, gluing it into a circle.
5. Then the next person will read their response and will glue their link in the chain connected to the first circle.
6. Repeat until every student has read and glued their chain link.
7. When everyone has glued their part of the chain, the reader will go back and read the prompt and responses out loud.

9 minutes Students do the activity.

5 minutes Bring class together and ask if any groups had a chain that made sense. Read a couple of chains as examples.

3 minutes Tell students that a blog is kind of like a chain in that there is a post and then people comment on that post. Explain that the post is like the notecard and the comments are the chain links.

3 minutes Shuffle groups, if necessary, and repeat the activity. This time, students have different prompts and will choose an order to proceed in. As each student reads their response, the next student should add something that builds on that response, and so on until the chain is complete.

9 minutes Students do the activity.

5 minutes Bring class back together and ask if any groups have a chain that makes sense. Read a couple of chains as examples.

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- 5 minutes Ask students why the second chains made more sense (because they built off of what the previous person said). Ask students if they think this is important on our class blog (yes). Why? Chart student responses on anchor chart and post with other charts.
- Closing Review learning that has happened up to this point
- Learned what a blog is
 - Learned how to log in to our class blog and read posts
 - Started learning the writing process for our class blog
- Extension Read *This is the House that Jack Built* and have a class discussion about how the events in the book built off of each other and how that connects to our blog.

Lesson 4: Writing process for our blog (part 2)

ISTE NETS*S Standard 1b: Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

Learning Target I know how to respond to someone else's post in our class blog.

Time & Location This lesson will take 50 minutes. Each student will be posting and commenting on the class blog during this time so access to a computer lab is essential. The beginning of the lesson can be done in the classroom, moving to the computer lab when students are ready to start posting.

Materials Anchor chart (Guidelines for posting and commenting), markers, 1 computer for each student.

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Remind students of the chain activity from the previous lesson. Ask: What happened when we didn't add to what the person before us said? Did our stories make sense? What happened when we built off of each other's responses?

10 minutes Make an anchor chart that has some guidelines for posting and commenting on our class blog. Sample guidelines include: using proper spelling so everyone can read your post, keeping private information private, only write stuff that you wouldn't be embarrassed if your mom read it, always respond to what the person before you said when you are commenting, be nice, etc.

3 minutes Tell students that today they will be logging into their own blogs and posting one thing that other people in the class will respond to. If you would like more control, give a prompt for each post to respond to. They will have about 10 minutes to do their posts, and then we'll come back together as a group.

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- 10 minutes Students log in and post on their personal blogs
- 3 minutes Bring class back together and make sure everyone has published their posts. Then tell them to read each other's posts and comment on their group members' posts.
- 10 minutes Students comment
- 5 minutes Bring class back together and tell them to read the comments their original posts received. Students read comments.
- Closing Students post a second time on their personal blog with a rule they think is really important for posting on their blog and why they think it is important. You will be reading these and commenting on each one before the next blogging lesson.
- Extension Students can work individually or in small groups to create an illustration of a blogging rule. They can also practice logging into their blog to see if they have any new comments.

Lesson 5: Don't feed the Trolls (Title from article by Richardson, see further reading page for full citation)

ISTE NETS*5a/b: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology and exhibit a positive attitude toward using technology that supports collaboration, learning, and productivity.

Learning Target I know how to make sure I'm not hurting anyone's feelings on my blog.

Location & Time This lesson will take 45 minutes. Students will need access to the computer lab so they can check the comments you left in response to their "rule" posts from last class.

Materials Anchor chart with posting guidelines from last class, book, and poster to write class pledge on

Literature

Big Bad Bruce by Bill Peet

Monday's Troll by Jack Prelutsky

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Ask students to describe a troll to you. Write their responses on the board.

5 minutes Tell students that a blog is one place you might run into a troll, but not like the one they described. Tell students that a troll is "a person who posts rude or offensive messages on the Internet...to upset its participants (Wikipedia) Ask if anyone has ever met a troll in real life (not necessarily online), it could be a bully on the playground, someone in swim class, etc.

15 minutes Read Big Bad Bruce by Bill Peet. After reading, have a class discussion on the ways Bruce was a bully and what the witch did to teach him to be nicer.

5 minutes Tell students that we need to have a way to make sure that we don't turn into trolls on our class blog. Does anyone have a suggestion for what we could do?

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10 minutes Take suggestions from students, chart on paper. Try to get them down to 3 rules that are easy for students to remember.

Sample rules:

If you wouldn't say it at school, you can't say it on the blog

Treat others how you want to be treated

Never share your personal information (address, name, etc)

Closing Have students read the rule poster you've created and sign their names around the rules as a sort of pledge to follow them.

Extension Let students read "Monday's Troll" by Jack Prelutsky. They can choose one character from the poems and compare them to a cyber bully.

Lesson 6: Supporting your stance

ISTE NETS*S Standard 4d: Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems, and make informed decisions using appropriate digital tools and resources. Students use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.

Learning Target I can tell why I think something in my blog.

Time & Location This lesson will take 45 minutes. Students will need access to the computer lab in order to respond and post on individual blogs.

Materials Open-ended questions from recently read texts,

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Remind students of the chain activity from lesson 3. Tell them that it was very important for each comment to connect to the previous one in order for them to make sense. Ask them why (students should say something like-the ideas supported each other)

5 minutes Using a book you've read recently in class, ask an open ended question that calls for an opinion and solicit responses without asking why the student feels that way.
Example: Cinderella question
"Do you think the stepsisters have fairy godmothers?"

5 minutes After students have answered (take 3-5 responses) ask them to think about their answers and be able to tell the class why they think that. Give them a few minutes to think about it.

5 minutes Take a few responses with support. Then connect to blogs. Tell students that anyone can say something on a blog, but you need to be able to support it with evidence. Show your sample blog post about whether cats or dogs make better pets. Ask students to highlight your statement and your support.

10 minutes Students login to their blogs and post about whether cats or dogs make better pets and why.

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10 minutes Students spend time looking at each other's posts and responding to them. They need to have support in their comments, so you may want to use the sentence stem "I agree/disagree with you because_____"

Closing Ask students to nominate someone who they think did a really good job supporting their opinion in the posts. Have 2-3 students read their posts.

Lesson 7: Blogging for a purpose (reading/writing assignments)

ISTE NETS*S Standard 2a: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.

Learning Target I can write about what I read.

Time & location This lesson will take 45 minutes. Students will need access to individual computers as they will be posting individual responses to reading.

Materials *If a Dog Could Blog* by Princess Lola LeDeaux

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Remind students of the learning they have done so far. Tell them that now that they know how to use a blog, they are going to find out how to apply that knowledge. Application is taking what you know and using it for a new purpose.

15 minutes Read *If a Dog Could Blog* to the class. Pause to allow students to make connections (when the dog logs in, when the dog replies to other comments, etc)

5 minutes Lead a class discussion about the book-what were the favorite parts? Did anyone have a question that came up while listening to the book? Did anything surprise you? When we finished reading, I thought..." You can choose to have students write responses first, then think-pair-share. This will add about 10 minutes to the lesson.

15 minutes Tell students to log on to their blog and post a response to *If a Dog Could Blog*. Then tell them that they must support their stance (referencing the previous lesson) and that they must read at least 2 other posts and respond to them.

5 minutes Closing-ask students if they think writing about their reading helped their comprehension (metacognition).

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Extension Students could choose another animal to write a similar story to “If a Dog Could Blog”. When they finish, the teacher should post the story on the main class blog and allow students to extend it by responding to the post.

Lesson 8: Blogging for a purpose (science and social studies)

ITSE NETS*Standard 2b: Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.

Learning Target I can show what I know about _____. (insert science or social studies topic most recently studied)

Time & location This lesson will take 45 minutes. Students will need access to computers.

Materials chart paper, markers

Instructional Plan

10 minutes Brainstorm as a class everything you know about the topic. Chart out on paper.

10 minutes Tell students that they know a lot about that topic and now they are going to have a chance to show it off on their blog. You have two choices here-for older students; you could have them explain the topic to a younger audience. For instance, a 5th grader could explain the water cycle to a 2nd grader. They will need to use vocabulary that is understandable and still get the concept explained. For younger students, I recommend having them just write everything they know about the topic.

15 minutes Students log in and post about the topic using the guidelines you've given them.

10 minutes Students will read each other's posts and find one thing that they didn't know and one thing that everyone seemed to have in their posts.

Lesson 9: Blogging for a purpose (math)

ITSE NETS*S Standard 2d: students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students contribute to project teams to produce original works or solve problems.

Learning Target I can work in a team to solve a math problem and can explain our solution using the class blog.

Time & Location This lesson will take 45 minutes. Students will need access to one computer per group.

Materials scratch paper, pencils, manipulatives (appropriate to task), math word problem to solve (try to use one that uses already mastered skills-the goal is not demonstrating mathematical competence, the goal is communicating their problem-solving process and solution.)

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Explain activity. Tell students that today they are going to learn how to use their blog to show what they know in math. They are going to get a word problem to solve. First they will work individually to begin solving it. Then you will put them in groups and they will work together to solve the problem. Each group will have to post their solution on the class blog. Then you will read the responses for each group and post responses to them.

10 minutes Students work individually to solve problem.

20 minutes Put students into small groups (no larger than 4/group) and have them work together to solve.

10 minutes Students log in to class blog and explain their problem, how they solved it, and how they know their answer is correct.

Lesson 10: Self-assessing blog posts

ITSE NETS*S Standard 5c: Students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. Students demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning.

Learning Target I can look back on what I've posted and choose examples of really good work.

Time & Location This lesson will take 45 minutes. Each student will need access to a computer.

Materials Chart paper and markers

Instructional Plan

5 minutes Introduce activity. Tell students that they have been blogging for a purpose during the past few lessons. Now it's time to evaluate those entries. But before the teacher grades them, you need to grade yourself.

10 minutes Ask students to brainstorm things that make a blog post good. For example, students may say that a good blog post needs to have support for its stances, it needs to be polite (no feeding the trolls), and it needs to answer the prompt or apply to the topic.

5 minutes Have students decide on 3 things they think are most important. List those three things separately.

10 minutes Have students brainstorm criteria for evaluating each thing they chose. How will they know they've done a good job?

15 minutes Students review their blog posts and select one they would like you to review. Students should post about why they chose this entry.

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For Further Reading:

Boling, E., Castek, J., Zawilinski, L., Barton, K., & Nierlich, T. (2008).

Collaborative literacy: Blogs and internet projects. *Reading Teacher*, 61(6), 504-506

Davis, A. P., & McGrail, E. (2009). The joy of blogging. *Educational Leadership*, 66(6), 74-77

Kist, W., Doyle, K., Hayes, J., Horwitz, J., & Kuzior, J. T. (2010). Web 2.0 in the elementary classroom: Portraits of possibilities. *Language Arts*, 88(1), 62-68. doi:Article

Richardson, K. W. (2008). Don't feed the trolls: Using blogs to teach civil discourse. *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 35(7), 12-15

Zawilinski, L. (2009). HOT blogging: A framework for blogging to promote higher order thinking. *Reading Teacher*, 62(8), 650-661