[University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#https://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/blogs/)

**What is a Blog?**

Blogs are websites made up of short entries which one or more writers post over time. Most blogs have a unifying topic or theme, although the content and frequency of posts vary widely across the blogosphere.

**Picking a Topic For Your Blog**

Blog topics can be broad (such as “international politics”) or narrow (such as “pictures of potato chips bitten into shapes resembling animals”).

This blog is about *The Invention of Wings* and issues related to it. Your topics might be literary, might be historical or cultural, and they might be anecdotal (at least in part).

As with all blogs, you should write about something that you *know* about, that you *care* about, and that *someone else will want to read* about. Blogs should be original and interesting. (The plot of the novel is neither, so stay away from that).

**Composing a Post**

1. **Have a point**. You may not have a “thesis” like an academic paper, but your reader should be able to easily identify your main point and to follow the organization of your narrative or argument. Like most good writing, a clear, interesting post will require some planning.
2. **Some approaches**: consider the reading in relation to its historical or theoretical context; write about an aspect of the day’s reading that you don’t understand, or something that jars you; formulate an insightful question or two about the reading and then attempt to answer your own questions; or respond to another student’s post, building upon it, disagreeing with it, or re-thinking it. In any case, strive for **thoughtfulness and nuance**. To ensure that everyone has a chance to read the blog before class, post your response by midnight the evening before class.
3. Apply your **favorite writing strategies**. Narrative, analysis, comparison, and exposition – all of these modes of writing have usefulness in a literary blog.
4. Create **an appropriate tone**. Blogs are a conversational genre, less formal than journal articles or academic papers. Using first person is usually preferable. Think about your intended audience and how you would communicate with people who might read your blog (teacher, parents, classmates, friends not in this class). Your tone would probably be more relaxed than a formal paper, but more formal than a conversation with a friend at a party. In your post, try to replicate the tone and vocabulary of your imagined conversation.
5. Be concise and focused. Readers are likely to skim your blog post, and you want the important information to jump out at them. Stick with one theme per post so as not to overwhelm your reader. If your post seems long, consider using subheadings or bullet points because huge chunks of text can be daunting to potential readers. A blog should be about 250-300 words.
6. **Proofread for typos and spelling errors**! Careless mistakes can distract readers and may turn them off from your blog.
7. Include **images**. Images can grab a reader’s attention and make your posts more aesthetically appealing. Images should add to the ideas discussed. Whatever images you choose, be sure **to cite** where they came from.
8. Include **research o**n relevant historical, cultural, or other information if this interests you. **Cite appropriately.**
9. Just as in any piece of writing, pay special attention **to the title** and **opening line of each post**. Both should intrigue the reader so she continues to read.
10. Keep your posts **concise.** Potential readers will likely be skimming through a number of websites. You don’t want them to get bored and leave your site or to miss important points that are buried in fluff or convoluted language. A blog should be 250-300 words.
11. **Spark conversation**. Blogs are “social media,” providing opportunities for you to converse with your readers. You want the reader to be invested in the “conversation” of your blog so that they will continue reading your posts. You can ask questions and encourage readers to respond in comments.

**Works Consulted**

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.

Lanson, Jerry. *Writing For Others, Writing For Ourselves: Telling Stories in an Age of Blogging.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

Wright-Porto, Heather. *Creative Blogging: Your First Steps To a Successful Blog.* Berkely, CA: Apress, 2011.