Setting up a class blog

This is easy and relatively quick to do – according to the age of the students, it takes about an hour of class. Here are the steps I follow:

• Ask your students if they know what a blog is

• (Optional) Get them to look at some different types e.g. http://encouraginglearnerautonomy.blogspot.com/2007/03/some-examples-of-different-kinds-of.html

• Show them one of your current class blogs e.g. http://weseeandenjoy.blogspot.com/2007_10_01_archive.html

• Go to https://www.blogger.com/start

• Get one of your students to sit at the computer connected to the data projector

• Get them to follow your instructions and demonstrate opening an account. Insist on the importance of writing down and saving their password (otherwise they always forget it)

• Sign yourself back in so that when you create the blog you are the administrator

• Naming the blog. Get the class to work in pairs to come up with an idea. The class then votes for which they like best.

• Make sure the title they’ve chosen is available.

• Choosing a template. Show them the options and again take a class vote for the one they like best.

• That’s the last step, by now you should have created the blog!

• Inviting your students to become authors.

• Click on Settings > Permissions > Add authors.

• Get them one by one to come and fill in their email addresses.

• Tell them to check their email and find the invite they should have just received. Give them the following Instructions for students on how to become a blog author to guide them through the next steps.

• Making a posting. Click on New post. Give the post a title, for example, Welcome and demonstrate the writing tools and, most importantly, the spell check.

• Ask them your students to make a first simple Hello posting once they’ve followed the instructions and become a blog author.
Instructions for students on how to become a blog author

• Open your email account in a web browser (Explorer, Firefox etc)

• You will see an email with the title *You have been invited to contribute to ……’s blog*

• Open the email

You have been invited to contribute to Ann’s blog

   From: Ann <no-reply@google.com>
   
   The Blogger user: Ann has invited you to contribute to the private blog: that blog.
   
   To contribute to this blog, visit:
   
   [http://www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

   You will need to sign in with a Google Account to confirm the invitation and start posting to this blog. If you do not have a Google Account yet, we will show you how to get one in minutes.

   To learn more about Blogger and starting your own free blog visit: [http://www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)

• Click on the link it contains. This will take you to *Blogger*
• Click on **Create your account now**

• Fill in:
  1. your email address
2. a password (write it down and keep it somewhere safe)
3. the same password again
4. your display name
5. type in the word you see in red
6. click that you agree with the terms of service
7. click the **Continue** button

• You will see the following:

![Blogger invitation screenshot](image_url)

- If necessary, enter your email address for **Username**
- Enter your password and click on **ACCEPT INVITATION**
- You will see the following:
Click on **New Post** and you will see:
Getting your students to generate their own class material

This will probably be your next session with the class. To get your blog off to a good start, try the following:

• Ask them to choose in pairs a song in English that they like. Then get the class to vote for the choice they think is best.

• Go to http://www.youtube.com and do a search for the song

• Click in the embed box to the right of the video and copy the code

• Return to you blog posting and click on the Edit Html tab and paste the code you’ve copied

• Ask your students to come up a title for the posting (for example, the title of the song) and a reason why they chose that particular song

• Click on the Compose tab and write down what they’ve said

• Now do a Google search for the lyrics and make a link to them in the post by clicking on the link tool on the posting’s top menu.

• Set this as a task for all of your students to complete

• Now you have material for your next session. In this session you can do the following:

• Do a language focus for the whole class on the typical mistakes they’ve made in their postings.

• Get them to make a comment on each others’ posts saying what they thought of the choice of video and song e.g. http://weseeandenjoy.blogspot.com/2007/10/sex-pistols-god-saves-queen.html

• Feature the lyrics of one of the songs for further language work

• Use the time they’re doing this to talk to them individually about the language in their postings, (I never post comments about language errors. Any comments I make are always about content.)