

The Student Blogging Challenge

Frequently Asked Questions

studentchallenge.edublogs.org



WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE ABOUT?

The Student Blogging Challenge is about embracing all of the benefits of blogging -- from learning digital writing skills, and digital citizenship, to developing an authentic audience and connecting with others around the globe.

Since 2008, the challenge has run twice yearly, beginning each March and October. The next challenge begins March 3, 2019. It will be hosted by teacher and blogger, Kathleen Morris with support from founder, Sue Wyatt, and the Edublogs team.

The challenge is made up of a series of 10 weekly tasks all designed to improve blogging and commenting skills, while connecting students with a global audience.

The challenge is totally free and is open to both classes and individual student bloggers from all over the world. Blogs don't need to be hosted by Edublogs! Participants can complete each of the ten weekly challenges or pick and choose.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The challenge is open to all age groups (K-12) worldwide, however; it is most suitable for ages 8 to 16. Students aged 18+ may prefer to volunteer as a commenter.

There are three ways to participate:

- 1. Using a class blog:** Teachers and students can participate together as a class. Teachers or students can publish their weekly tasks on their class blog, and/or students can participate by leaving comments on posts.
- 2. Students with their own personal blog:** Individual students can participate by publishing posts on their own blogs and leaving comments on other students' blogs.
- 3. Volunteer commenters:** If you're an educator (or study/work in the field), you can also register to comment on a small group of students' blogs.

AS A TEACHER, WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

To get the most out of the challenge, we recommend you allow students time each week to complete at least one of the activities.

Typically, this would involve an hour or so of class time but the time commitment is flexible. Some teachers like to assign challenge tasks as homework, or run the challenge as a lunchtime activity.

If you have a class blog, make sure the link to the Student Challenge blog is on your sidebar to make it easy for your students to find the weekly challenges. If you would prefer, you can copy and paste the weekly challenges into a post on your own class blog and adapt them to suit the needs of your students.

A teacher's level of involvement in the challenge often depends on the age and experience of the students.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

Registrations open for classes and students on February 10, 2019. Follow these steps to register:

- 1. Join the mailing list:** Teachers interested in the challenge are asked to join our mailing list. Visit studentchallenge.edublogs.org and look for the sign up box on the right sidebar. There is no commitment to join in once you're on the list, but it will keep you in the loop!
- 2. Register:** On February 10, registrations will open and this will be announced in the email newsletter, on the Student Challenge website, and on TheEdublogger.com. There will be separate registration forms for students, classes, and volunteer commenters.
- 3. Connect:** Once registrations are sorted, you'll get access to all the participants' URLs so you can visit them to read posts and leave comments. Students will be sorted according to age making it easier for you to find connections.
- 4. Follow along:** The challenge begins March 3 and you can follow along by checking for your weekly email or visiting the Student Blogging Challenge site. New posts will be published on Sundays (Australian time). Our Twitter hashtag is #STUBC.

DO I HAVE TO BE USING EDUBLOGS?

No. You can use any platform for your blog including Blogger, WordPress, Kidblog, and Weebly, however; when we give technical instructions they will mostly refer to Edublogs and you will need to adapt them for the platform you use.

HOW CAN I PREPARE?

No experience is required to participate in the challenge; however, you may get more out of the challenge by setting up your blog before you begin.

The two best ways to get your blog set up are via our free self-paced courses:

- **Student Blogging Bootcamp** (for students) — This course guides students through the process of setting up and using their own blog. You might like to assign all/parts of the bootcamp to your students before the challenge begins.
- **Blogging With Students Teacher Challenge** (for teachers) — We walk you step-by-step through the process of setting up a class blog and blogging with students.

These two courses can be helpful if you're new to blogging no matter what platform you use.

DO I HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO BLOG?

No. There will be many students/classes involved who are new to blogging, however; you can set yourself up for success by completing the courses mentioned above.

WHAT WILL THE TASKS INVOLVE?

Each week there will be a different topic and you will be given a choice of tasks to complete.

Often, the task is to write a blog post but there may be a certain skill attached, such as using images or free online tools. There will also be tasks that focus on commenting and general blogging skills such as setting up sidebars, pages, tags/categories etc.

We're looking forward to some tasks that are just for fun too!

CAN PAST PARTICIPANTS RETURN?





Absolutely! Past participants are very welcome to complete another Student Blogging Challenge. We have lots of students and classes who join in the challenge once or twice a year and they can be great role models for our new bloggers.




The first three weeks of the Student Blogging Challenge are always similar. We go through introductions, customising your blog, and commenting. This is a good time for past participants to update their blogs and focus on forming connections. We then change up the topics so we have some new ones each time.

WHAT IS THE WEEKLY PROCESS?

Each week there is a four step process to remember. The graphic below explains and there is also a more detailed PDF version that will be made available to you at the beginning of the challenge.

STUDENT BLOGGING CHALLENGE WEEKLY STEPS

- 1 READ** Explore the weekly topic posted on <https://studentchallenge.edublogs.org>
- 2 TASK** Complete one (or more) tasks. Classes can work on a task together and publish a post on their class blog. Student bloggers can publish their task response on a post on their own blog.
- 3 FORM** Enter the URL of your post in the form on the STUBC post if you want commenters to visit.
- 4 COMMENT** Visit another participants' blog. Leave a comment and strike up a conversation.



WHAT WILL WE GET OUT OF IT?

All participants will have access to a Student Blogging Challenge badge which they can display on their blog. You will also get access to a certificate for completing the challenge.

Of course, there's a lot you can gain from taking part -- new skills, authentic learning, friendships, connections, and an understanding of the world.

CAN WE START LATE?

Yes. It doesn't matter when you start. You can catch up the activities or you can leave some out. We understand some schools will be on holidays for parts of the challenge.

WHO IS RUNNING THE CHALLENGE?

Kathleen Morris (@kathleen_morris) is a primary school teacher from Victoria, Australia. She has been blogging with CampusPress (Edublogs sister service) since 2008.



Kathleen has had class blogs, student blogs, writes a professional educator blog, and is an author on The Edublogger.

Kathleen is a big fan of global collaboration and enjoys connecting with teachers and students from across the world!

From 2008 - 2018 Tasmanian teacher, Sue Wyatt (@tasteach) was in charge of the challenge. After the 20th challenge, Sue passed the baton on to Kathleen. Sue is now assisting behind the scene as the leader of our commenting team.



More questions? Email us.



support@edublogs.org