

CLASSROOM USES OF WEBLOGS

You might like to create a reflective, journal-type blog to

- reflect on your teaching experiences etc.,
- keep a log of teacher-training experiences etc.,
- write a description of a specific teaching unit,
- describe what worked for you in the classroom or what didn't work,
- provide some teaching tips for other teachers,
- write about something you learned from another teacher,
- explain teaching insights you gain from what happens in your classes,
- share ideas for teaching activities or language games to use in the classroom,
- provide some how-tos on using specific technology in the class, describing how you used this technology in your own class,
- explore important teaching and learning issues.

You might like to start a class blog to

- post class-related information such as calendars, events, homework assignments, and other pertinent class information;
- post assignments based on literature readings and have students respond on their own Weblogs, creating a kind of portfolio of their work;
- communicate with parents if you are teaching elementary school students;
- post prompts for writing;
- provide examples of classwork, vocabulary activities, or grammar games;
- provide online readings for your students to read and react to;
- gather and organize Internet resources for a specific course, providing links to appropriate sites and annotating the links as to what is relevant about them;
- post photos and comment on class activities;
- invite student comments or postings on issues in order to give them a writing voice;
- publish examples of good student writing done in class;
- showcase student art, poetry, and creative stories;
- create a dynamic teaching site, posting not only class-related information, but also activities, discussion topics, links to additional information about topics they are studying in class, and readings to inspire learning;

- create a literature circle (where groups of students read and discuss the same book);
- create an online book club;
- make use of the commenting feature to have students publish messages on topics being used to develop language skills;
- ask students to create their own individual course blogs, where they can post their own ideas, reactions, and written work;
- post tasks to carry out project-based learning tasks with students;
- build a class newsletter, using student-written articles and photos they take;
- link your class with another class somewhere else in the world.

You can encourage your students (either on your Weblog using the comments feature or on their own Weblogs) to blog

- their reactions to thought-provoking questions,
- their reactions to photos you post,
- journal entries,
- results of surveys they carry out as part of a class unit,
- their ideas and opinions about topics discussed in class.

You can have your students create their own Weblogs to

- learn how to blog;
- complete class writing assignments;
- create an ongoing portfolio of samples of their writing;
- express their opinions on topics you are studying in class;
- write comments, opinions, or questions on daily news items or issues of interest;
- discuss activities they did in class and tell what they think about them (you, the teacher, can learn a lot this way);
- write about class topics, using newly learned vocabulary words and idioms;
- showcase their best writing pieces.

You can also ask your class to create a shared Weblog to

- complete project work in small groups, assigning each group a different task;
- showcase products of project-based learning;
- complete a WebQuest (an online, structured research activity);
- share ideas you have for using Weblogs in education (tinyurl.com/6jvojj).

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