

• **Tips on a Good Blog Entry**

You're starting out as a blogger. You have a blog set up. You know how to work the blogging software. But how do you write an entry that gets read? Here are ten tips that make a blog entry grab readers:

Choose an attention-getting and accurate title. Like a newspaper headline, a good blog title draws readers in. It's your chance to convince a reader to take a look at what you've written. But no bait-and-switch! Make sure that your title reflects the content of the entry.

State your opinion clearly. Take a stand and make it clear. Your blog isn't the place for meandering. If your opinion isn't appropriate for the general public, choose a different subject. If you wouldn't stand up in front of your colleagues and share your opinion, don't post it on your blog.

Back things up with specific stories and examples. Once you state your opinion, explain it. Share stories or examples that show why you hold your opinion. The advice we give students applies: Show. Don't Tell!

Keep it short. You have a few seconds to catch someone's attention. People rarely read all of longer posts. Focus on one specific topic, state what you have to say, and end the post.

Chunk your text. People read webpages quickly. They scan more often than they read every word. Because of the way people read on the Web, it's best to use short paragraphs and lists to chunk your content.

Use visual clues. Headers, boldface, use of color—all these visual clues help people scan and read online. As you chunk your text, make the key ideas and sections obvious with visual clues. As readers scan a page, they'll linger on these highlights.

Include photos, video, and/or audio. Take advantage of the multimodal nature of the Internet. Use photos, videos, and audio recordings to help make your point. These multimodal additions draw readers' attention and can emphasize your points.

Link to outside sources. Add examples and explanations to your text by linking to outside resources. Studies have shown that links build ethos by indicating that the writer is connected to the greater blogosphere and web.

Go with an informal, first-person style. No need to use formal, academic prose. Go ahead and use words like I, me, and mine. Be conversational and informal. You'll draw in more readers.

Proofread! Take the time to reread your entry before you publish it. Use a spellchecker if one is built into your blogging software. Little errors can slow readers down. And when your readers are other English teachers, they're bound to notice any typos.

Adapted: Traci Gardner, *NCTE InBox*: <http://ncteinbox.blogspot.com/2008/10/tips-on-good-blog-entry.html>