Blogger for Beginners

A guide for those new to Google's blogging platform

Blogger for Beginners

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Introduction

About Blogger

Blogger is a free web based tool to help you easily publish your thoughts online as a “web log”. Established by Pyra Labs in 1999, Blogger is credited with popularising “blogging” as a format of web publishing. In 2003, Pyra Labs was purchased by Google, enabling Blogger to offer all it's services for free and develop the service to become the powerful publishing format it is today.

There are many reasons to choose Blogger to publish your blog including:

- It is completely **free** to use!
- It's incredibly **easy** to use!
- Blogs are hosted on Google servers, and have no limitations on bandwidth
- You can completely customise the appearance of your blog
- Gadgets can be added to the layout by means of a simple editor
- You can post online, by email or using your mobile phone
- It is easily integrated with other Google services, such as Picasa, YouTube, Google Plus, AdSense, and Google Analytics.
- Advanced users can customize the template's HTML code

And more!

About this guide

Blogger for Beginners is a basic guide to starting out with the Google Blogger platform.

Through easy-to-follow instructions, this guide will take you from starting your first blog through configuring important settings, writing blog posts and customizing the appearance of your site.

This ebook is divided into ten main chapters:

1. **Getting started** – find out how to create a blog with Blogger and navigate the Blogger dashboard
2. **Writing your first blog posts** – see how easy it is to begin publishing content and rich media
3. **Permissions and privacy** – discover important settings about who can see or publish to your site
4. **Customise your blog** – with just a few clicks you can transform the appearance of

your blog
5. **Gadgets and the Blogger layout** – learn how to alter your sites layout and add rich content with Blogger gadgets
6. **Comments and backlinks** – discover Blogger comments and settings, plus how to show links to pages discussing your content
7. **Publish and archive** – find out more about publishing and archiving your blog content
8. **Share your blog** – learn about Blog Feeds and syndication, plus how readers can share your posts with social media
9. **How do I..?** - Answers to some frequently asked questions about Blogger
10. **Learn more about Blogger** – links to useful sites offering more information about Google's free blogging service

Each section includes concise instructions and helpful screenshots with annotations.

Tips and important notes are highlighted in grey shaded boxes like this.

I hope you enjoy using this ebook as you take your first steps towards becoming a Blogger aficionado! Feel free to either read from start to finish or just dive right in and read the sections most relevant to you.

Getting Started

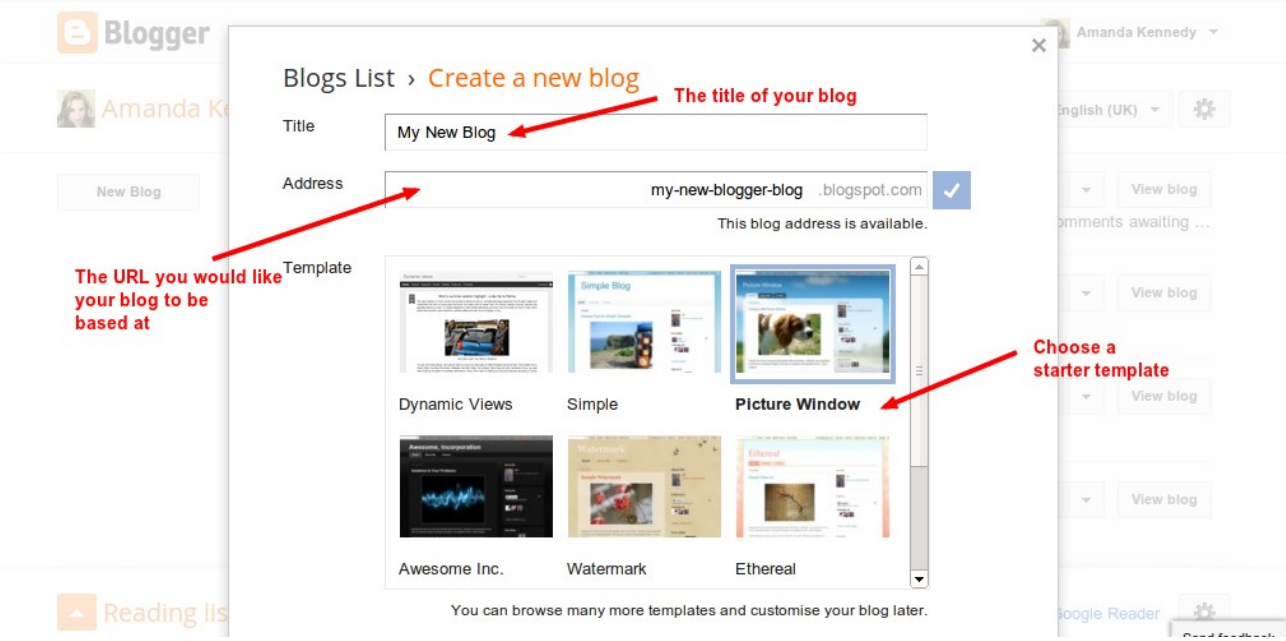
If you've never used Blogger before, this short chapter will get you up and running in just a few minutes.

Create your blog

To start using Blogger, simply sign in with your Google Account. (If you use Gmail, Google Groups, or YouTube, you already have an account.) If you don't have a Google Account yet, you can create one here.

Visit the Blogger Homepage and enter your Google username and password to sign in. Now type a display name (this is how you will appear as the site *author*) and accept Blogger's Terms of Service. Finally, click “Create a Blog” to start creating your first blog!

On the next page, you'll be asked to chose a title and URL for your blog:



Tip: Choose a title which is relevant to the content of your site, perhaps including a keyword or two connected to your content. This will help people find your blog more easily in search engines. It's also useful to match the URL to the title of your site, as in the example above.

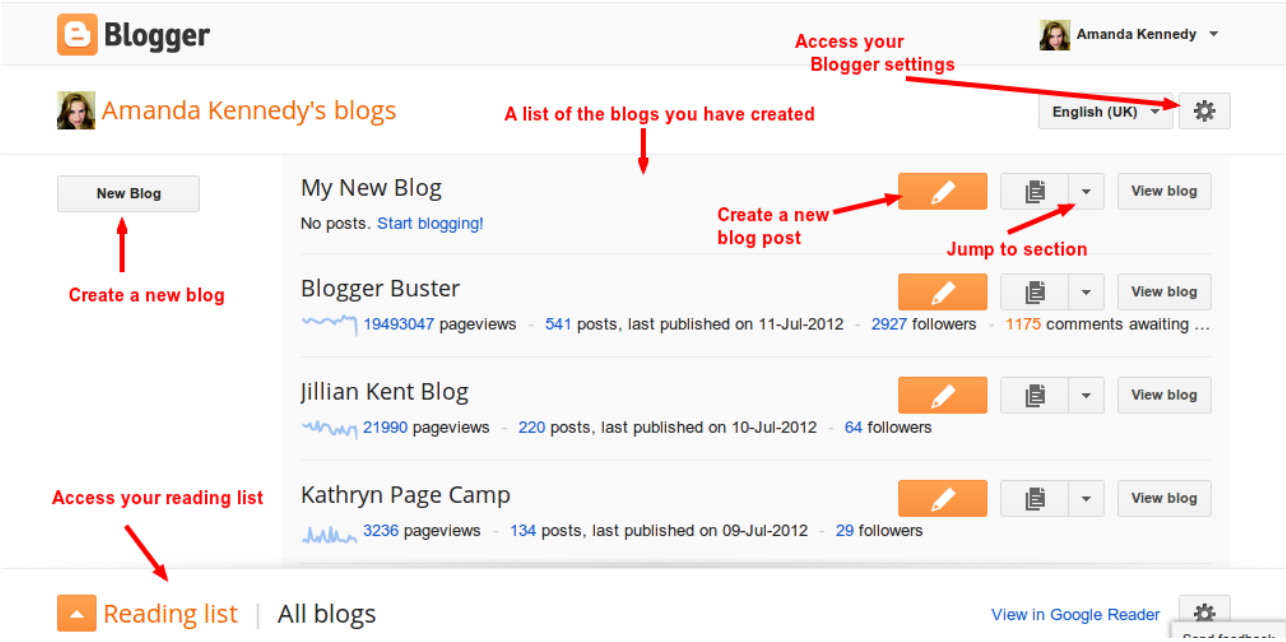
Next, pick a “starter template” from the selection further down the page. You can easily change or customize this later, so for now just choose the style you like best.

Finally, click the orange “Create Blog” button and your blog will be ready to use! You can start publishing right away or begin to find your way around the Blogger Dashboard.

Tip: Take a look at this video which explains how to create a blog with Blogger

The Blogger Dashboard

Once you have created a blog with Blogger, you'll be able to use the Blogger Dashboard, from which you can access any blogs you have created, and catch up with news in your reading list (see *How do I..?*).



Your newly created blog should be listed right at the top of the page. To create your first post, you can either click the “Start Blogging! Link or the orange pencil icon.

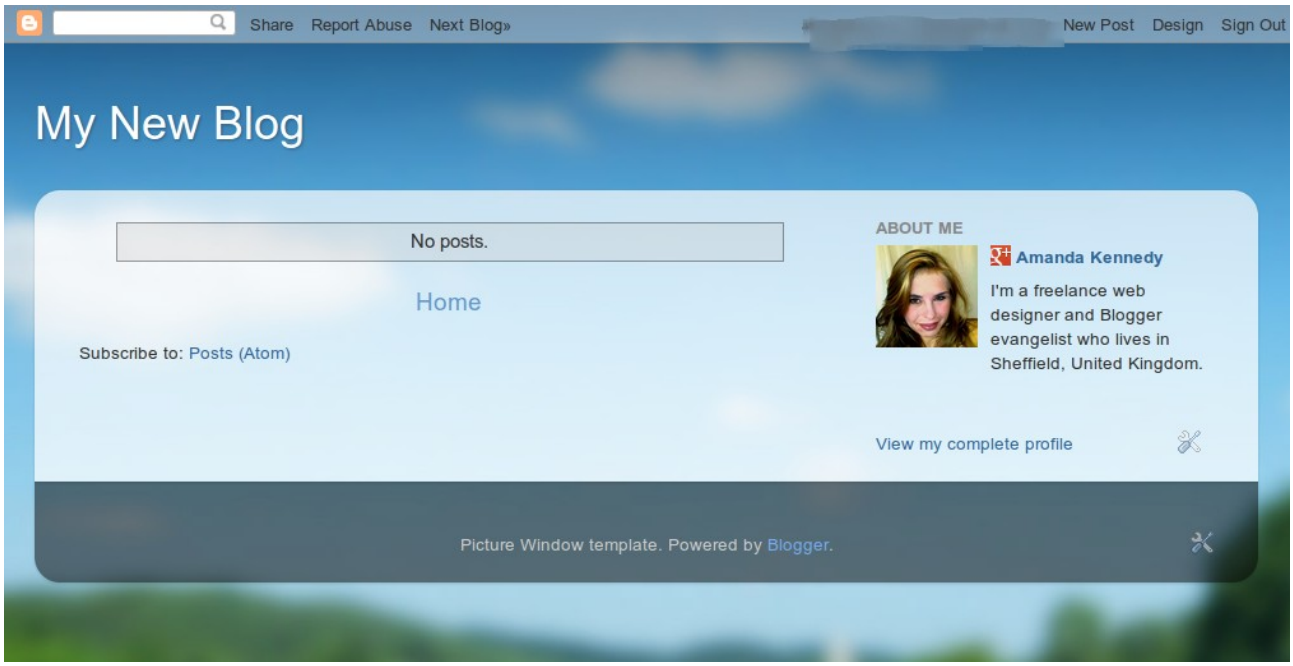
Once you've started using your blog, you'll discover statistics appear beneath your blog title, including:

- How many page views your site has had in the past week
- The total number of posts (including drafts) and the last publishing date
- The number of people following your blog

Tip: This video on YouTube provides a comprehensive overview of the Blogger dashboard.

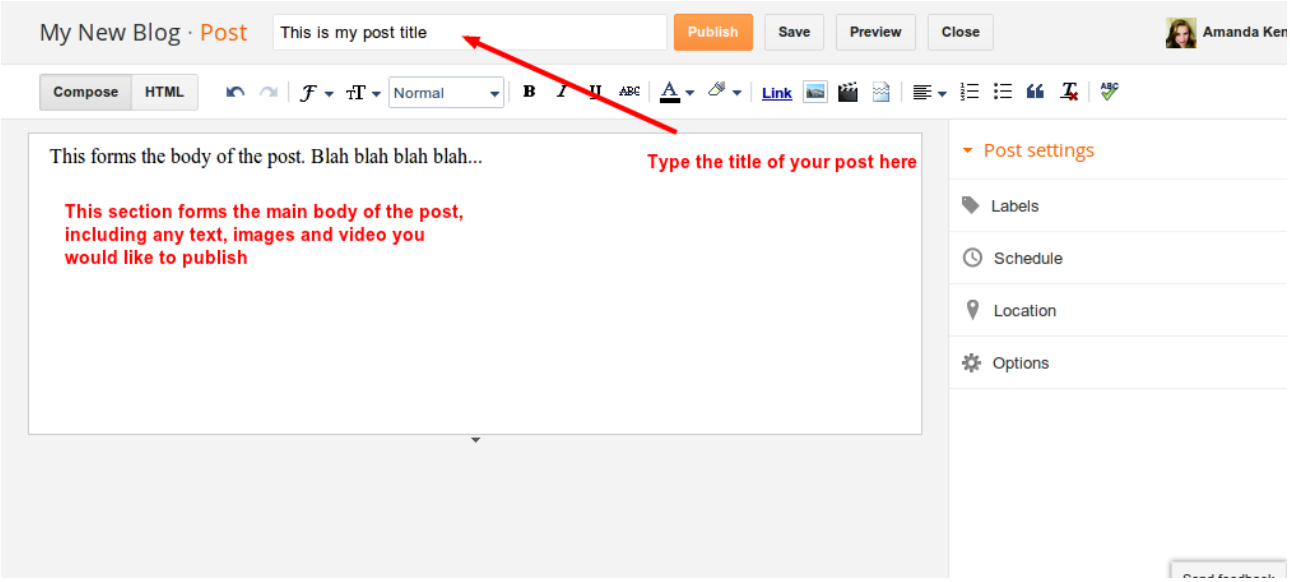
Writing your first blog posts

Right now if you were to visit your blog you'd be presented with a notice explaining that there are “no posts” to display.



Creating a posts for your blog is as simple as filling out a form. To get started, you can either click the “Start Blogging” link or the orange pencil icon in the Blogger dashboard. If you are viewing your site on the web, alternatively click the “New Post” link in the top right of the Blogger nav bar.

This will bring up the blog posting form in which you can write your post:



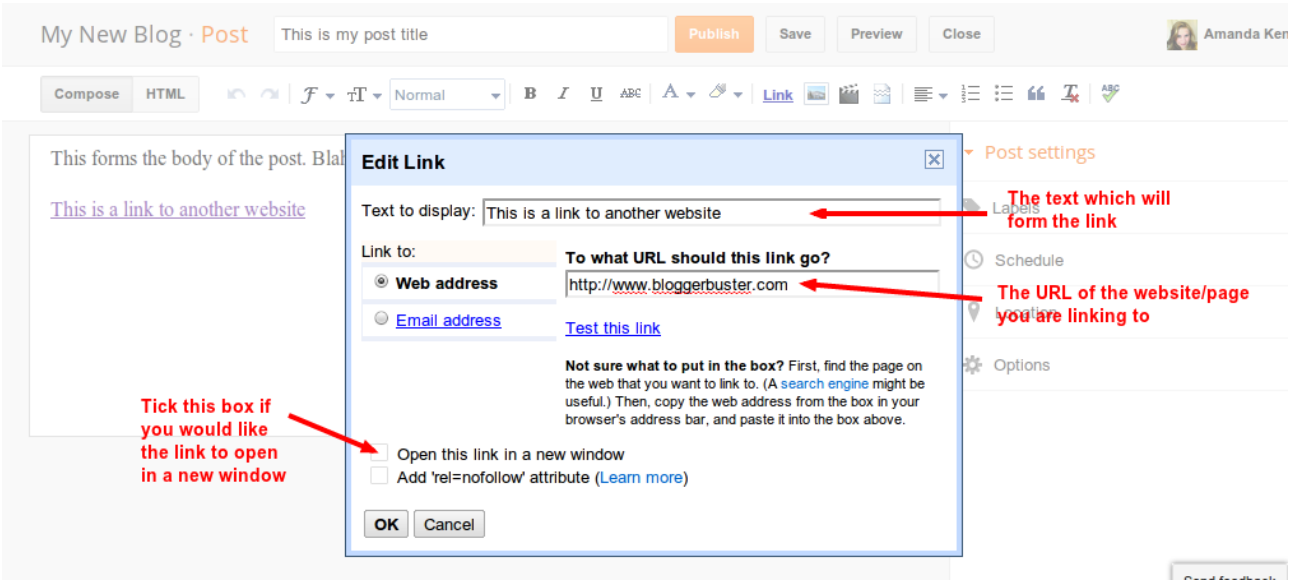
Tip: When choosing a title for your post, try to include a relevant description of what the post will be about. This will help people find your post more easily in search engines and attract more page views.

You can jazz up the text-based content of your blog posts in a number of ways:

- Use **bold**, *italic*, underlined or ~~strike-through~~ text using the buttons above the form
- Use different coloured fonts and background colours using the drop-down buttons
- Insert a numerical (ordered) or bulleted (unordered) list
- Select an area of text to appear as a quote using the blockquote button

Adding links

To add a link in your blog post, select the text you would like to form a link and click the **hyperlink** button. This brings up a pop-up dialogue in which you can specify the URL of the page you would like to link to, and choose whether or not clicking on the link will open in a new window:



Tip: Links are regarded as the "currency" of the web. Web pages which are linked to by many other sites are regarded as having more "authority" and often rank higher in search engine results. If you would prefer not to pass on this "link love" to the site you link to, check the "rel=no-follow" box which tells search engines not to follow this link from your published page.

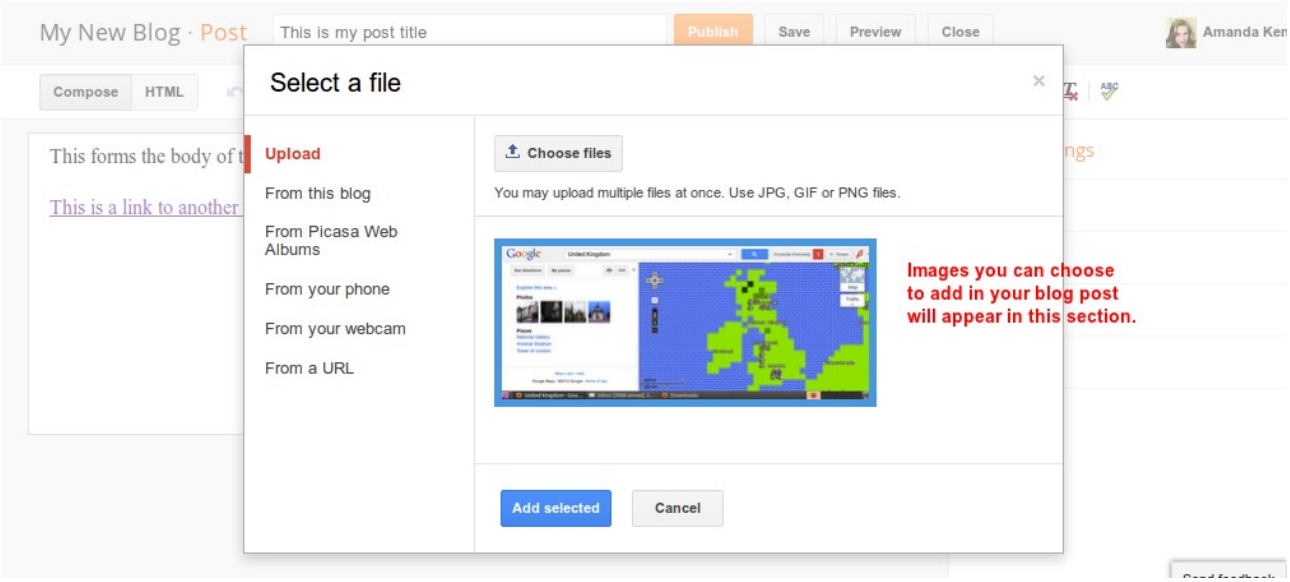
Instead of a web address, you can also use the hyperlink tool to link to an email address. However, linked email addresses can become the target of spammers unless the address is encrypted (an alternative *safe* method for posting your email address can be found here).

Inserting images

There are many ways of choosing images to include in your blog posts:

- Upload an image from your hard drive
- Insert an image previously uploaded to this blog
- Add an image hosted in Picasa Web Albums
- Upload from your mobile phone (requires the Google+ app)
- Use your webcam (requires confirmation of use via Adobe Flash)
- Paste the URL of an image hosted elsewhere (e.g.: Flickr, Photobucket)

To add an image, click the image button in the posting toolbar and select the method you would like to use.



The images which are available to paste into your blog post will appear in the larger section on the right.

Tip: You can choose to paste in more than one image at a time by holding CTRL (or CMD) and clicking each image. The selected images will feature a blue border and will be added to your post when you click the “Add Selected” button.

By default, the images you paste into your posts will be “medium” sized and will be aligned to the centre of the page.

If you would like to change the alignment, size or other image options, click on the image in the text editor to see a menu of available options:

You can also add a caption to appear beneath your image by clicking the “Add caption” link.

Tip: To ensure your images are more “accessible”, add a title and alt-text for your image by clicking the “Properties” link in this menu. This ensures relevant code is in place for those who view your site with images disabled (it's also said to improve search engine

visibility, though cannot be relied on).

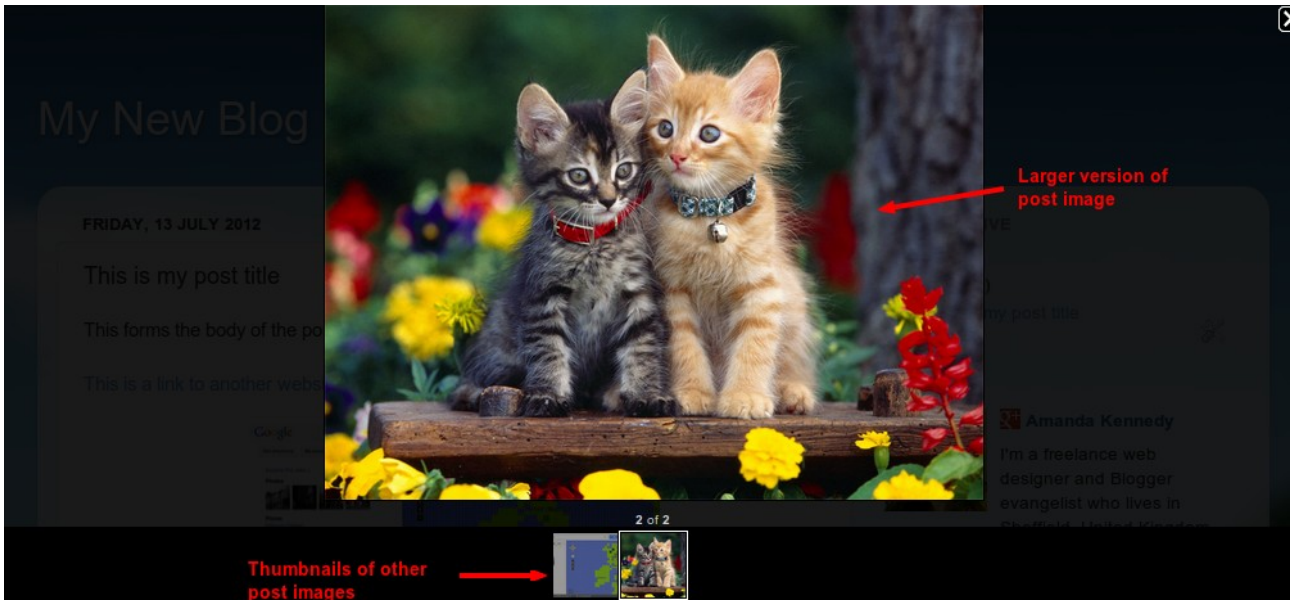
When you upload images to your blog, these will be added to an album on Picasa which is named using the title of your blog. If you ever want to reuse a previously uploaded image, you can select “From this blog” in the image menu.

Images added to blog posts are automatically linked to the URL on which they are hosted.

Blogger's Lightbox Feature

Blogger recently introduced a “lightbox” feature for blog posts, which is enabled by default in the blog settings.

When viewing a published post in your browser, you can click on a post image and this will bring up a larger version in a lightbox-style format. If multiple images are used in a post, you can flick through these images like a slideshow without having to edit a single line of code!

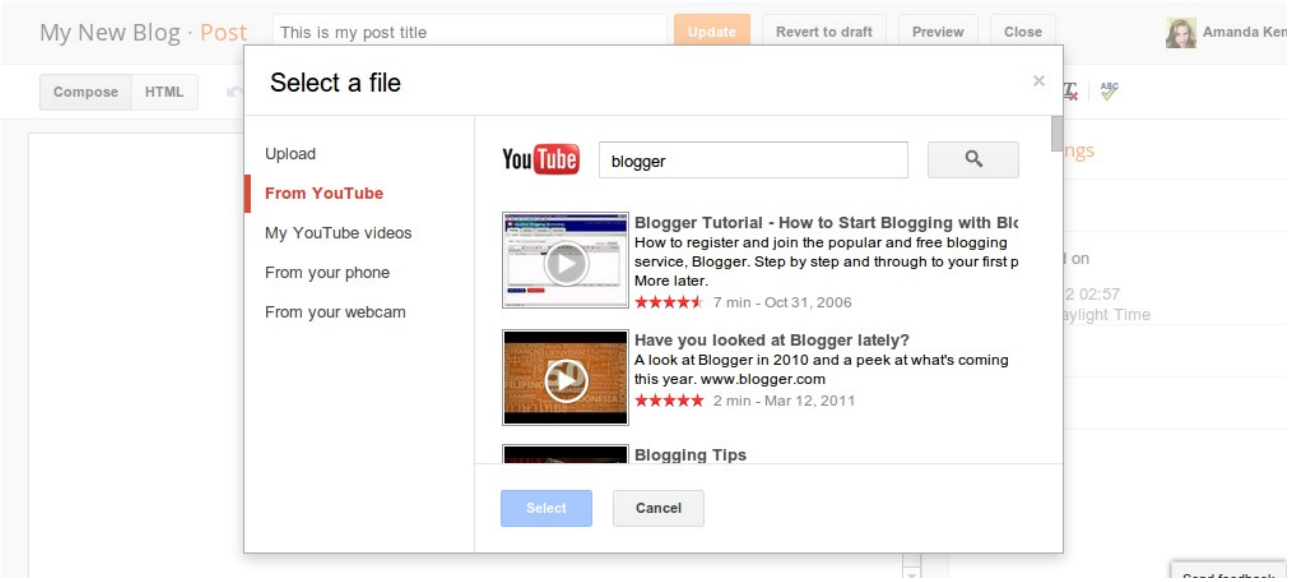


Tip: If you would prefer not to use this feature in your blog, you can disable the lightbox by going to **Settings>Posts and Comments** in your Blogger dashboard and choosing "No" for the option titled "Showcase images with Lightbox".

Add Video to your Posts

You can add video content to your blog posts in many ways:

- Upload a video from your hard drive (most video formats are accepted)
- Search YouTube for a video to embed
- Insert a video from those you have uploaded to YouTube (using the same Google account as you are using for your blog)
- Add a video from your mobile phone (requires the Google+ app)
- Record a video using your webcam



Again, videos which are available to embed in your post will appear in the main section to the right. If you upload a video, the code required to embed the video in your post will be automatically added so you don't need to tinker with the post's HTML.

Select the video you would like to add. The video thumbnail will enlarge enabling you to preview it in a small player before inserting into your post.

Publish or save to draft?

Once you've finished adding content to your blog post, you can choose to publish it by clicking the “Publish” button. Your post will then appear on your blog.

If you would prefer to save your post to edit it at a later time, you can choose to “Save” your post, then click the “Close” button to return to the Blogger dashboard.

Tip: when composing or editing, your posts will be automatically saved every few minutes.

Sharing posts to Google+

By default, the setting to share posts to your personal stream on Google+ is enabled. When you choose to publish your first blog post, you'll receive a prompt asking if you would like to share your post or “cancel”.

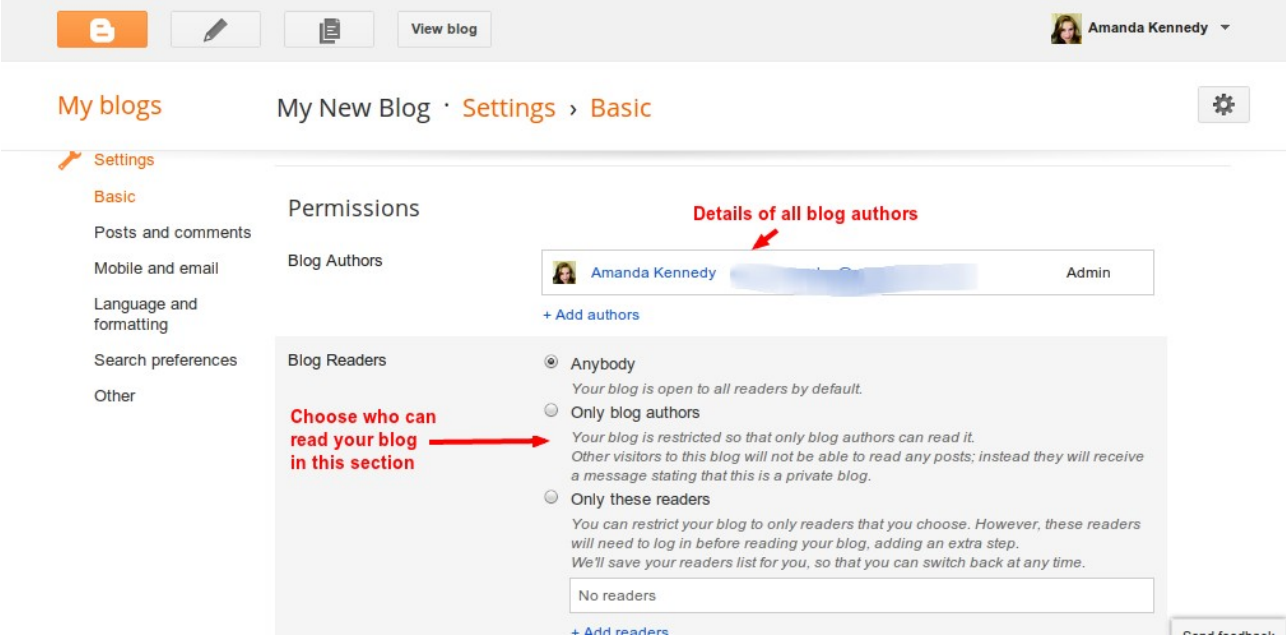
If you'd like to share, a snippet of your post, along with a thumbnail if you have inserted an image, will appear in your Google+ stream, with the title of the post linked to the item page.

If you would rather not share any of your posts to Google+, you can disable this option in

Settings>Posts and Comments section of your dashboard.

Permissions and privacy

Most Blogger users create sites they would like to be public, which anyone can see on the web. This setting is enabled by default when you create a new blog.



Making your blog private

If you would prefer your blog to remain private, you can easily change this option in **Settings>Basic**. Scroll down to the "Permissions" section and choose from the following options:

- **Anybody** – the default setting, enabling anyone to view your blog
- **Only Blog Authors** – this ensures your blog is completely private, and that only the authors you choose to add will be able to see your posts.
- **Only These Readers** – In this area you can add the email addresses of those with whom you would like to share your posts, Separate multiple email addresses with commas. Up to 100 blog readers can be added in this section, which should be more than ample for a reputable private blog!

For each email address you enter in the "Only these readers" section, the person will receive an email prompting them to do one of three things:

1. Sign in to an existing Google account
2. Create a new Google account (with which to login to Blogger)
3. View your blog as a guest

If the reader creates or logs into their Google account, they will be able to view your blog whenever they are logged in. Invited readers may only view your blog as a guest for a period of two weeks using the link sent in the email, after which you will need to invite them again if they would like to view your posts.

> **Tip**: If you choose to make your blog private, your site will not produce any blog feeds (thus preventing unwanted viewing of your posts).

To revoke a reader's access to your blog, simply click the “X” button beside the person's name. Blogger saves your list of invited readers if you choose to change the readership setting to “anybody”, allowing you to quickly make your blog private again at a later time.

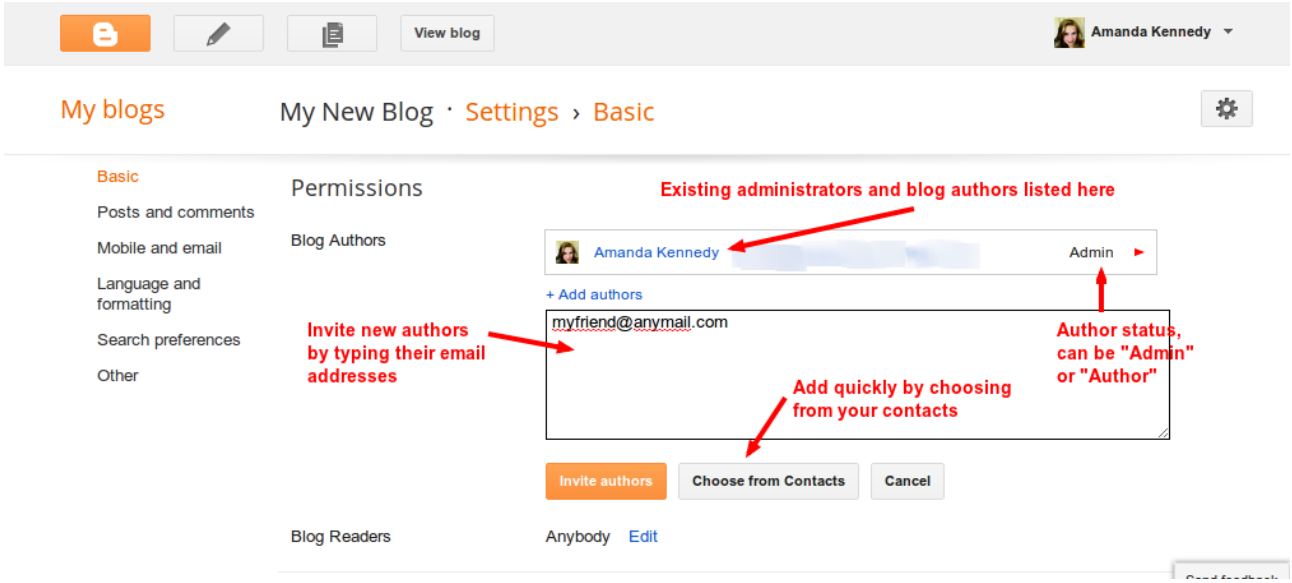
Adding authors and administrators

The creator of a blog has administrative privileges of the site. You can add more blog authors and administrators in the **Settings>Basic** section of the Blogger Dashboard.

- **Blog administrators** have complete access to all features of the blog dashboard; they can edit the template and change settings in addition to adding, editing and deleting posts and pages.
- **Blog Authors** may only create posts and edit their own posts. Authors cannot edit others' posts, nor can they control settings or edit the design.

Blog administrators have the privilege to add new authors and to provide existing authors with administrative privileges.

To add a new author to a blog, click the **+ Add Authors** link in the **Permissions** section of the basic settings page. You can invite new authors by typing their email address in the form, or by choosing from your Google contacts:



When inviting someone to become an author to your blog, they will be sent an email to conform they accept. Blog authors must have a Google account and will be invited to create one if they do not have an existing account.

Once an author has accepted the invitation, your blog will appear in the list of blogs in their Blogger dashboard, with permission to create new posts.

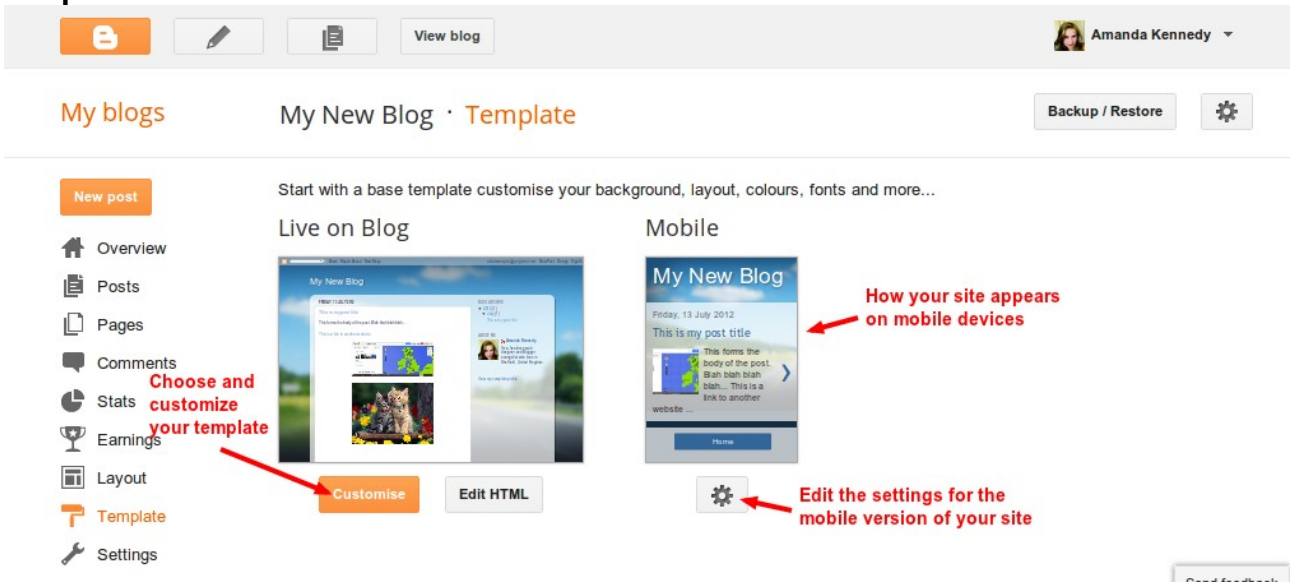
To promote an author to administrator status, click the arrow to the right of their Author status and choose “Administrator” from the drop-down menu. This menu can also be used to revoke an administrator's status or to delete a person from the list of blog authors (preventing any access to the site).

Customize your blog

One of Blogger's best features is the ability to easily customize virtually aspect of your site's design.

The templates available when starting a new blog are but a small sample of the designs and layouts available for you to try. Furthermore, you can add “gadgets” to the layout for virtually every need, from a simple linked image banner to your blog archives and a list of your public followers!

The **Template** section of the Blogger dashboard enables you to change the overall design of your site, either by using the **Blogger template designer** or by **directly editing your template HTML code**.

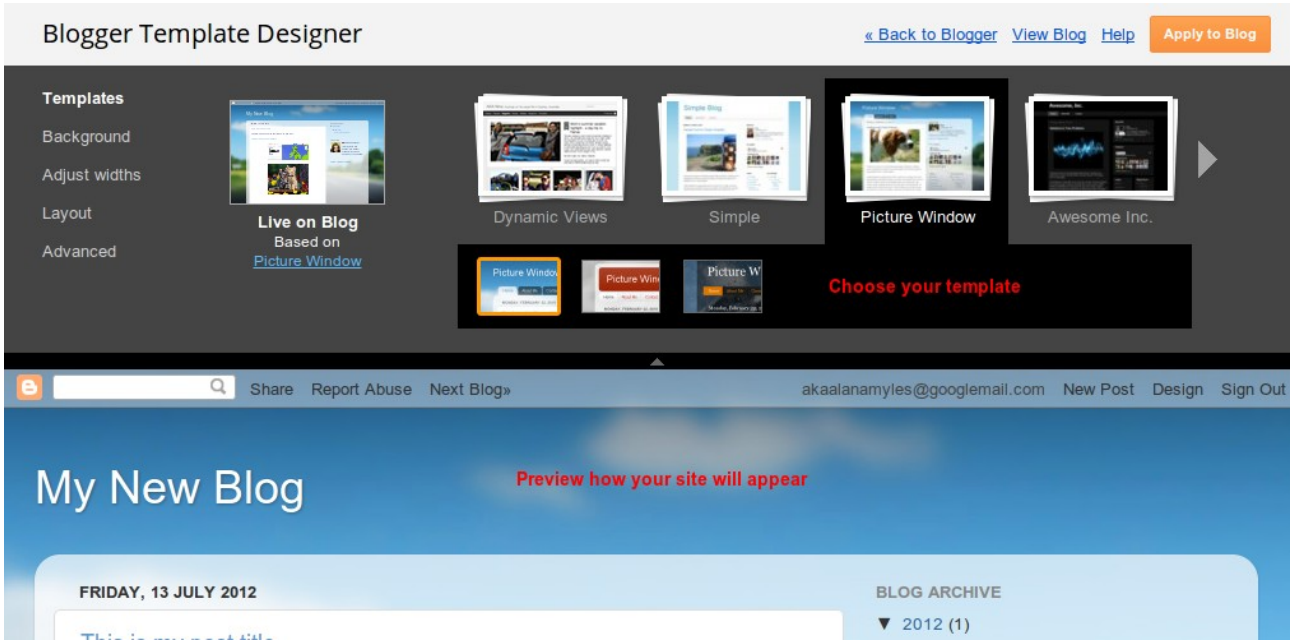


To get started customizing your template, click the orange “customize” button which appears beneath the web preview of your site. This takes you to the **Blogger Template Designer** through which most visual settings can be changed.

Choose a base template

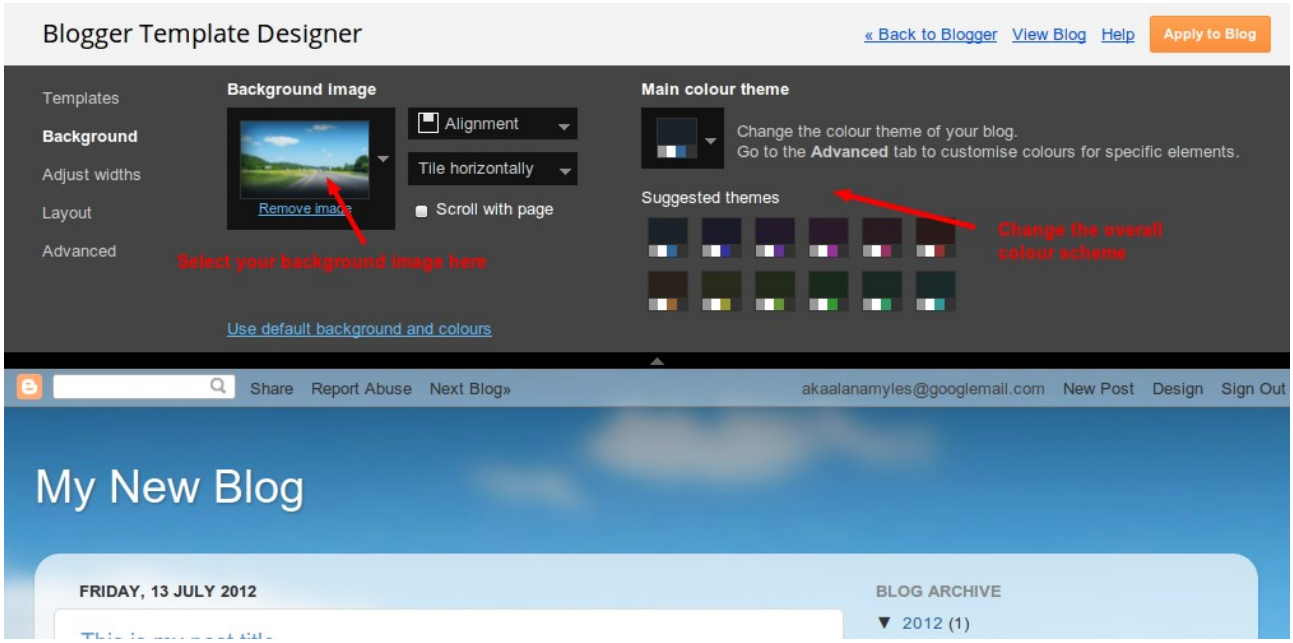
There are currently 7 varieties of base template you can choose from (including *Dynamic Views*, see below), each of which includes several variants.

Select the template style you would like to use, and the preview below will update to demonstrate how your site will appear.

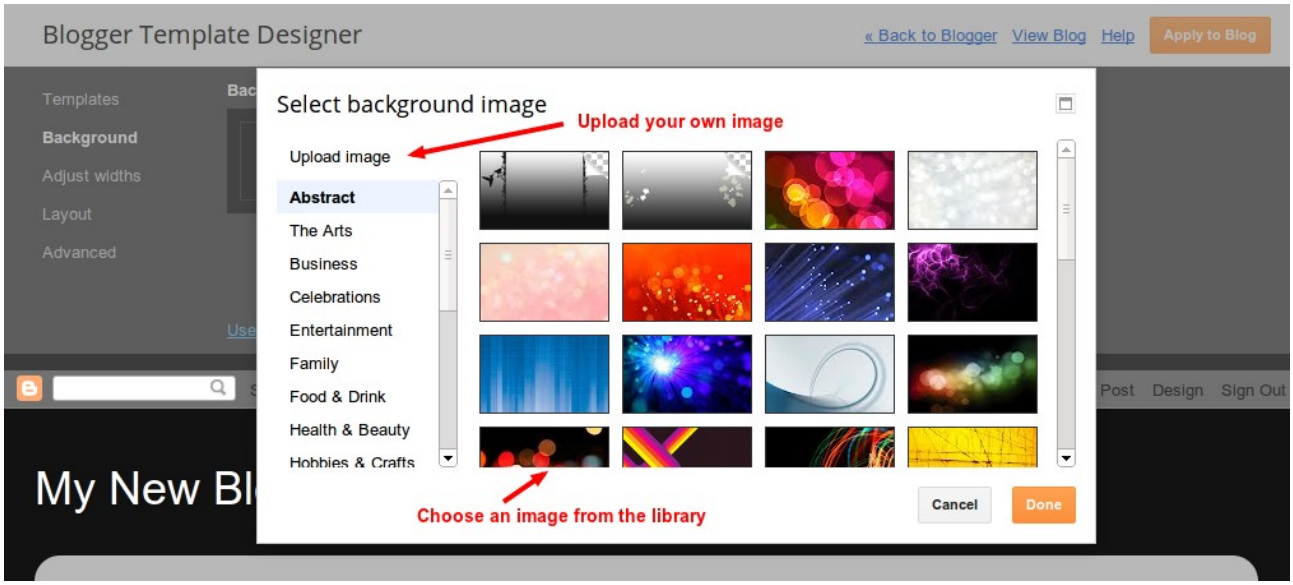


Backgrounds and colour schemes

You can add a background image to your blog in the **Backgrounds** menu, or – if your chosen template includes a background image – edit the existing one.



Blogger has a vast library of images you can upload in just a few clicks, or you can upload a background image from your hard drive.

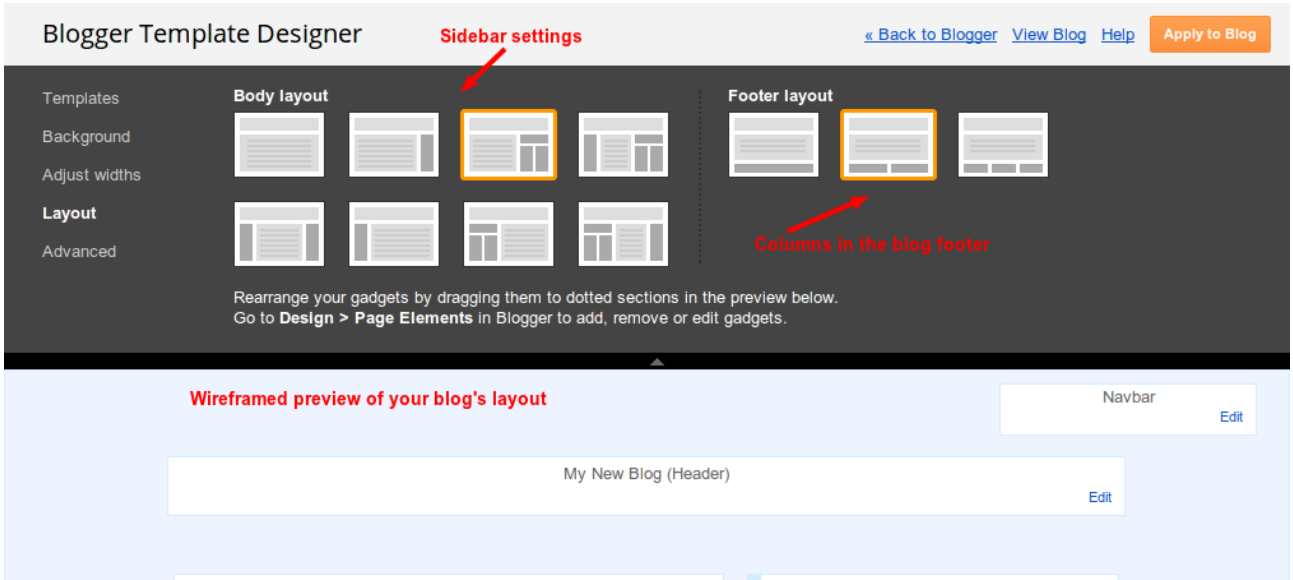


Several pre-set colour schemes are suggested for each template, enabling you to quickly switch between them. More control over individual font and background colours can be accessed in the “Advanced” menu.

Sidebars and Footer Columns (or not!)

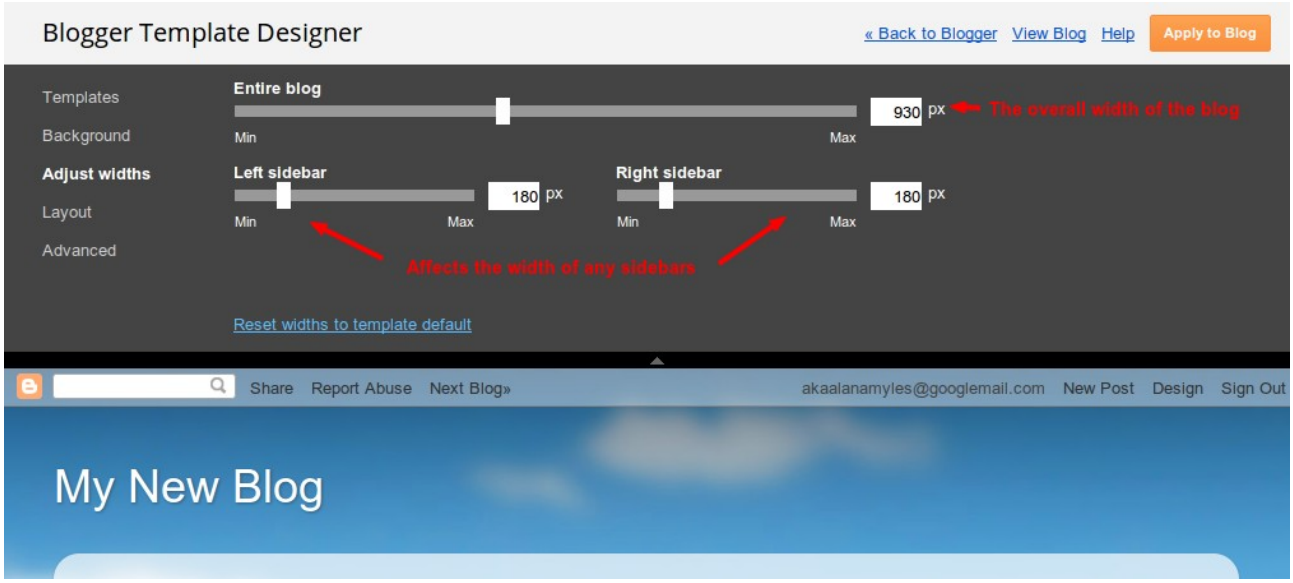
Aside from Dynamic Templates, all of the basic Blogger templates enable you to adjust the overall **layout** of your site.

Using the **Layout** menu, you can choose where to position sidebars (if indeed at all!) and how many columns to feature in the footer. You can then add **Gadgets** to these areas of your layout (see *Gadgets and the Blogger Layout*).



Adjust the widths of your blog and sidebar(s)

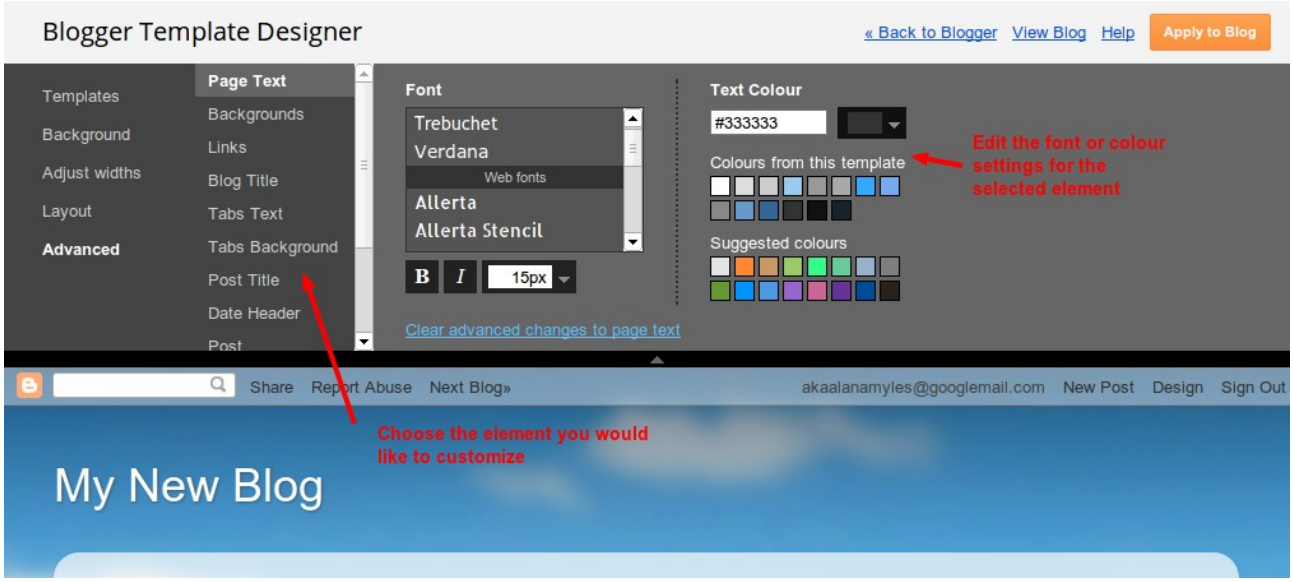
You can select how wide you would like your overall blog to appear on screen and how wide you would like any sidebars to be. The main body content and footer sections of your site will adjust accordingly, and you can preview the changes in the window below.



Advanced Template Design Options

By clicking the “Advanced” option in the Template Designer menu, you can tweak the fonts, colours and backgrounds of individual elements of your chosen template.

Customize your site by choosing from dozens of Google Web Fonts, select the size and style of text-based elements, and use selected colour values for backgrounds:



If you're feeling bold, you can even add your own **custom CSS** to tweak your design even more!

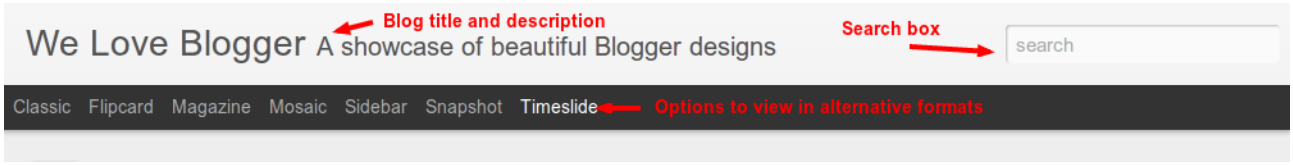
> **Important** – Don't forget to click **Apply to Blog** to save your customizations when you're done!

Using Dynamic Views

Blogger's Dynamic Views templates provide 7 new ways for readers to experience your site. As the title suggests, these templates are “dynamic”, enabling readers to view posts in a more visually to stimulating manner and find posts they may not have otherwise encountered.
Dynamic Views templates are best suited to blogs of a more visual nature, and some particular types will only work effectively when at least one image is present in every post.

Unlike regular templates, Dynamic Views cannot be easily customized using the Blogger Template Designer, and only certain gadgets (highlighted in the gadget lists, see *Gadgets and the Blogger Layout*) are available to use with these templates.

When using Dynamic Views, your blog title and description will appear at the top of the page, followed by a toolbar which links to the alternative views with which readers can view your site:



If **Pages** have been enabled for your blog (see *Publish and Archive)*, the toolbar will minimize to become a drop-down menu at the left, while links to pages appear to the right of it.

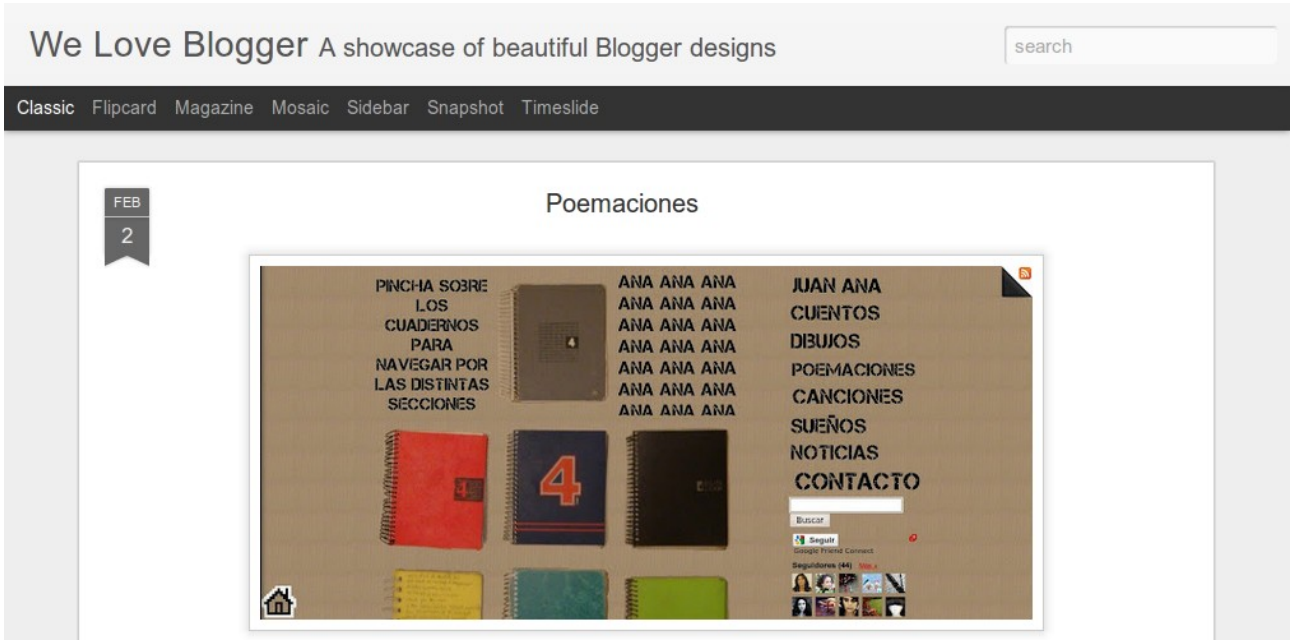
A useful search box appears in the top right of all blogs using dynamic views; the visualization of search results depends on the format chosen.

Here are the seven different types of “Dynamic Views” you can enable for your blog:

Classic

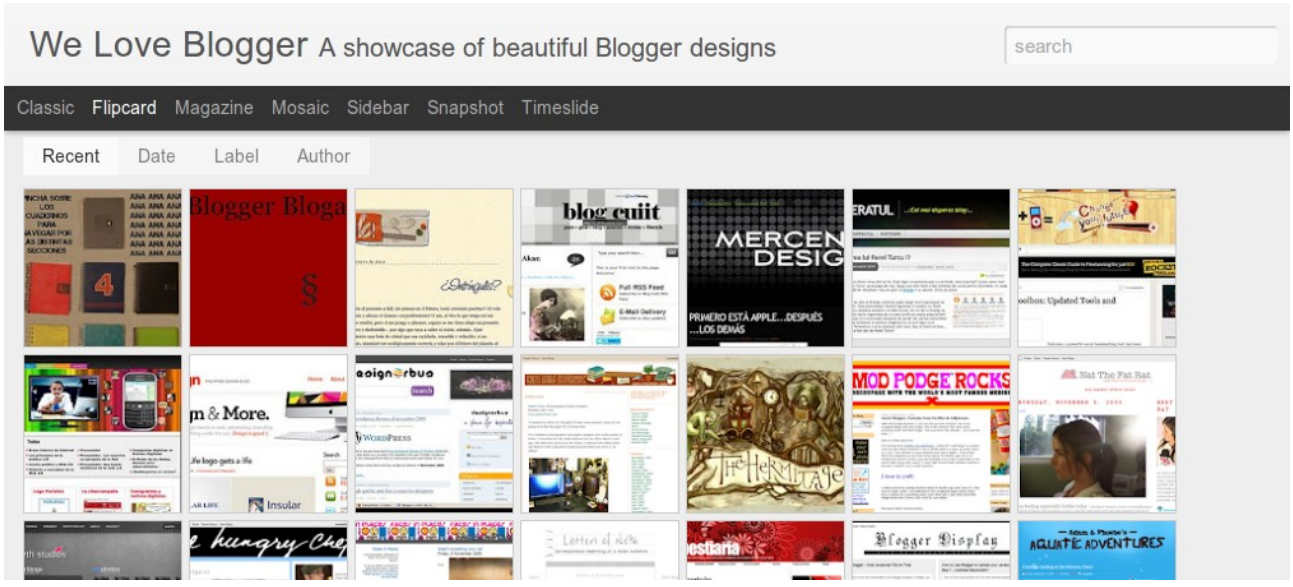
Infinite scrolling replaces the “Older posts” link, and posts will continue to load as you scroll down the page.

Keyboard short-cuts can be used to quickly jump between posts using J (for older posts) ad K (for newer posts). Alternatively the arrow keys may be used.



Flipcard

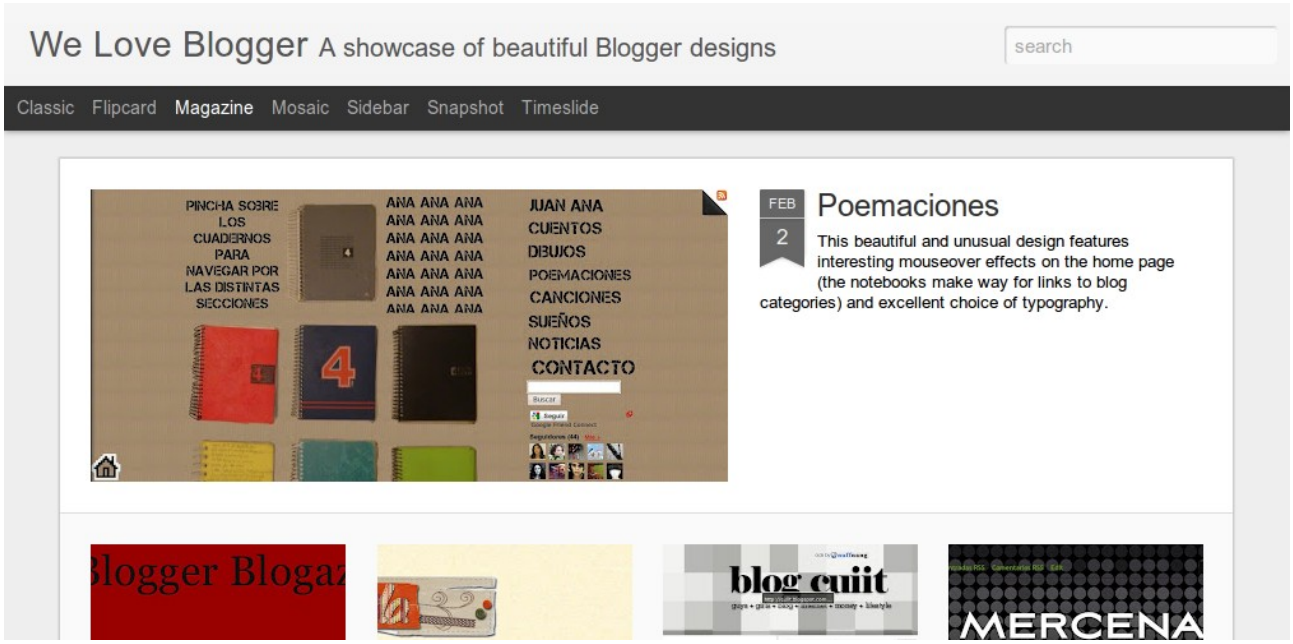
Post thumbnails are arranged to span the width of the page. These act like “cards” which can be flipped over when the mouse is hovered over them to see the post title and comment count. Infinite scrolling is enabled so that more posts load as you scroll down the page.



Click on a card to see the post in full view. You can navigate through the posts using J (older post) and K (newer post) or the arrow keys. Hit escape or click Back to all posts to return to the Flipcard view. In the upper left, click to sort by Recent, Date, Author and Category.

Magazine

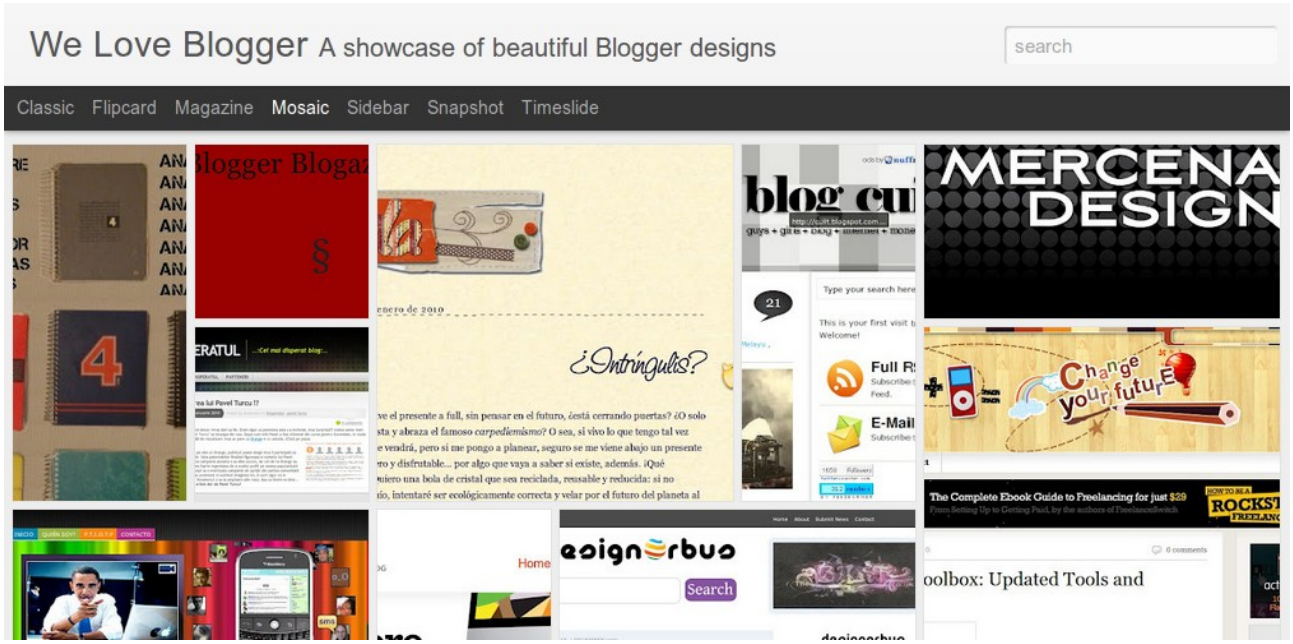
The newest post includes a larger image and snippet of the blog post. On the second row, large thumbs of recent posts will appear; beneath these you will see a list of older posts with smaller thumbnails to the left and a summary to the right.



Hover your mouse over a post to see animations featuring a comments bubble (when the post has received one or more comments) while the post date is highlighted in red.

Mosaic

This template style organises images from blog posts into a mosaic-like display. It is optimized for the tablet viewing, and supports screen rotation.

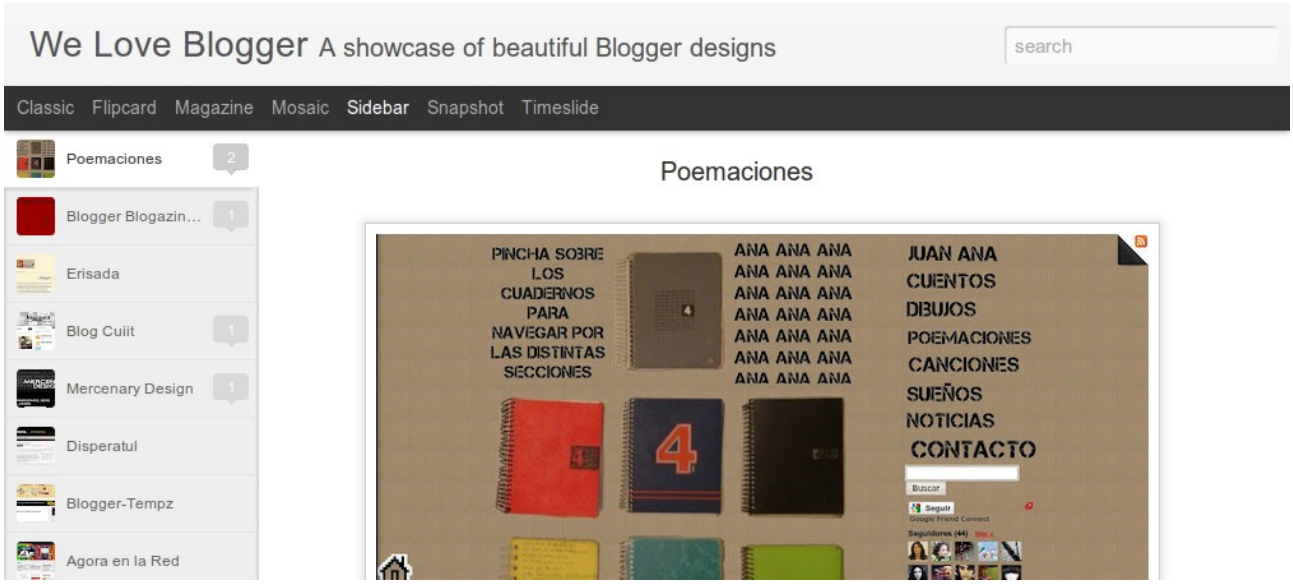


Clicking on an individual tile will expand that post to the full width of the view, and clicking again will collapse the post back into its original position.

The exact position of the tiles is randomly determined each time the blog loads, but they will appear chronologically from top left to bottom right. Once a tile is expanded, you can page down by using the "up" and "down" arrow keys as well as J and K.

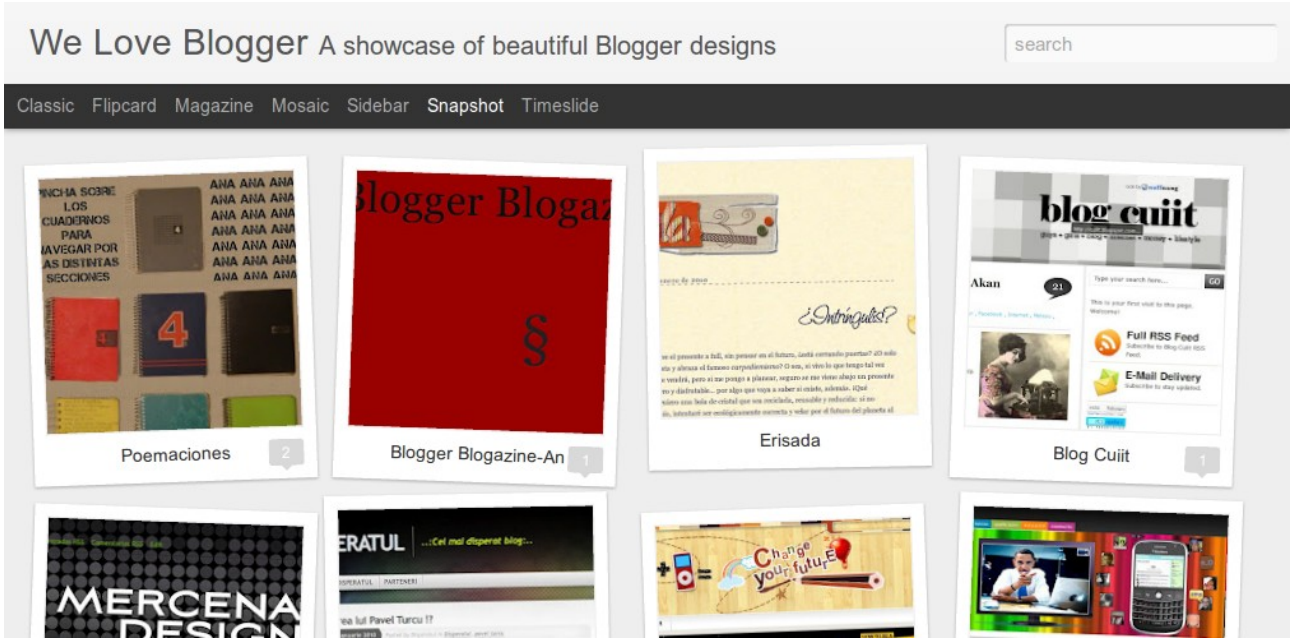
Sidebar

Using this style, the left side of the blog is reserved for the titles, thumbnails and comment count of recent posts. You can navigate between posts easily using the J and K, or arrow keys.



Snapshot

Using this view, only posts which include images will be displayed, and all images from a post will feature as large thumbnails (some of which are rotated).



When hovering the mouse over any thumbnail. The thumb will expand and rotate to normal view with a snippet of the post featured beneath.

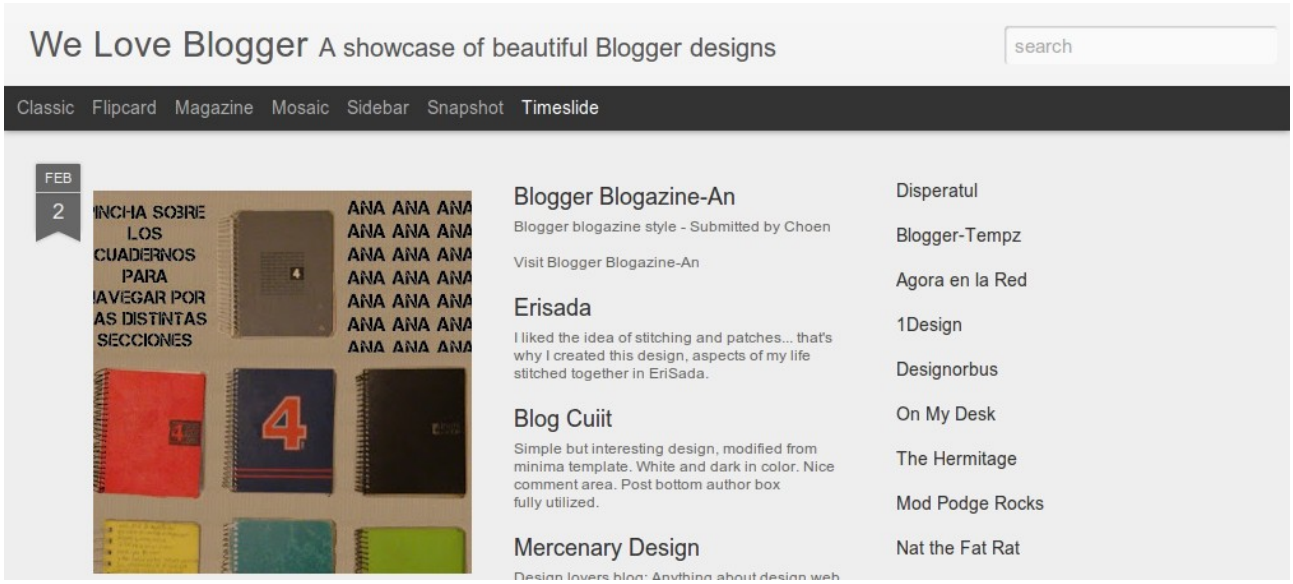
Clicking through any photo will display the full post page, with navigation links at the bottom for Newer and Older posts.

Timeslide

This view breaks the blog content down into three different areas:

- **Left column**: Enlarged picture with a post snippet, title, and snippet displayed in chronological order
- **Middle column**: Displays just the post title and snippet
- **Right column**: Displays just the individual post titles

When using the Search function in this view, search terms on the page will be highlighted.



To use a dynamic views template for your blog...

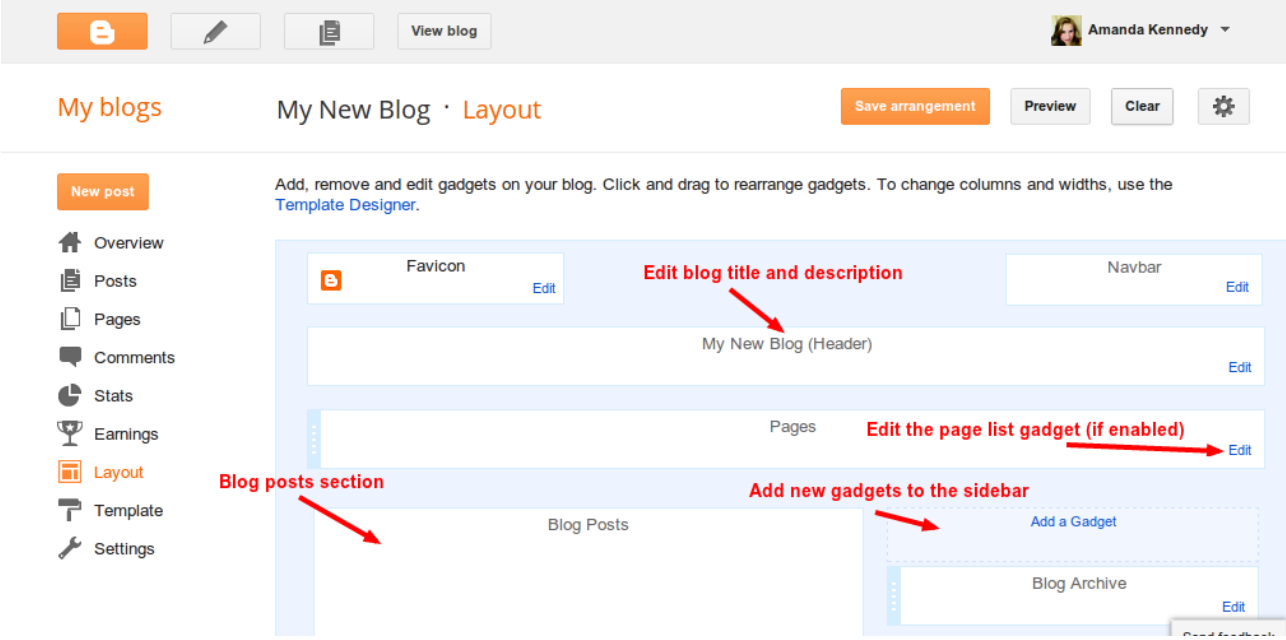
Simply choose the view you would like to use from the list of options in the **Template Designer**. You will be able to preview how your site will appear using a Dynamic View just as if you had chosen a regular template.

Tip: ensure you have published several posts before adopting a Dynamic Views template for your site to better see how your blog will appear.

Gadgets and the Blogger Layout

Blogger's Layout feature is an easy-to-use template editing feature that allows you to add and edit rich content in the form of gadgets without any knowledge of HTML or CSS.

As mentioned earlier, you can control the **overall layout style** of your blog in the **Template** section of the dashboard. To populate each gadget-ready area with content and control elements of the blog content, we will be using the **Layout** section.



In this wire-frame view of your blog, you can add **gadgets** to your sidebar and footer sections. When we first create a new blog, **Archive** and **About Me** gadgets are automatically inserted into the template. More gadgets can be added by clicking the “Add a gadget” link which appears at the top of each gadget-enabled section.

Editing elements in the layout section

Here's an overview of what you can configure when you click **Edit** for each of these elements which are included by default when you create a new blog:

- **Navbar**: Select the colour you'd like your Navbar to be.
- **Header**: Add or edit the header of your blog, which includes your blog title and blog description.
- **Blog posts**: Choose the number of posts to display on your main page. You can choose either the number of days with posts to display or the total number of posts on the main page. You also have the option to show email post links that let your

visitors easily email posts from your blog to their friends.
•**Profile**: Edit/add your profile title, 'About Me' description, and location.
•**Blog archive**: Edit/add your blog archive title, select your display style (hierarchy, flat list or drop-down menu), choose to display post titles, display oldest posts first, choose your archive frequency (monthly, weekly or daily) and date format.

The following elements are **fixed** and cannot be moved to different sections of the template:

- Navbar
- Header
- Blog Posts

All other elements can be moved to different places in the sidebar and footer sections.

Tip: If you have enabled **Pages** for your blog, you can list your pages as a horizontal bar which appears beneath the header section, or as a vertical list in the sidebar/footer. By default, all published pages will be linked to in the Page List gadget, but you can choose to hide selected pages by deselecting the box to the left of the page name.

To rearrange gadgets in your layout, simply drag the gadget using your mouse to your chosen position. You can **preview** and **save** your changes using the buttons on the top right of the page.

Adding new gadgets to the sidebar and footer sections

Add new gadgets by clicking the **Add a Gadget** link in the area you would like it to appear. This will initiate a pop-up page where you can choose which gadget to add:

You can choose from one of the **27 basic gadgets** (provided by Blogger) from the initial screen, or select a third-party gadget from the library. Each gadget in the list features a brief description and can be added by clicking the blue **+** icon.

Some gadgets have options which can be configure when you choose to add to your template. Once you have saved your changes, the gadget content will be live in your layout when viewing your blog on the web.

Commonly used Blogger gadgets

Here's a selection of some commonly used gadgets you may like to add to your layout:

- **Translate** – Allow readers to translate your blog into their native language for easier reading
- **Follow by email** – make it easy for visitors to subscribe to email updates from your blog
- **Popular posts** – Adds a list of popular posts, including an optional thumbnail and snippet
- **Blog stats** – Displays the number of visitors to your blog
- **Adsense** – Quickly add an AdSense block to earn revenue from
- **Search box** – Enable readers to search your site with integrated Google site search
- **HTML/JavaScript** – Helpful for when adding Javascript widgets, embed code and rich content from other sites

- **Text** - An easy way to add simple text-based content
- **Picture –** Upload an image with optional title and caption, which can be linked to act as a banner
- **Slideshow** – Create a slideshow with ease using images uploaded to Picasa Web Albums
- **Blog List** – Show off your favourite blogs, with optional snippets of their latest posts

Adding third party gadgets

Many sites offer widgets you can add to your blog. Some widgets are easy to install by clicking an "Add to Blogger" buttons:

This type of widget install pre-populates the content of an HTML/JavaScript widget with the embed code or JavaScript which you can preview before saving to your site.

Other sites offer embed or widget codes which you will need to copy to your clipboard and embed as the content of an HTML/JavaScript gadget.

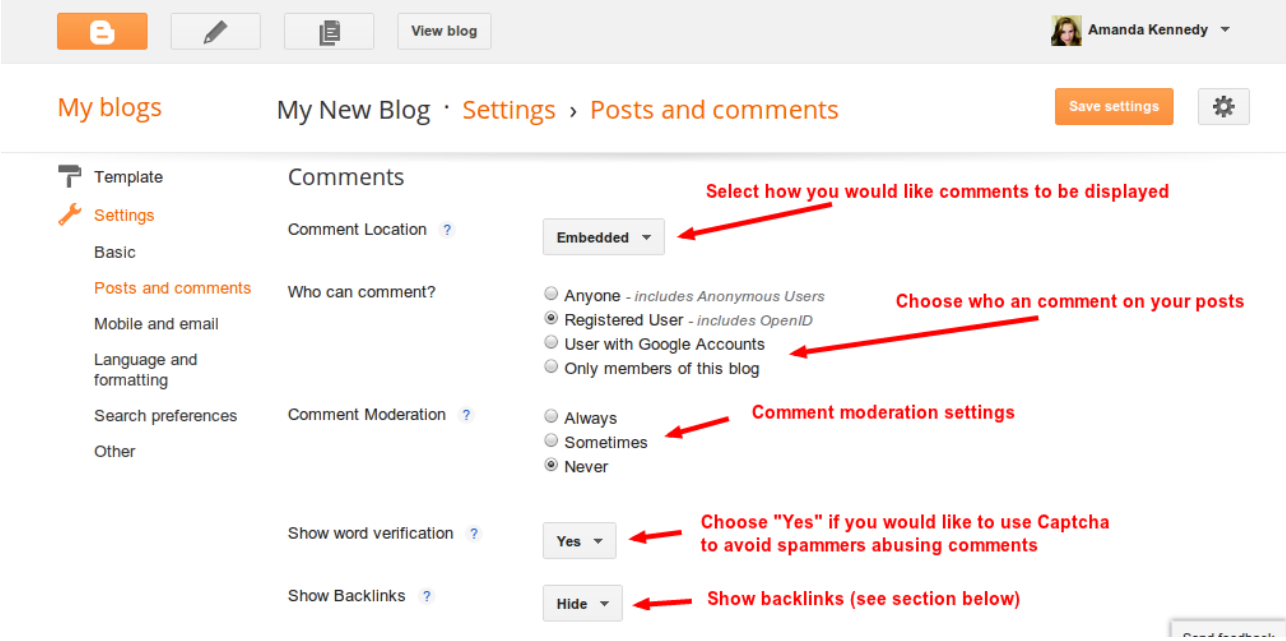
Comments and backlinks

If you choose to enable comments, visitors to your blog will have the option to respond to your posts.

Blogger supports **threaded commenting**, which means that comments are presented in a way that a reader can more easily differentiate between whether someone is making a general comment on the thread, or responding to another comment on the thread through indentation. Single-level comments will always be displayed chronologically.

How to enable (or disable) comments

By default, comments are enabled on new blogs. To control whether comments are enabled or disabled, go to the **Settings>Posts and Comments** area of your Blogger dashboard and scroll down to the **Comments** section.



Here is an overview of the various settings for blog comments:

- **Comment location –** select how comments will appear on post pages: **Embed, Full Page, Pop-up window** or **Hide**
- **Who can comment?** - Specify who can comment on your posts. The options range from anyone (which means that anonymous users can comment without having to sign in to any type of account first) to only members of the blog (ideal for private team blogs)
- **Comment moderation** - Decide if you'd like to always, sometimes, or never

moderate comments. If you select "Always," you'll have the option to enter in an email address where you can receive notifications that there are comments awaiting moderation. If you select "Sometimes," you'll be prompted to specify how many days old the post should be before it requires moderation.

- **Show backlinks** - Turning on this option will show all the URLs around the web that link to your blog post. The URLs will be visible to both you and to the readers of your blog (see below for more information about Backlinks)
- **Comment Form Message –** Type a message which will be displayed above the comment form. This is a useful way of thanking readers for leaving comments, or to explain about forms of comment moderation.

In order to disable comments on all pages of your site, simply choose **Hide** in the **Comment Location** setting.

Tip: Selecting the “Word Verification” option helps thwart a good percentage of spam from the comments section, but the only true way to ensure no spam comments appear on your site is to moderate all comments.

Threaded Comments

To enable threaded comments, you need to ensure that:

1. The setting for **comment form placement** is **embedded below post**
2. The **Blog Feeds** setting is set to **Full**

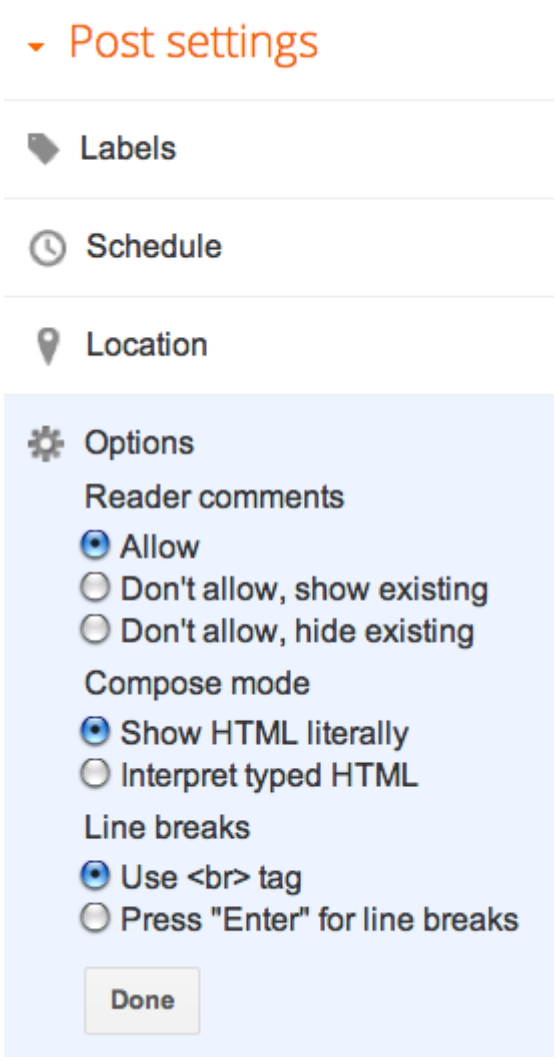
The Blog Feeds setting can be found in the **Settings>Other** section of the Blogger dashboard.

With these two settings configured, Threaded Commenting will be enabled for your blog, allowing visitors to respond directly to each other.

Disable/enable comments on a per-post basis

If you would like to disable comments only on certain posts of your site, choose to edit your post and click on the menu on the right side of the Post Editor to set post-specific comment settings. Here you can choose among three options:

1. Allow
2. Don't allow, hide existing
3. Don't allow, show existing



Moderating comments

If you choose to moderate all comments for your blog, you can add an email address to which comment notifications will be sent, You can then select to approve or delete the comment.

When Comment Moderation is set to **Sometimes**, you can select how old posts need to be for moderation to be active, but will not receive notifications by email.

The number of comments per blog which need to be moderated will display in the Blogger dashboard when you first log in. This links directly to the comment moderation page where you can view comments and select which to approve or delete.

You can also delete comments which have already been left by clicking the **Waste** icon beneath each comment while logged into Blogger. From the linked page, you can choose whether to temporarily or permanently delete the comment.

- Temporarily deleting a comment will provoke the message “This comment has been removed by the administrator” to appear in place of the original comment; the original comment may be recovered.
- Permanent deletion removes all trace of the comment and cannot be recovered.

Tip: Any links inserted into the comment body or as the linked name (when **Who can comment** is set to **Anonymous**) are reconfigured as **no-follow** links. This prevents link-love from your site being passed on to anyone attempting to manipulate links to their site.

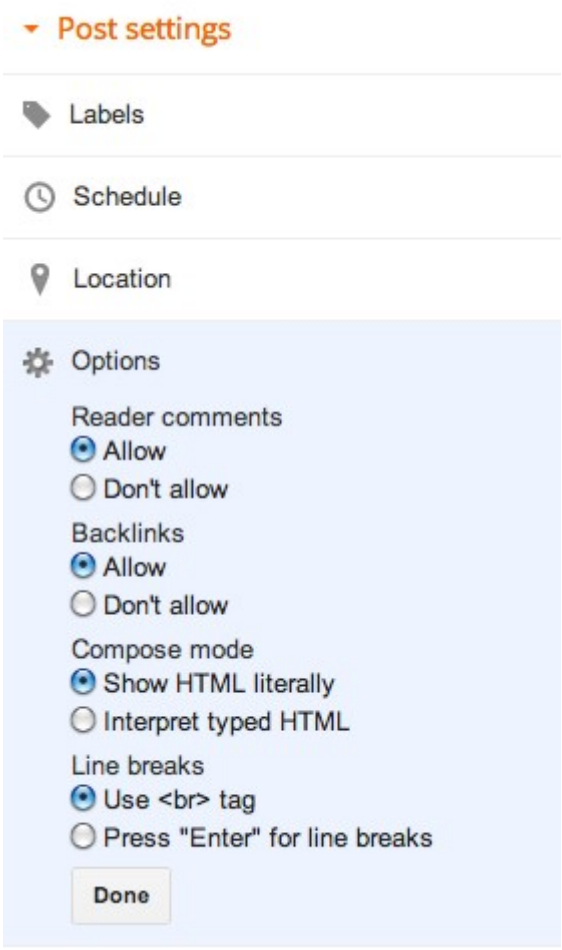
About Backlinks

Backlinks are a way of expanding the comments feature so that links to discussions on other sites may be displayed alongside comments on a post.

To enable backlinks being displayed on your blog, go to **Settings>Posts and Comments** in your Blogger dashboard and choose “Show” for the **Show Backlinks** option.

Once you have set up backlinks and others have linked to individual posts on your site, you will be able to see a list of backlinks (along with a brief snippet of the linked page) beneath the comments section on post pages:

In similarity to post comments, backlinks may be disabled on a per-post basis by changing the setting on the post editor for individual pages:



Backlinks are discovered by the **link:** operator of Google's Blog Search. This means there may be a brief delay before a linking page is displayed in the Backlinks section of your post pages.

Since Backlinks are generated “on the fly”, there is not the option to subscribe to new backlinks in the same way we can subscribe to post comments. If you would like to be notified of new backlinks, simply subscribe to the results of a query such as **link:your-blog-url.blogspot.com** in Google Blog Search.

Publish and Archive

Once you've published a post or two, you'll probably want to learn more about the organisation of content in your blog. Let's revisit blog posting, learn about **Pages**, and discover how our posts can be labelled and archived.

Blog posts revisited

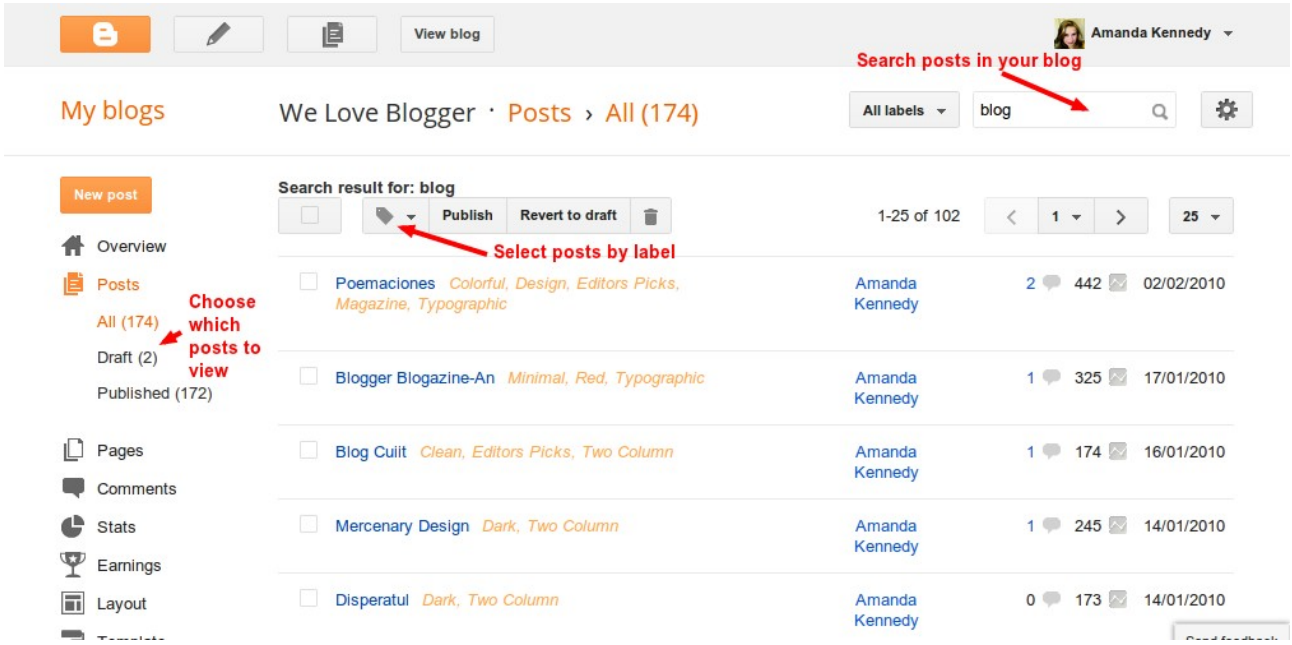
You can edit an existing blog post in one of two ways:

- Click the **Edit** link which appears when hovering over a post in the **Posts** section of the Blogger Dashboard
- Click the **wrench** icon which appears beneath a post when viewed in your browser

This will open up the post editing screen so you can edit and republish your post.

When you have written many blog posts, you can save time searching for an older item by searching or filtering the posts which are displayed in the **Posts** section of your dashboard:

- Filter by post status (*All, Published* or saved as *Draft*)
- Filter by label (see *Publish and Archive* for more information about **Post Labels**)
- Use the **Search** function



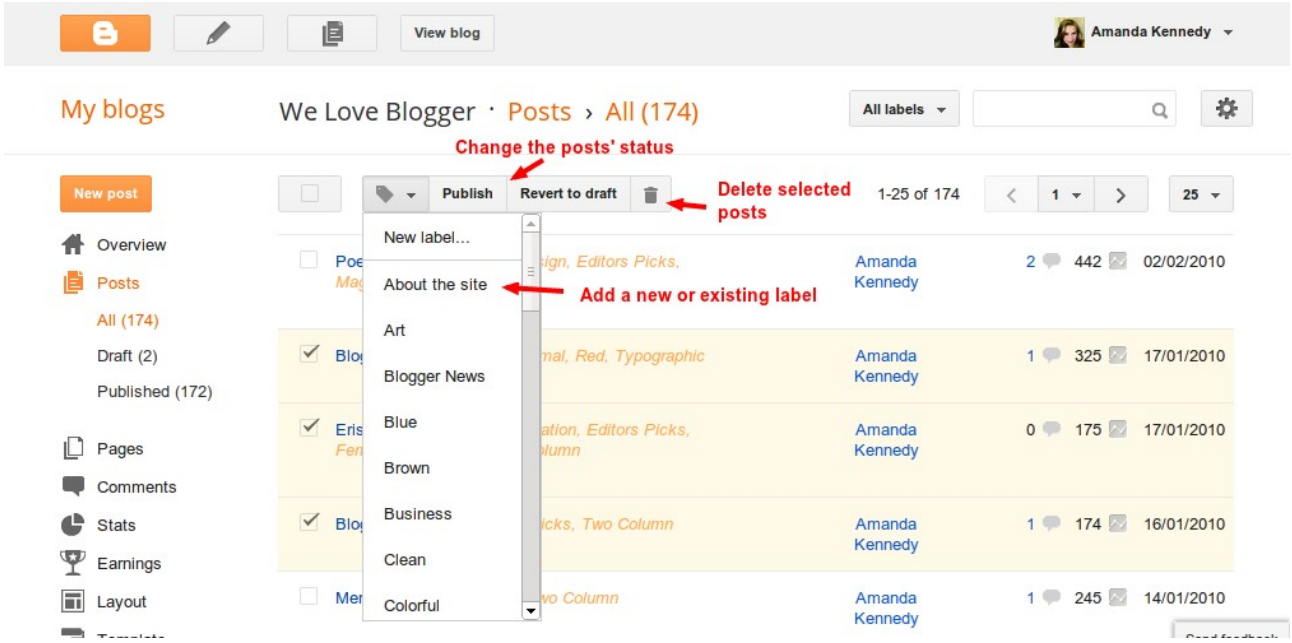
Tip: In addition to editing, in the **Posts** section of the dashboard, you can also choose to **View**, **Share** (on Google+) or **Delete** a single blog post.

Mass editing blog posts

You can choose to edit a number of posts at once by checking the box to the left of the post title (or check the box at the very top to select all posts).

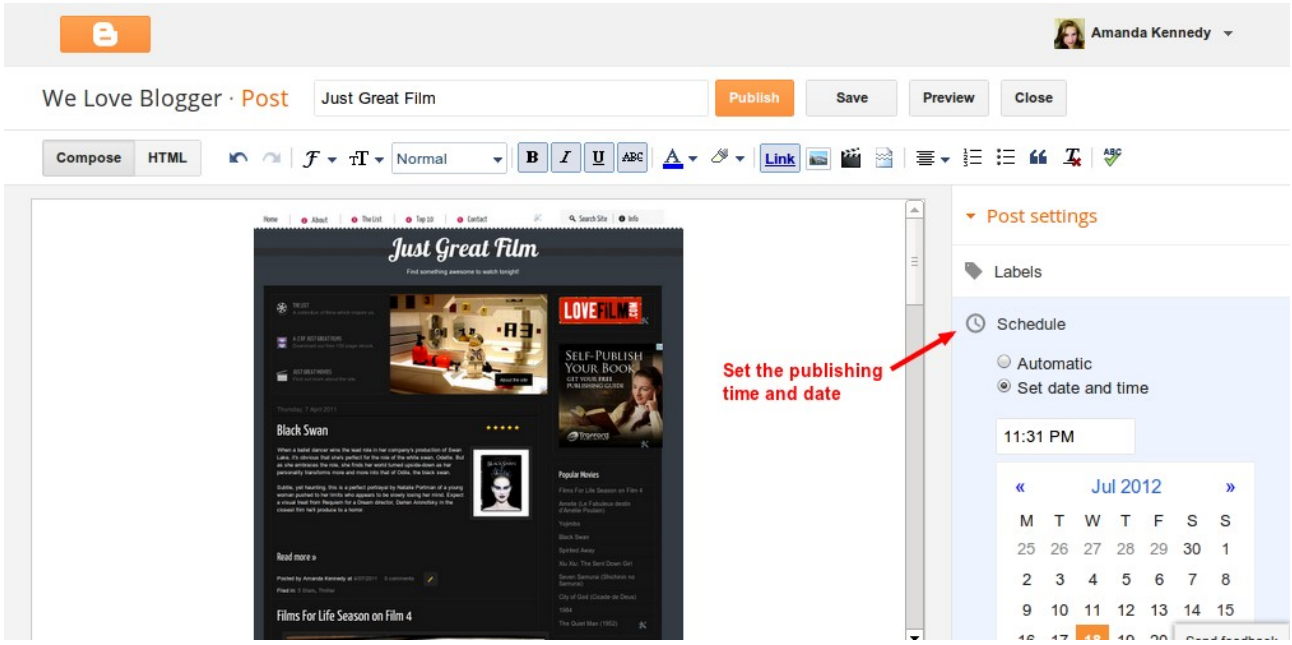
Once you have selected the posts you would like to edit, choose from one of the mass-editing functions near the top of the page:

- Add a **Label**
- **Publish** (if the posts are currently draft)
- **Save to Draft** (when selected posts are currently published)
- **Delete** the selected posts (you will need to confirm before the deletion becomes permanent)

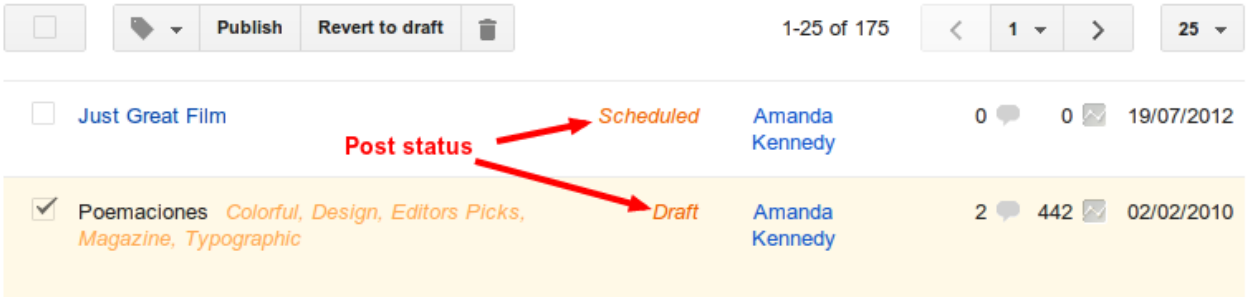


How to schedule blog posts

Blogger enables us to schedule a new blog post to be published on a specified time and date. To do this, click the **Schedule** section in the right-hand column and select when you would like your post to go live:



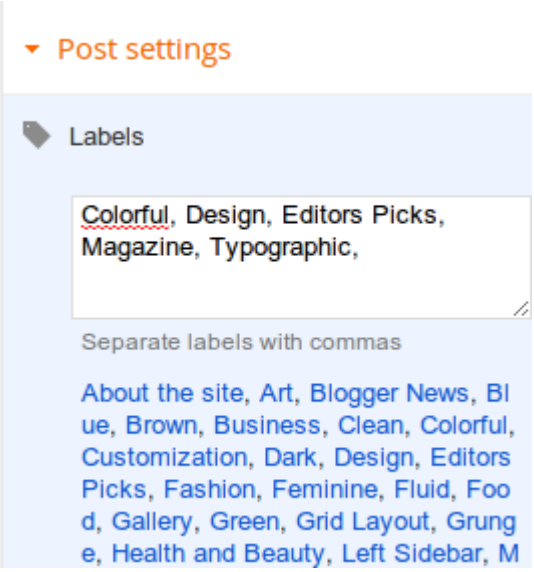
Tip: While viewing the **Posts** section of your blog dashboard, you can quickly identify posts which are **Scheduled** or **Draft**:



You can also change the posting date and time of previously published posts by editing and clicking the “Published On” section in the right-hand column.

Labelling blog posts

Labels are an easy way to categorise or tag blog posts. When writing or editing blog posts, you can add labels easily by clicking the **Labels** section in the right-hand column.

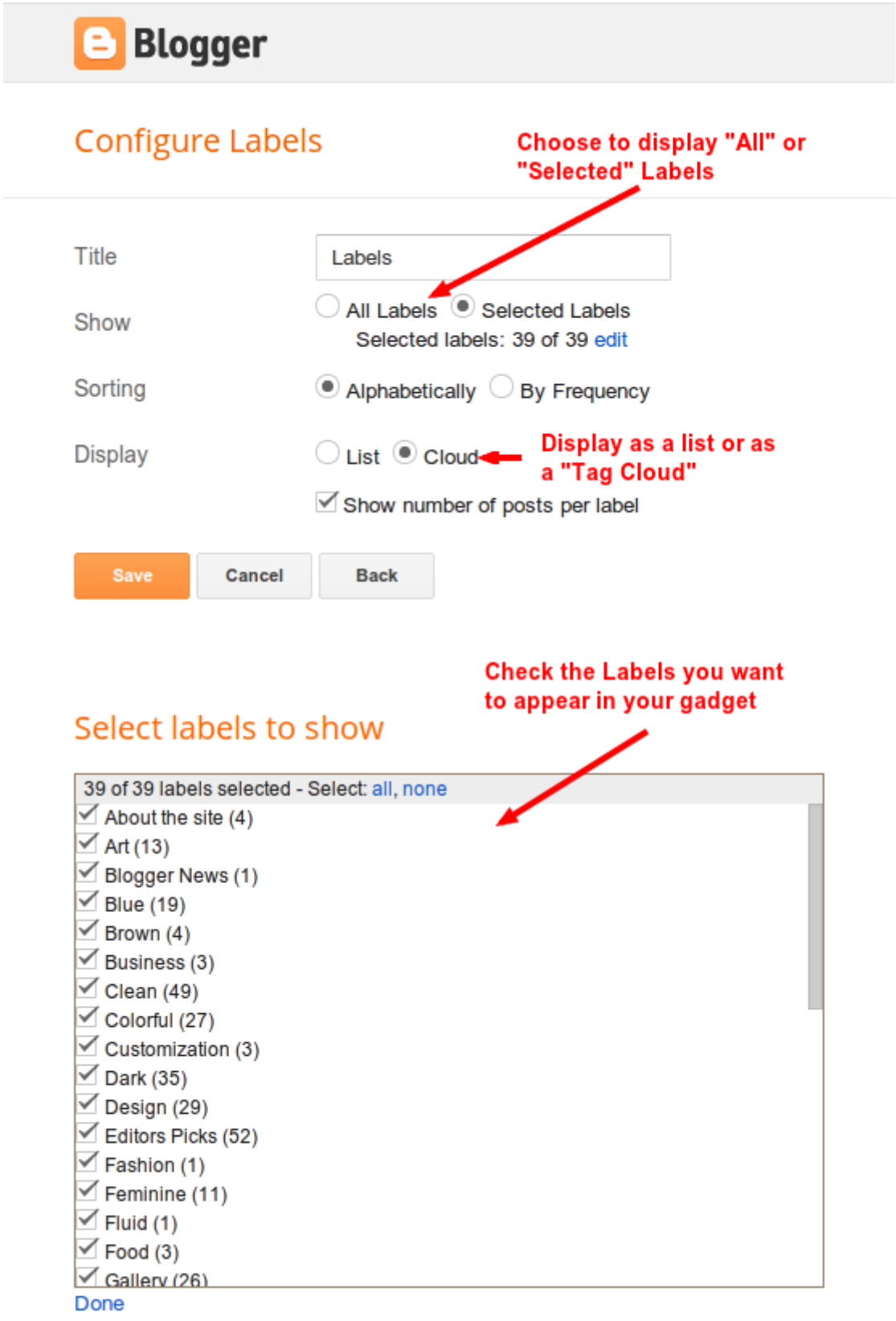


Type each Label you would like to add, separated by a comma. Labels you have used in previously published posts will appear beneath; you can click these to quickly add them to your posts.

When you add Labels to a post, these will appear in the post-footer section beneath each post. Each Label forms a link to a **Label Search** page, where all posts including the selected label will appear in reverse chronological order.

This helps readers quickly locate other content which may be relevant to their interests.

You can also add a **Label Gadget** to your blog in the **Layout** section of your site (see *Gadgets and the Blogger Layout*). When choosing to add a Label Gadget, select whether you would like it to display Labels in a list, or as a “Tag Cloud” in which commonly used labels appear more prominently than those less used.



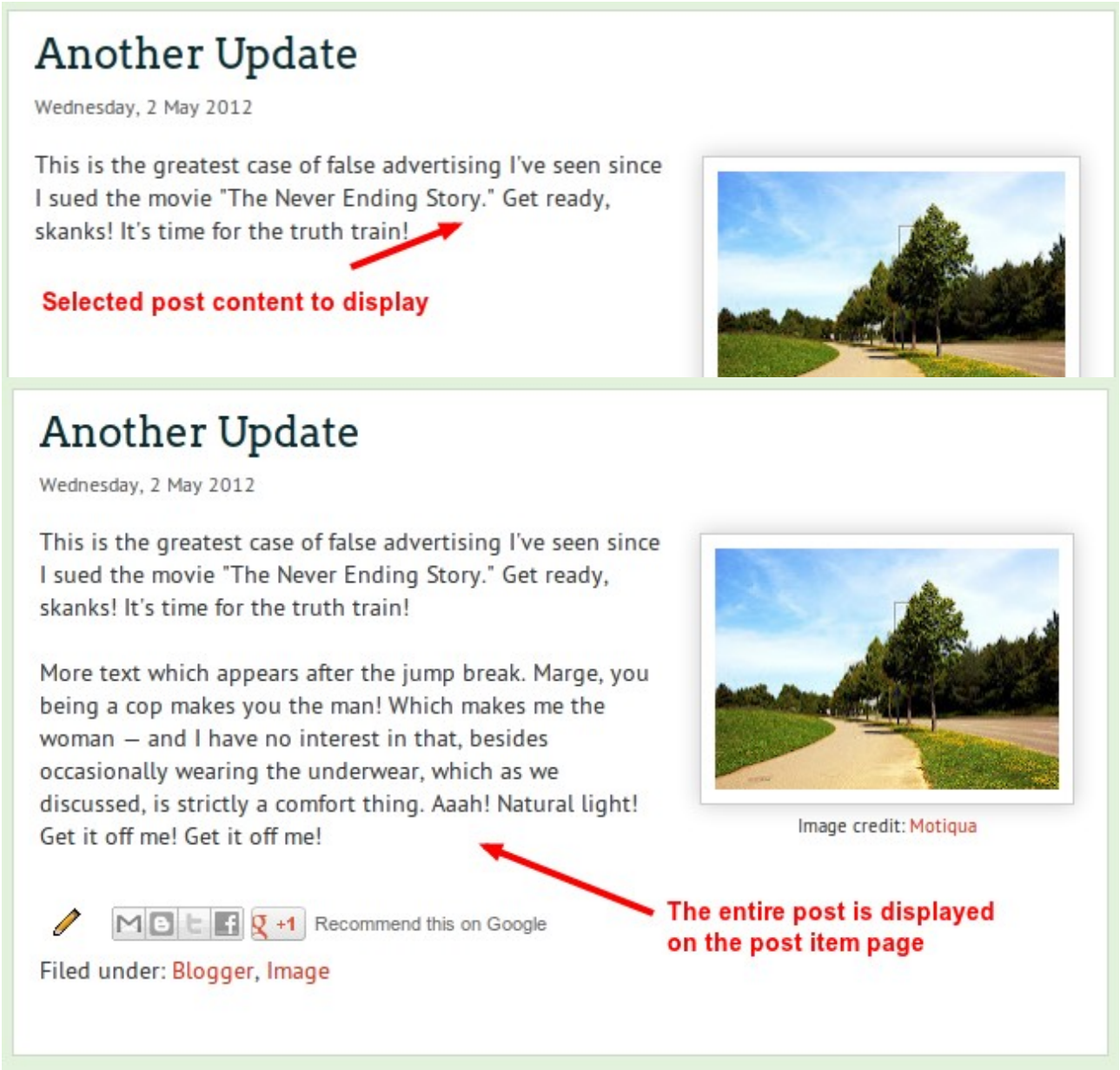
Creating Post Summaries

If you write long blog posts, you may not want the whole post to be displayed on non-item pages. Blogger offers a **Jump Link** feature which allows us to choose how much of a post to display. This has the benefits of:

- Preventing too much visual space being taken up on index pages
- Creating an enticing summary prompting readers to click through and read the whole article

Jump Links can be added easily through the Post Editing page. Simply write your post as usual, then place your cursor at the place where you would like the post to be summarised. Then click the **Jump Link** icon to insert a dashed line into your post.

Continue writing your blog post and publish as normal. All content which appears below the **Jump Link** line will only be displayed on item pages.



By default, the text “Read More” is displayed for jump links. You can customize this text to display your own wording by editing the **Blog Posts** gadget in the **Layout** section of your dashboard:

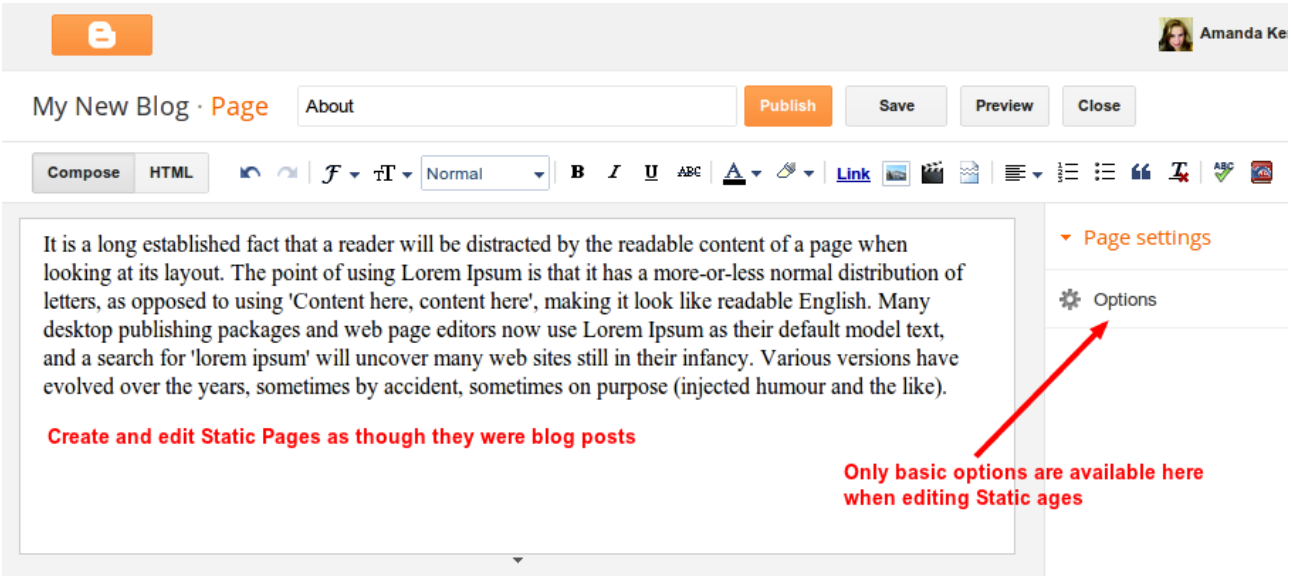
Creating Static Pages

Blogger **Pages** are standalone pages which are linked to from your blog, usually by means of a Pages gadget in your **Layout**.

You may want to create static pages for your blog for purposes like:

- An “About” page
- A contact page, featuring a contact form; address, or phone number
- FAQs, or links to relevant sites

To create a Static Page, navigate to the **Pages** section of your Blogger dashboard and choose to create a new **Blank Page**

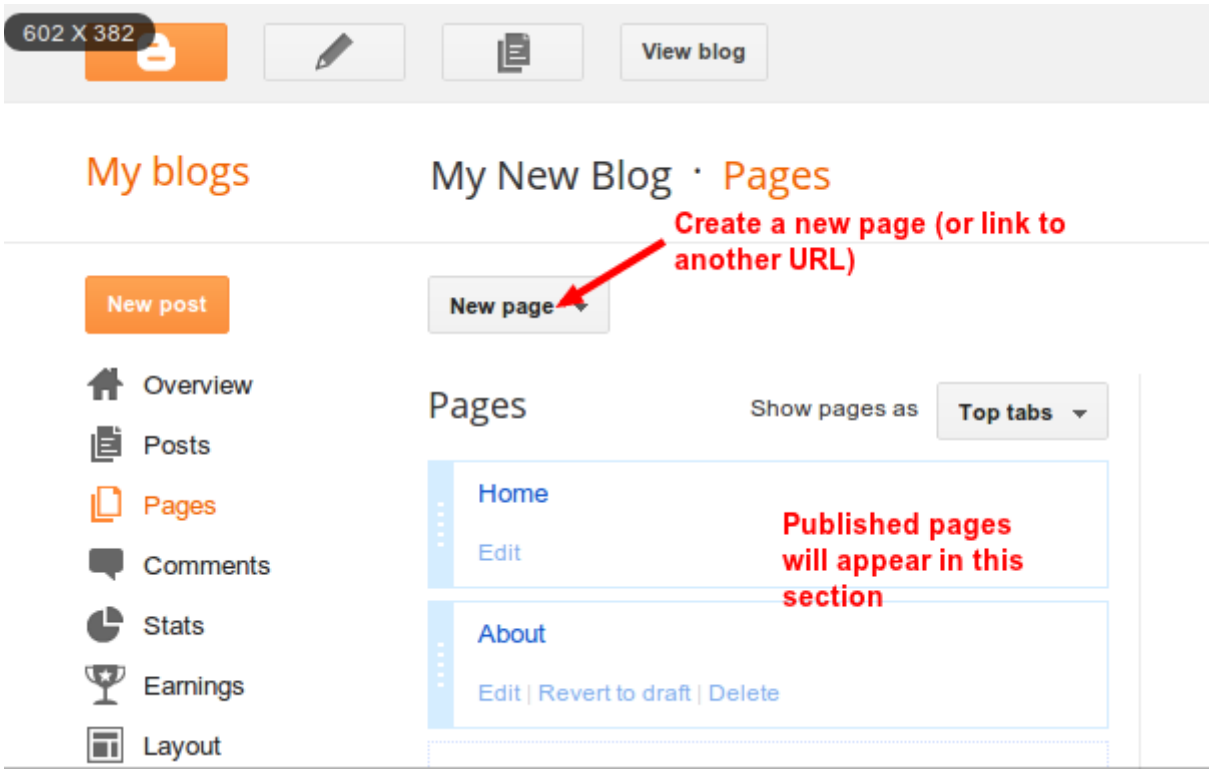


You can then compose a new page in much the same way as publishing a blog post.

The Page Editor has fewer options available in the right-hand column since there is no requirement to display Labels, Location or Publishing Date.

When you publish a Static Page for the first time, you will be prompted to add a **Page List** gadget to your Blogger Layout. You can choose to add this gadget as **Top Tabs** (beneath the Header section), in the **Sidebar**, or not to display at all (in which case you'd need to manually link to pages in a gadget or blog post).

Pages which you have created will appear in a list on the **Pages** section of the dashboard.



To edit the Page List gadget, navigate to the **Layout** section of the dashboard and click the relevant Edit link. This will enable you to re-order links in the gadget and select which Page links you would like to display.

Configuring Blog Archives

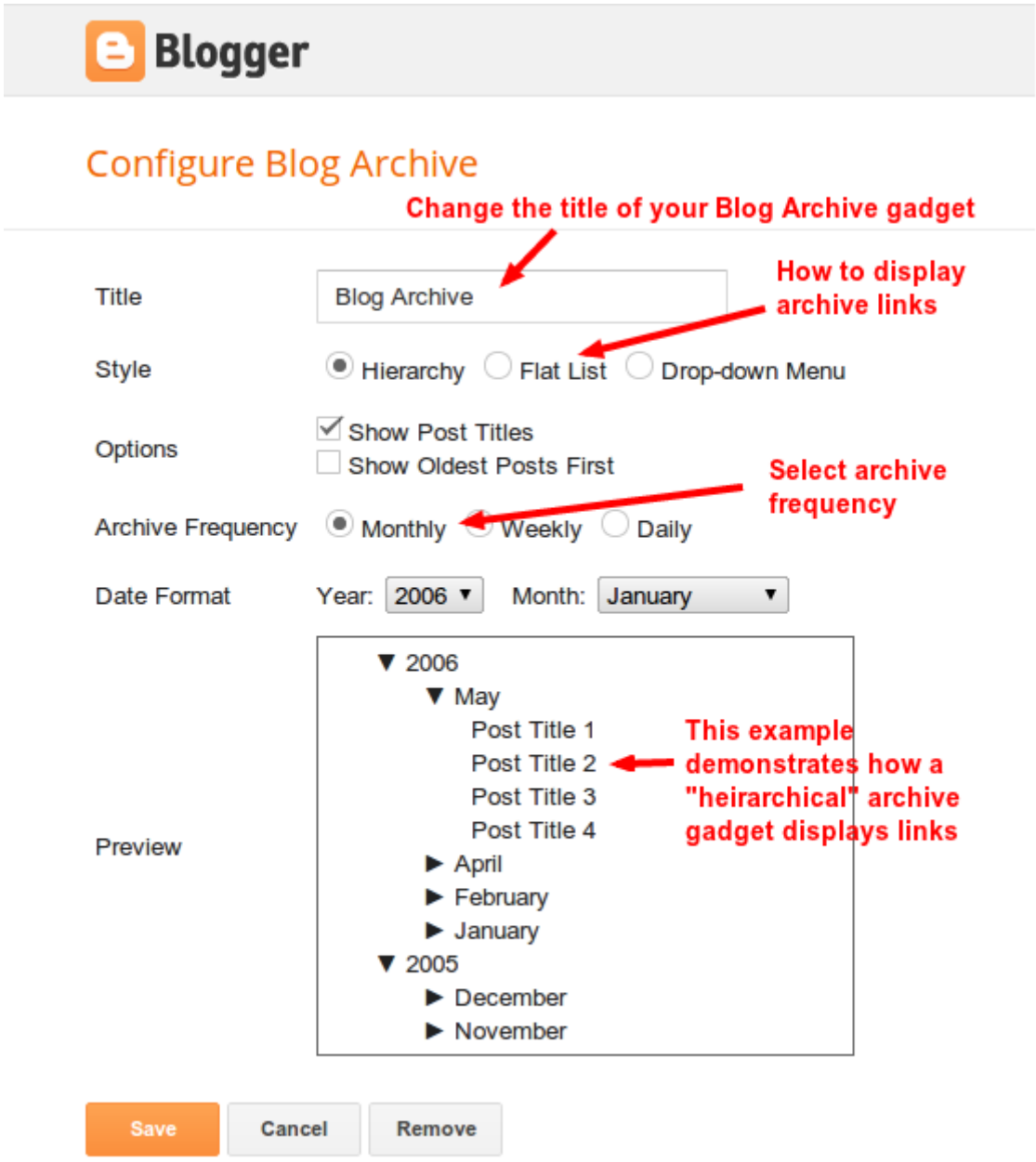
When publishing with Blogger, the most recent posts will appear on the home page. You can set how many recent posts will appear on the home page by editing the **Blog Posts gadget** in the **Layout** section of your dashboard.

On all index pages of your site, links to **Older Posts** and **Newer Posts** will appear at the

bottom of the Blog Posts section. This takes readers to the next (or previous) page with the set number of posts appearing on the page.

Adding an Archives Gadget

As we saw *Gadgets and the Blogger Layout*, you can add a **Blog Archive** gadget to your blog sidebar or footer section. Links produced in this gadget lead to pages of blog posts corresponding to the archived time period



To add a **Blog Archive** Gadget, go to the **Layout** section of your dashboard and choose to add an Archives gadget in the place you would like it to appear.

You can choose to archive your blog posts by **Month** (the most common choice among bloggers!), **Weekly** or **Daily**. Your choice will depend on the frequency (and timely relevance) of your blog posting schedule.

Select the format of your gadget, which determines how Archive page links will be displayed, and decide on the date format (this can be different to your choice for displaying the “Date Header” on Blog Posts).

Once you have saved your gadget, it will appear in your blog when viewed in a browser. Archive pages are automatically generated for you.

Share your blog

By using **Blog Feeds** and **Social Media Integration**, we can share the content of our blogs with a wider readership, offering more ways for readers to keep up with new posts than simply visiting your site.

What are Blog Feeds?

You may already be familiar with the term **RSS Feed**. A site feed is a machine-readable representation of your blog that can be picked up and displayed on other web sites and information aggregation tools. RSS is a *type* of site feed; by default Blogger produces **Atom** feeds which is a similar format.

Special pieces of software called feed readers, news readers, or aggregators can scan your site feed, and automatically let your readers know when your blog has been updated. An example of such software is Google Reader, which you can use with your Google Account.

Site Feeds available in Blogger

In addition to the regular feed of Blog Posts, there are also feeds generated for:

- Comments (site-wide) if comments are enabled
- Per-post comments
- Label feeds (similar to Post feeds, but includes only posts using a particular label)

How to configure Site Feeds

It is possible to configure settings for your blog feeds in the **Settings>Other** section of the Blogger dashboard.

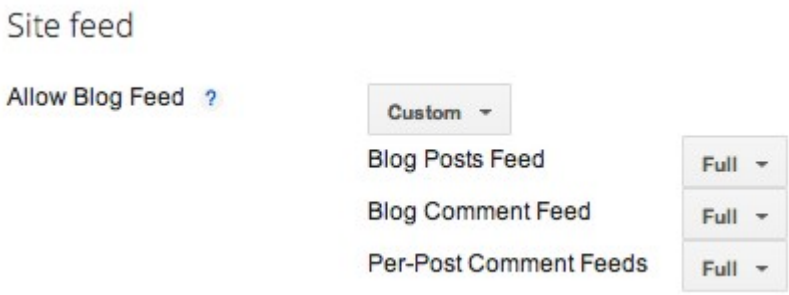
Here, you can select how much of your content you want to syndicate. "Full" will put the entire content of each post in your site feed, while "Short" only includes an excerpt from the beginning of each post. Select "Until Jump Break" to show all post content before your jump break.

The "None" option turns your site feed off entirely.

For more advanced options, you can select "Custom." In this section you'll see options for three different types of feeds. Each option has the same "Full," "Short," and "None" setting choices.

•**Blog posts**: This is the same as the original, "Allow Blog Feed" option.

•**Comment feed:** This will contain all comments made on all posts on your blog.
•**Per-post comment feed**: With this option, each individual post will have its own site feed, containing only its own comments.

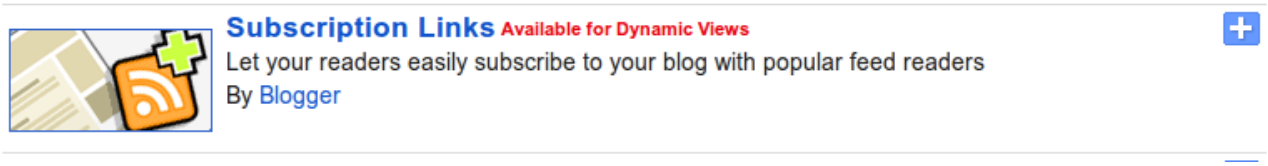


Note: If you want to display threaded comments on your post pages, be sure to set the main **Blog Posts Feed** to **Full**.

Make it easy for readers to "Subscribe" to your site feed

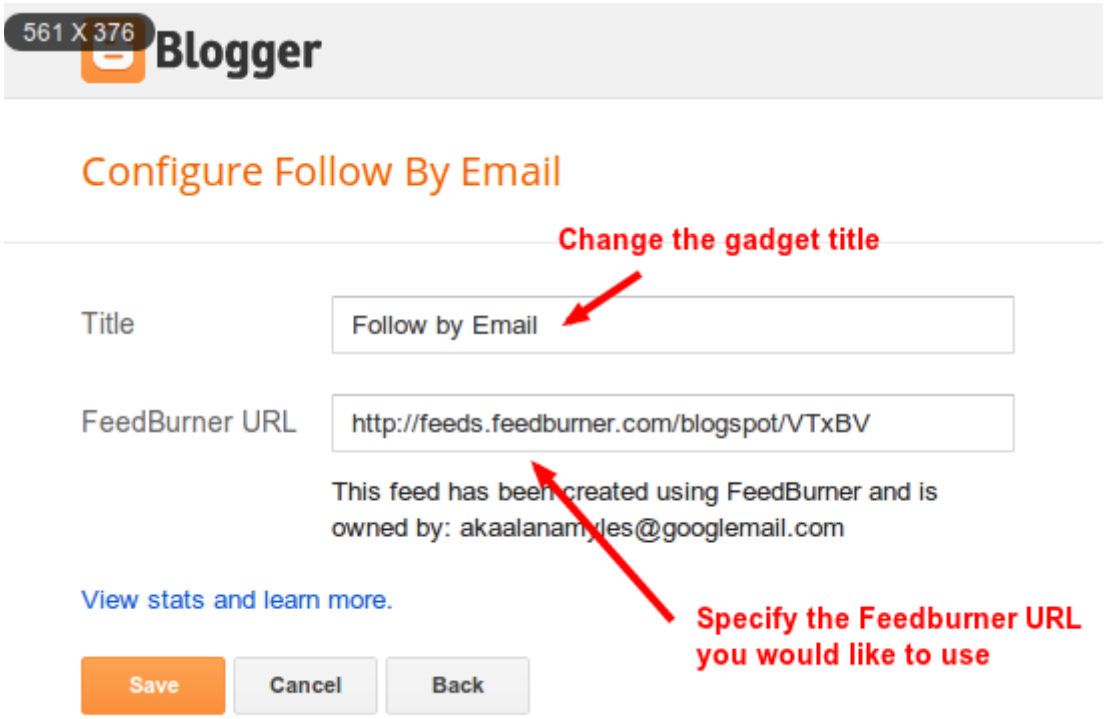
Most modern browsers can automatically detect if a site feed is present and enable the means for readers to subscribe. However, it is much more preferable to offer an easy way for visitors to subscribe to your updates, such as **adding a subscription gadget** or enabling readers to **sign up for email updates**.

Blogger offers a simple **Subscription Links** gadget in the **Layout** section of the Blogger dashboard. This produces links to both the Blog Posts and (site wide) Comments feeds. Visitors can use these links to subscribe to site feeds in their favourite feed reader.



You can also add a **Subscribe by Email** gadget, which is ideal for those unfamiliar with site feeds, or who prefer to read updates in a more manageable digest. This service is powered by Feedburner (which is also operated by Google). You can read more about syndicating your blog feeds using Feedburner here.

When you chose to add a **Follow by Email** gadget, you can change the title and specify the Feedburner URL you would like to use for your site:

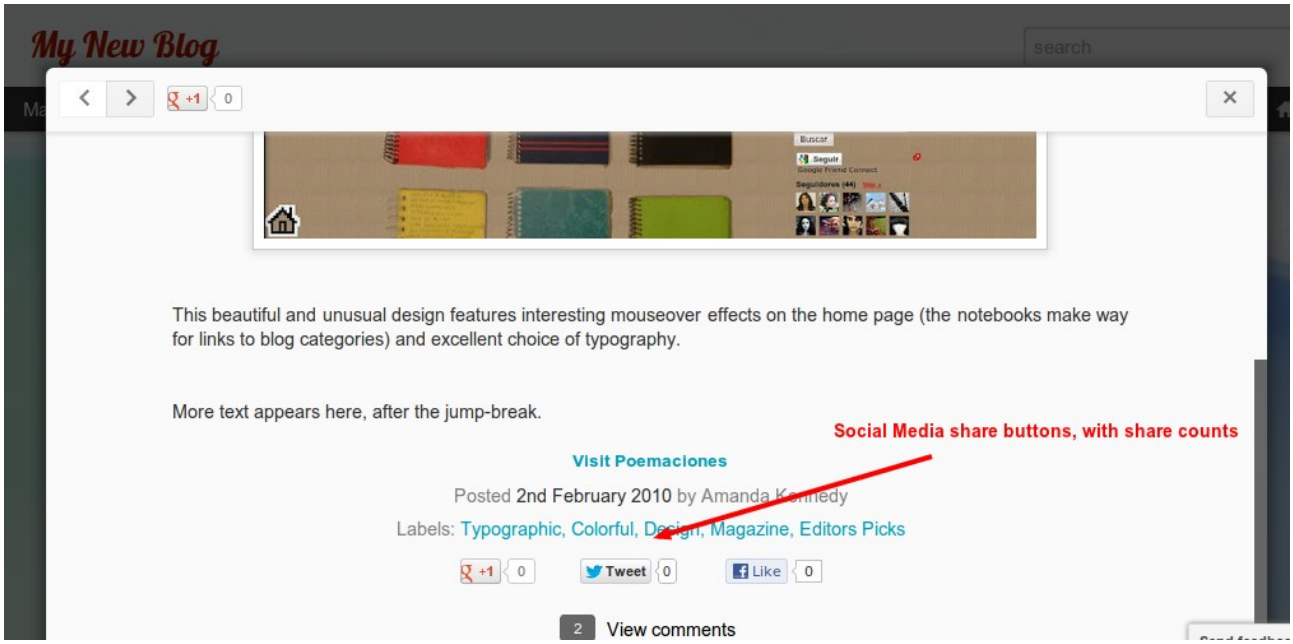


Help readers share your posts using Social Media

Blogger makes it easy for readers to share your posts on their favourite social media platforms by enabling **Share** buttons for your blog posts which appear in the Post Footer section.

You can choose whether or not to display these buttons by editing the **Blog Posts** gadget in the **Layout** section of your Blogger dashboard.

Those using Dynamic Templates will find Google+, Twitter and Facebook buttons along with share counts for each service.

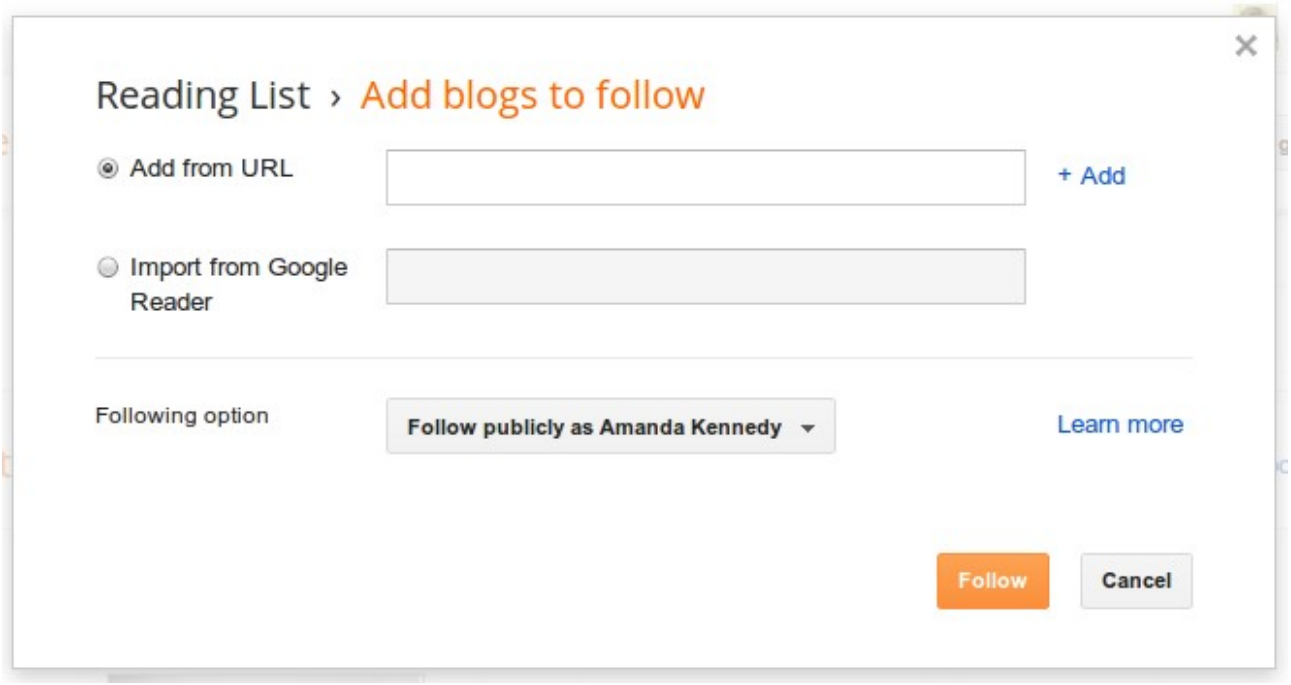


How do I...?

Here are answers to some common questions you may have about extending and customising your Blogger site.

...add blogs to my Reading List?

The Blogger Reading List enables you to read updates from your favourite blogs right in your Blogger dashboard. It is conveniently located beneath the list of blogs you manage and is instantly updated each time a new post is published on a blog you are following.



To add new blogs to your reading list, simply click the **Add** button in the left hand side and type the URL of a blog you would like to follow, or choose to import blogs from Google Reader. You can opt to “follow” blogs publicly or privately.

To manage blogs in your reading list, simply click the **Settings Icon** at the top right of the **Reading List** section.

...earn money from my blog?

It is very easy to integrate Google AdSense and Affiliate Ads with Blogger right from the Blogger Dashboard!

Click on the **Earnings** tab to get started. You'll need to sign into your AdSense account or set up a new one. Once approved, you'll be able to choose where to place AdSense ads in

your blog (**between posts**, in the blog **sidebar**, both or none).

You can also choose to sign up as a Publisher for Google Affiliate Ads. Once you've approved the terms and conditions, you'll see a new **Advertise Products** gadget in the post editor. You can use this to insert relevant links or full ads into your blog posts.

Another option is to insert ad codes from third party advertising networks into an HTML/JavaScript widget in your blog's Layout.

...upload a favicon?

Favicons are small icons you see beside some URLs in your address bar. By default, new blogs will display an orange Blogger icon.

You can upload a custom favicon in the **Layout** section of the dashboard by choosing to edit the **Favicon** gadget in the top right-hand corner.

Choose a square image which is less than 100kb in size; it will automatically be resized and saved at the root of your domain, replacing the default Blogger favicon.

...improve SEO and generate more traffic?

SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) helps increase traffic to your blog and connect your content with the intended audience. For more background on SEO, read through this article in the Webmasters Help Center, and be sure check out their free SEO Starter Guide (PDF) which I recommend highly!

Blogger provides **advanced** options to manage search engine preferences. Most SEO options can be found in the **Settings>Search Engine Preferences** section of the Blogger dashboard, including:

- Description
- Custom Page Not Found
- Custom Redirects
- Custom robots.txt
- Custom robots header tags
-

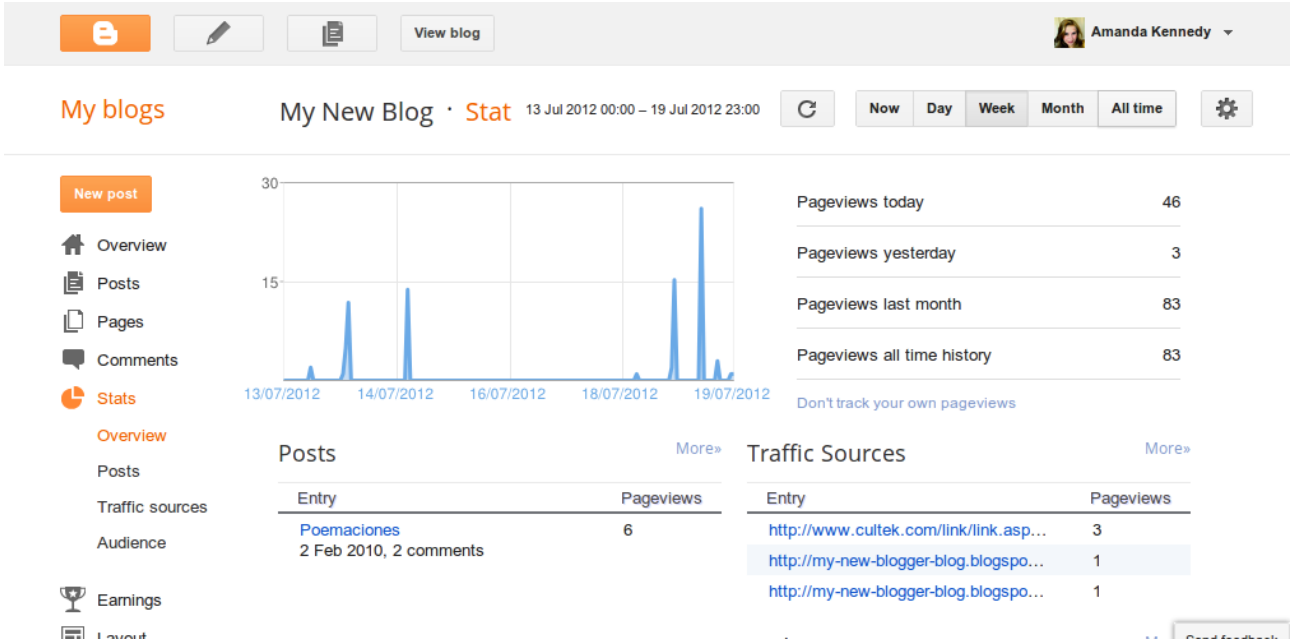
Other options, such as image properties and header tags, are located in the Post Editor.

> **Note:** Keep in mind that incorrect settings can result in unintended consequences! If you are new to SEO, be sure to only work on the aspects you are comfortable with.

In depth information on Blogger's SEO preferences can be found in the Blogger Help Center.

...keep tabs on my blog's statistics?

The **Stats** section of the Blogger dashboard helps you keep track the visitors to your site.

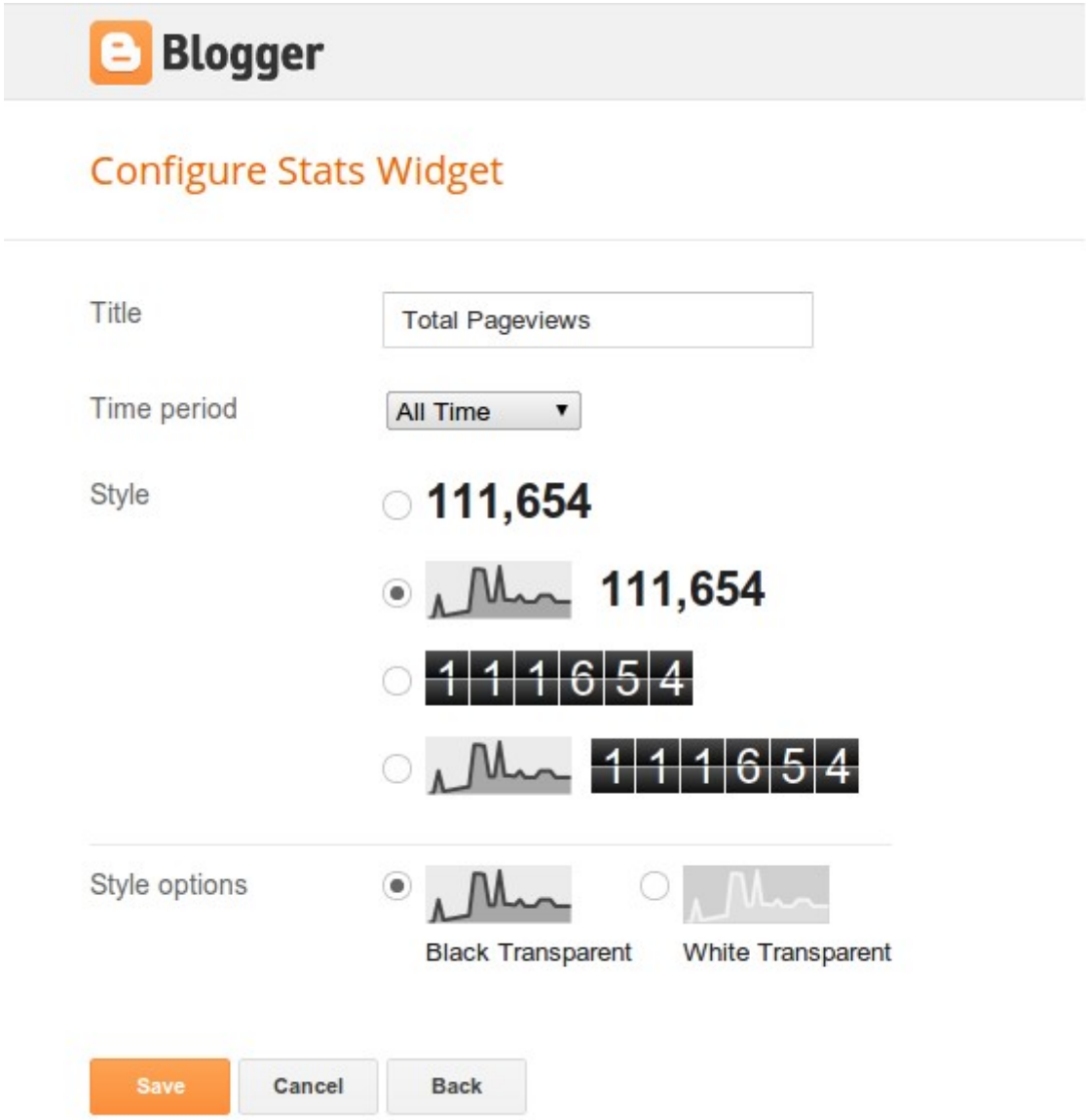


Here you can check:

- The number of page views your blog receives
- Popular posts
- Traffic sources
- Visitor information
- Link through to Google Analytics for in-depth information about your blog statistics

...add a stat counter to my blog?

A simple **Blog's Stats** counter can be added to your sidebar or footer in the **Layout** section of your dashboard.



You can select the style of counter you would like to display, along with the time-frame you would like the gadget to cover.

...edit the Blogger Navbar?

The Navbar is available in several colours, and is configured in the **Layout** section of the Blogger dashboard. Just click the "Edit" link on the Navbar page element and select the style you prefer.

If you would like to remove the navbar altogether, follow the instructions on this page.

...backup my blog posts?

It is good practise to back up your Blogger posts periodically. You can **export** your entire

catalogue of blog posts or **import** the contents of another Blogger site in the Settings**>Other** section of your Blogger dashboard.

Your posts will be saved as a Blogger Export File (.xml) which you can save as a backup to your computer hard drive or import into another site.

...backup my Blogger template?

If you have made extensive customisations to your site, you may want to backup your template before experimenting with a new template or changing design settings.

To do this, navigate to the **Design** section of the Blogger dashboard and click the **Backup/Restore** button near the top of the page.

From here, you can choose to save your existing template as a **backup** or **restore** a previously saved design.

..post by email?

Using the Mail-to-Blogger feature, you can post to your blog using any email client. To set this up, you will need to set up a *secret* email address in the **Settings>Mobile and Email** section of your Blogger dashboard.

Your secret email address will consist of your **username** (which you use to log into your Google account) followed by *Secret Words* which you can set.

> **Important:** you must ensure your email posting address is kept secret as anyone able to use this address will be able to post to your site!

Select whether to **Publish email immediately** or **Save emails as draft post** to edit or approve before publishing.

Once you have saved your settings, any email which is sent to your secret posting address will be published or saved as a draft post to your blog.

Posts sent by email can be sent as raw text or rich HTML (which will be formatted according to the CSS styles applied to your posts). To include images in posts sent by email, simply attach the images to your email and they will be published at the top of the

post.

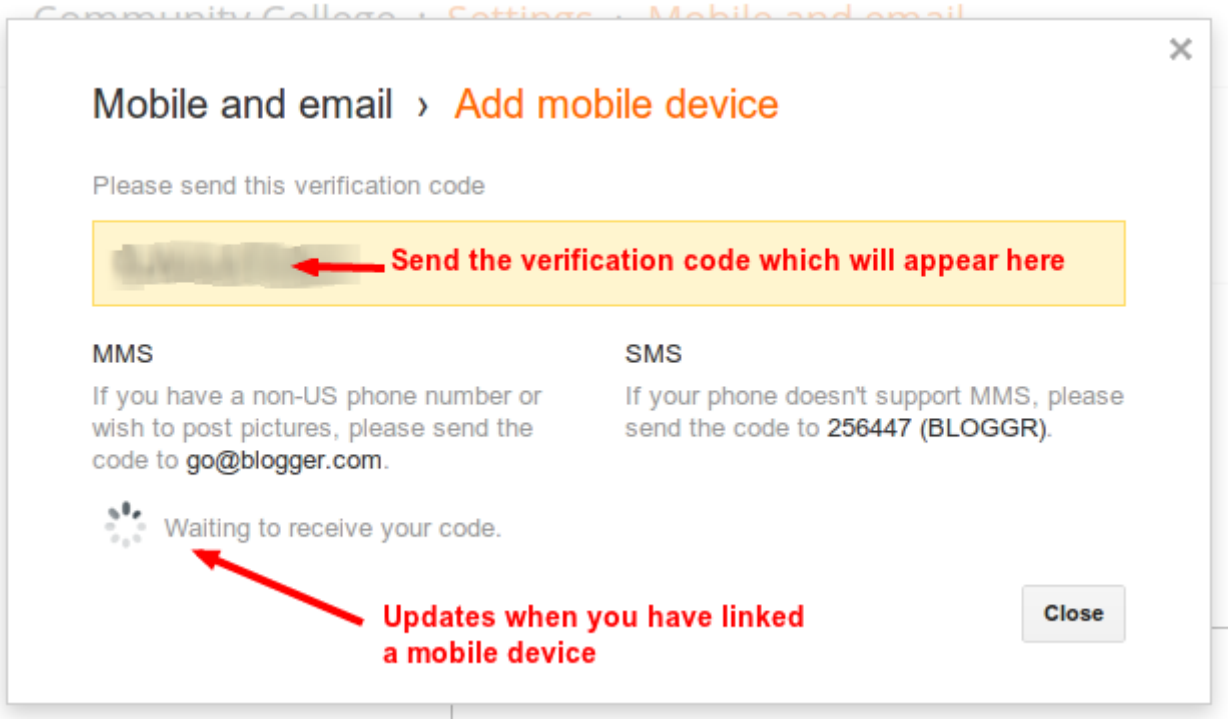
Unfortunately, we can't yet attach **Labels** to posts sent by email which are automatically published. If you need to label posts sent as email, set these to **save as draft** then add **Labels** through the post editor when logged into your Blogger dashboard.

...send posts using my mobile phone?

In addition to sending posts by email using a mobile device, there are two additional methods you can use:

1. Send (short) posts as **SMS/MMS**
2. Use a smartphone **application** (for Android or Apple devices)

To post to an existing blog using your mobile phone, go to **Settings>Mobile and Email** in your Blogger dashboard and click the **Add Mobile Device** link under the **Mobile** section. Then follow the steps given to post to your site using either MMS or SMS.



You can also create a new blog by sending an MMS to go@blogger.com. This creates a new *mobile blog* for you, and you should receive both notifications and a verification code sent to your phone.

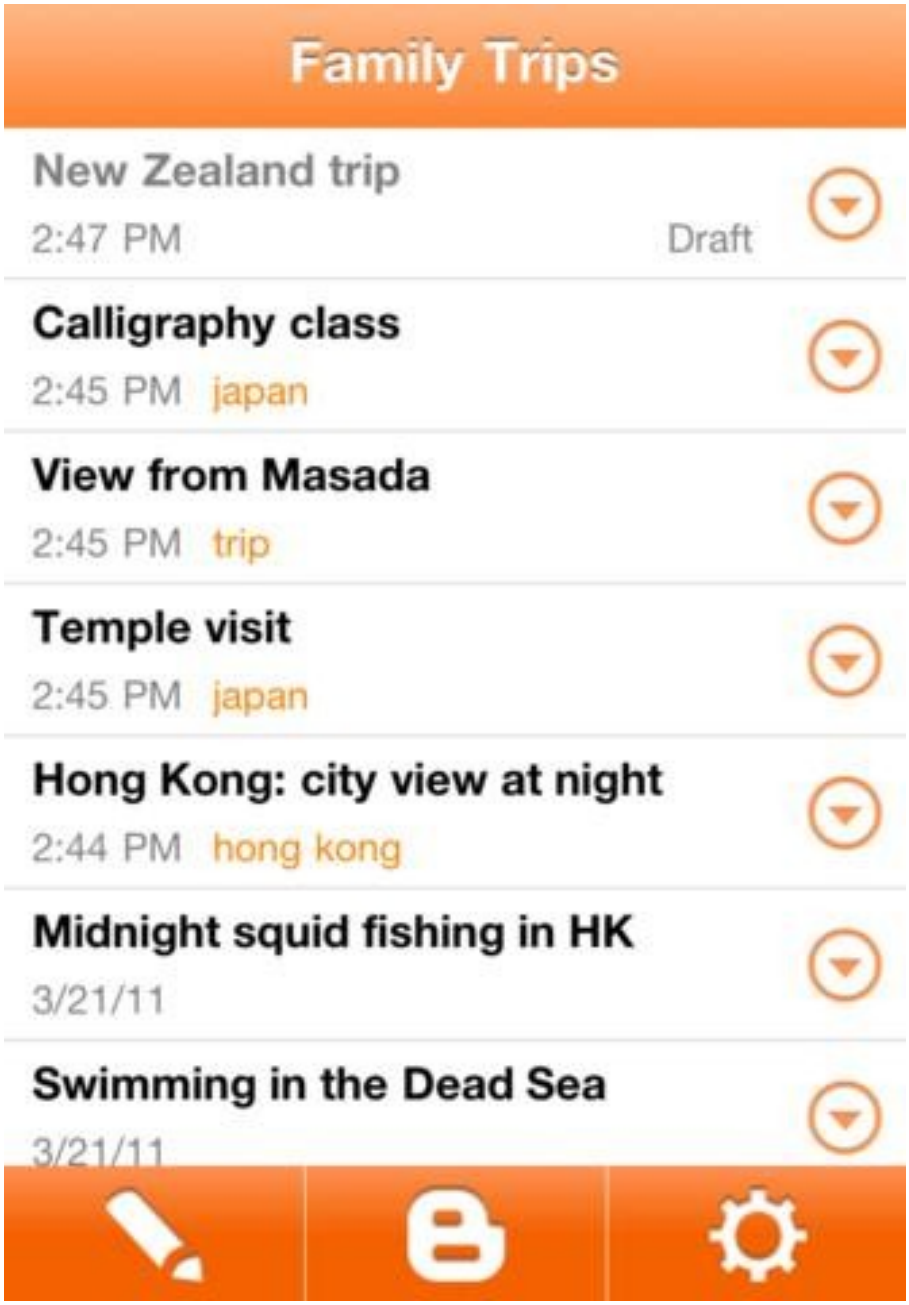
If you would like to claim your blog at a later date, you can log in to your mobile blog at go.blogger.com using the verification code sent to your phone and either merge your posts with an existing blog or develop your “moblog” as a standalone site.

Tip: visit this page on the Blogger help site for a helpful video and more information about mobile blogging.

Android and Apple apps for Blogger offer a more advanced system of blogging on the go. Using these apps you can write posts with rich content, including photographs taken with your smartphone, your location and post labels.

To get started, download the appropriate app for your device:

- Official Android App for Blogger
- Official iPhone/iPad app for Blogger



Once you've downloaded your app and run it for the first time, you'll be prompted to log in to your Google Account. After this, you will be able to manage all blogs associated with this account including creating, publishing and saving posts to draft.

...configure my blog for mobile devices?

In the **Template** section of the Blogger dashboard, you will be able to configure how your blog will be displayed on hand-held devices. Click the settings icon beneath the “mobile” preview of your site and select “Yes” to enable a mobile version of your site.

You can choose from one of the preset styles, or select **Custom** if you would like Blogger to make a mobile template based on the customisations you have made for your main template.

...use a custom domain?

Blogger offers two free publishing options for your blog: hosting on Blogspot (example.blogspot.com) and hosting on your own custom domain (www.example.com or foo.example.com). You can change your publishing option at any time, and your content will always remain unaltered regardless of which of these options you choose.

To use a custom domain for your blog, choose from one of the following two options:

1. Purchase a domain name through Blogger (the easy option)
2. Use a domain name you have purchased elsewhere (more advanced, but often cheaper!)

It is much easier to purchase a custom domain directly through Blogger as all important settings will be configured for you. Currently custom domains cost $9.99 USD per year.

If you already own your own domain name or would like to purchase one more cheaply, choose to set up your own custom domain.

> **Tip**: Many domain name providers offer discount codes which you can easily find using a Google Search. My personal preference is using GoDaddy as domains can often be purchased for just a few dollars per year.

To purchase a custom domain through Blogger, or find detailed instructions for set-up by domain provider, visit this link on the Blogger Help site.

Where to find out more about using Blogger

Blogger for Beginners was written to provide an overview of *basic* Blogger functionality for those new to using the platform.

Here are links to some useful websites and resources which can help you extend your blog and knowledge of the Blogger platform.

Official Blogger Channels

- **The Blogger Help Center** - Includes pages of useful information about all aspects of using the platform
- **Blogger Product Forum** – Post questions if you need help and discuss all aspects of the Blogger platform
- **BloggerHelp YouTube Channel** – Find useful video tutorials about using Blogger
- **Blogger Known Issues** – Includes details of any known issues affecting the platform. A useful first stop for the odd occasion when something goes wrong.
- **Blogger on Google+** - Where posts about Blogger news, updates and forthcoming features can be discovered
- **Blogger Buzz** – The official Blogger blog!
- **Blogger Developers Network** – For those developing applications and extended uses for Blogger

Although it is not possible to contact the Blogger team directly, you can check out the Contact Policy page to find out where best to get help for your particular needs. You might also want to check out Blogger's Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy and Content Policy.

Independent Sites

Several Blogger developers publish tips and tutorials for Blogger. Here are links to the **independent** Blogger help sites you may find useful for extending your knowledge of Blogger:

- **Blogger Buster** – Established in 2007, this site features many useful tutorials for customising your Blogger template; articles about using the platform, and the latest Blogger news. You can also find many free and premium templates.
- **The Real Blogger Status** – Operated by Nitecruzer (a veritable legend in the Blogger Help Group), this site offers excellent advice about dealing with Blogger-related problems, publishing issues and general Blogger news.
- **Blogger Tricks** – Tips and tutorials for Blogger users, with many free templates available
- **Blogger Plugins** – Quality Blogger tutorials, tips and gadgets

- **Southern Speakers** – An excellent resource for those using Dynamic Views templates
- **Blogger Stop** – Innovative widgets, customisations and templates
- **LeBlogger** – A French language blog (easily translated if required) featuring a plethora of useful tutorials and Blogger news
- **Blogger Xpertise** – A growing resource of Blogger tips, useful scripts and the occasional Blogger template
- **Btemplates** – The premier resource for free Blogger templates

Back Matter

Coming Soon

100 Ways with Blogger

Want to learn how to get the most from your Blogger site? Featuring 100 stand-alone tutorials, this ebook will help you learn how to improve your design, extend your blog and reach a wider audience.

Find out how to:

- Create a simple slideshow of your images
- Use Blogger as a newsletter service
- Publish your portfolio with Blogger
- Create a simple website for your business
- Integrate your blog with social media
- Make money by selling goods and services from your site

And much more!

100 Ways with Blogger offers useful guidance for anyone choosing Blogger as their publishing platform, with tutorials suitable for those just starting with the platform in addition to advanced guides.

Be sure to subscribe to Blogger Buster or follow on Google+ for updates on the release of this new book.

***Release date**: TBA*

About the author

Amanda Kennedy has extensive experience of using the Blogger platform (dating as far back as 2003), and is best known as the author of Blogger Buster – a resource site for those using Google Blogger (est. 2007). Amanda has written several ebooks about Google Blogger and currently resides in the UK with her family and numerous cats.

You can read more about Amanda on her personal site or find her on Google+, Twitter and Facebook.

Comments? Suggestions?

Feel free to contact Amanda with any comments or suggestions about this ebook by emailing amanda@bloggerbuster.com