

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. You can find the dates of the next challenge on the website (<https://studentchallenge.edublogs.org>). Kathleen Morris hosts the challenge with support from Sue Wyatt, Marg Grosfield, and the Edublogs team.

The challenge is made up of a series of 8 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 8 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 2-3 weeks prior to the start of each challenge. 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:** 2-3 weeks before the challenge begins, 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:** When the challenge begins, 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 the same. 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. Once these basics are covered there is more scope for creativity! Even if some of the topics in the final 5 weeks are ones you've done before, you can choose different activities.

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.

#STUBC

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.

Here are 8 reasons to take part in the Student Blogging Challenge!



1 **Learn about blogging and publishing online.**
It's more dynamic than pen and paper!



2 **Become a safe and responsible digital citizen.**
Learn about being part of an online community.



3 **Meet others from around the world.**
Global collaboration is important and fun.



4 **Increase engagement and motivation.**
An authentic audience is powerful.



5 **Prepare for the changing workforce.** Learn to communicate and empathize with all cultures.



6 **Develop technology skills and human skills.**
Both are very important in our changing world.



7 **Explore passions and interests.** There are choices for everyone in the challenge.



8 **Find a voice and community.** Recognize the value and responsibility of publishing online.

MAKE STUBC SUIT YOU AND YOUR CLASS

You are welcome to mix, match, and change elements of the challenge to suit you and your students.

For example:

- If the dates don't work, you can start late or run the challenge at another time.
- If you have holidays or busy times you can skip some weeks or catch up later.
- If you only see your students once a week, you can run each task over two weeks.

Another thing you might like to do is buddy up with another class. Once the list of participants is released you could ask another teacher if they're interested in connecting. Perhaps this could be a class from a different state or country. Students could support each other with comments.

WHO IS RUNNING THE CHALLENGE?

Kathleen Morris (@kathleen_morris) is a primary school teacher and blogger from Victoria, Australia. She began blogging with students in 2008 and enjoys global collaboration. Her personal blog is www.kathleenamorris.com



Sue Waters (@suewaters) is an educator who has been leading the support team at Edublogs and CampusPress for over a decade. Sue is from Perth, Western Australia and her personal blog is <http://suewaters.com>



Sue Wyatt (@tasteach) was in charge of the challenge from 2008-2018. Sue is now assisting behind the scene as the leader of our commenting team. Sue is a retired teacher from Tasmania, Australia. Her personal blog is <http://suewyatt.edublogs.org>



Marg Grosfield (@MargGrosfield) is a retired teacher from Alberta, Canada. Marg is a valuable team member who helps behind the scenes to organise challenge registrations. Marg's personal blog is <https://1marg.edublogs.org>



More questions? Email us.



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