

# Enabling Collaboration with Blogger

## Why Blogger?

We recommend that courses looking to incorporate a blog element use Google's Blogger service for a couple of reasons:

- Most students already have a Gmail account and therefore, already have access to Blogger. This limits the amount of students who will need to create yet *another* account for a class project.
- Blogger is powerful and versatile enough to do just about everything a student will need to do, but is easy enough to learn proficiently with one workshop. This means that students can spend more time learning the course material and less time learning the technology.

## What does Blogger require?

- An internet connection and a browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, etc.)
- A Blogger or Gmail account

## Blogger Features

- Embed images, video, or widgets (also known as "Google Gadgets")
- Full word processing ("WYSIWYG") editor (including spell check!)
- Multiple authors on a single blog
- Multiple blogs to any account
- Privacy settings
- Ability to moderate comments
- Scheduled posting
- Mobile blogging
- Customizable layout and template

## Getting started

If you do not already have a Gmail or Blogger account, go to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) and create one.

When your account has been created, click on the link to "Create a Blog."

The rest of this handout will walk you through setting up, designing and posting to your new blog.



## Create your blog.

Give your blog a name and a URL. These do not have to be the same and **you can change both the title and URL anytime that you like** after the blog has been created. Click the “Check Availability” link to find out if your preferred URL is available or not. Complete the security measure and press “Continue.”

The screenshot shows the '2 Name your blog' step. At the top, there are three tabs: '1 CREATE ACCOUNT', '2 NAME BLOG' (selected), and '3 CHOOSE TEMPLATE'. The main heading is '2 Name your blog'. Below it, there are three sections: 'Blog title' with a text input field and a note 'Your blog's title will appear on your published blog, on your dashboard and in your profile.'; 'Blog address (URL)' with a text input field containing 'http://', a 'Check Availability' link, and a '.blogspot.com' suffix, with a note 'The URL you select will be used by visitors to access your blog. [Learn more](#).'; and 'Word Verification' showing a CAPTCHA image with the word 'Akas' and a text input field with a note 'Type the characters you see in the picture.' At the bottom right is an orange 'CONTINUE' button with a right-pointing arrow.

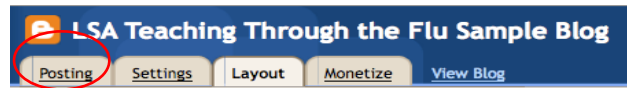
Choose a template. Blogger offers several templates (most of which have “subtemplates” with different color schemes). **You can change the template at any time.** You can also adjust the color of every element in your blog theme if you choose. At this point, you just want to pick a theme to start with and press “Continue.” The section on the “Layout” options will show you how to change themes, colors, fonts and how to upload different themes from the web.

The screenshot shows the '2 Choose a template' step. At the top, there are two tabs: '1 NAME BLOG' and '2 CHOOSE TEMPLATE' (selected). The main heading is '2 Choose a template'. Below it, there are four template preview cards. The first two are 'Minima' and 'Minima Black', both created by Douglas Bowman, with 'preview template' links. The other two are 'Sample Blog' templates. To the right of the templates is a text box that says 'Choose a custom look for your blog. You can easily change the template later, or even create your own custom template design once your blog is set up.' At the bottom right is an orange 'CONTINUE' button with a right-pointing arrow.

At this point, you’re done with the basic creation of your blog. Click “Start Blogging” and you will be taken to an empty posting screen. You can begin writing or alter your blog’s settings or design.

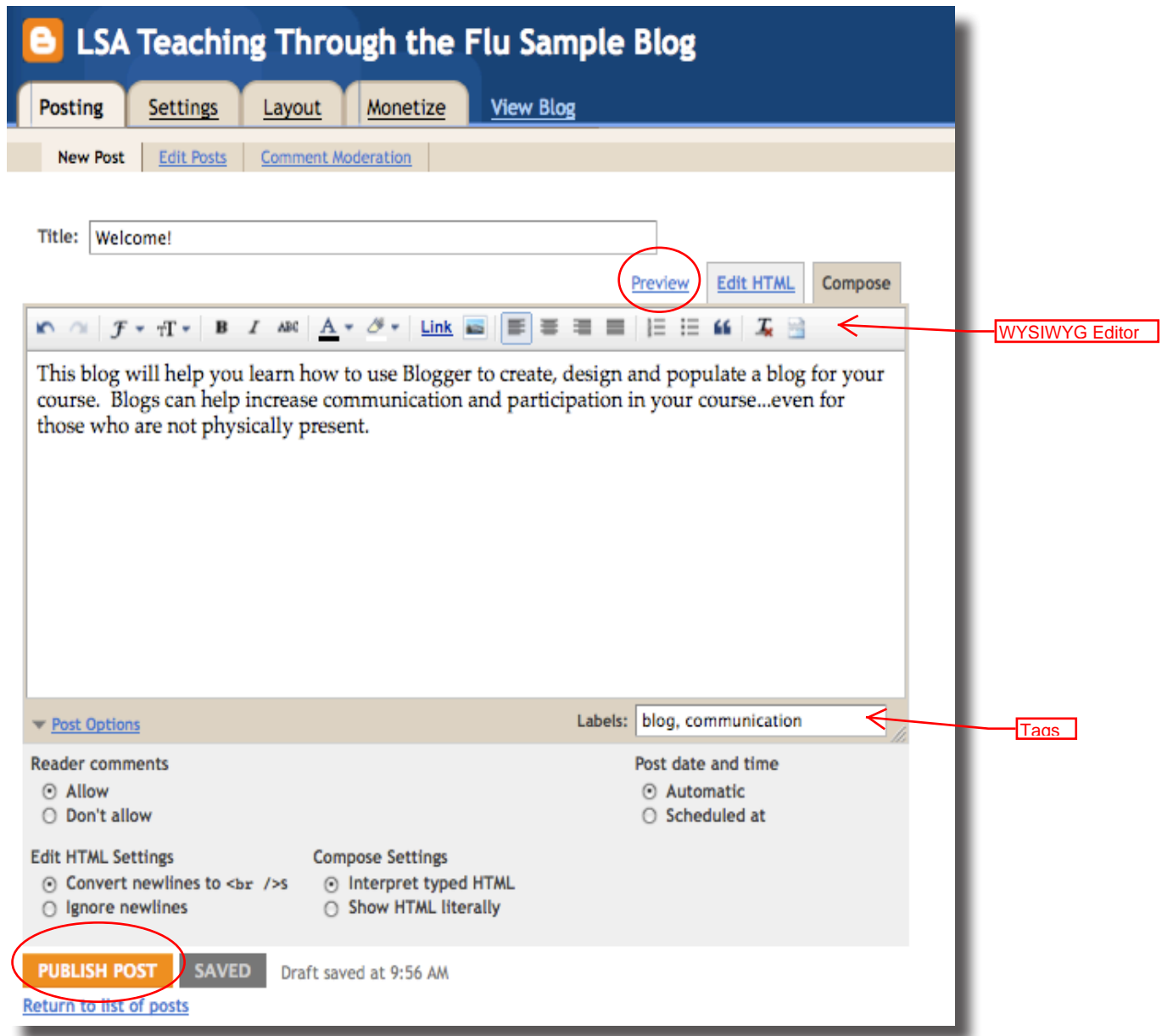
The screenshot shows a confirmation screen with a blue checkmark icon and the heading 'Your blog has been created!'. Below the heading is a paragraph: 'We've just created a blog for you. You can now add your posts to it, create your personal profile, or customize how your blog looks.' At the bottom right is an orange 'START BLOGGING' button with a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom left is a link '► Advanced Setup Options'.

## The Posting Tab



The posting tab is where you can create and edit posts and moderate comments, if you so choose.

### New Post

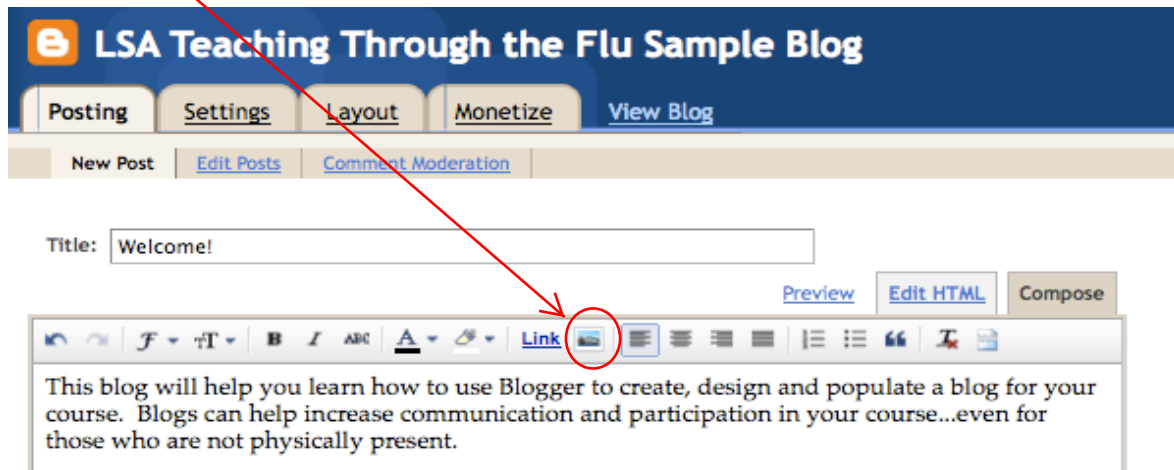


Above the actual post content, you can see what's called a "WYSIWYG" (pronounced wizzy-wig) editor. This is a basic word processing editor that's fairly common in a lot of online applications. The WYSIWYG editor gives you most of the basic tools you will find in Microsoft Word.

For each post, you can also choose whether or not to allow reader comments and whether the post will be published immediately or at a scheduled date and time. If you want to keep this post as a draft to work on later, click "Save." If you are ready to publish immediately, click "Publish Post."

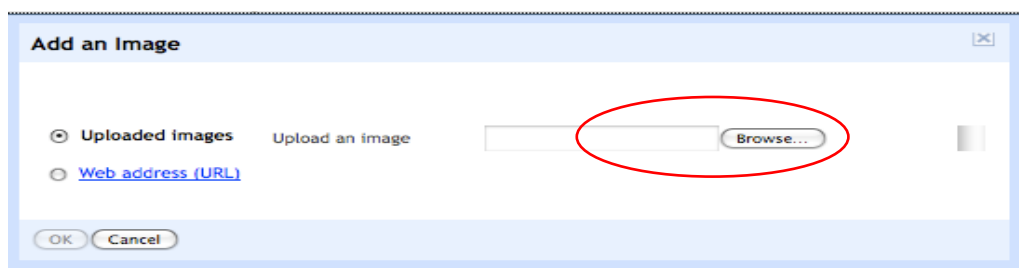
## How do I embed an image?

Click the image icon in the WYSIWYG editor.

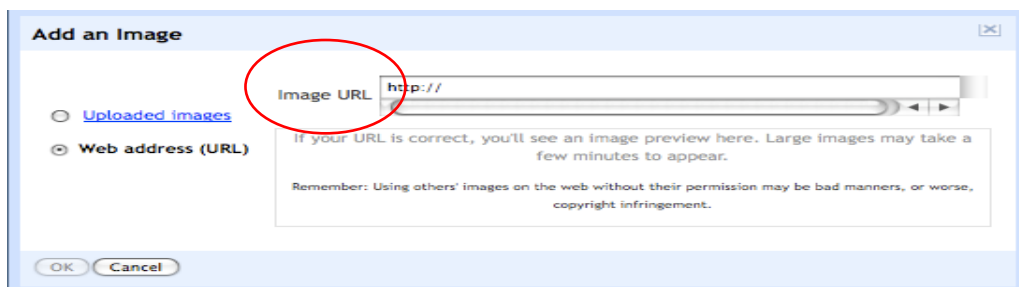


This will open a dialog box with two options: upload an image from your computer or submit a link to an image you found online.

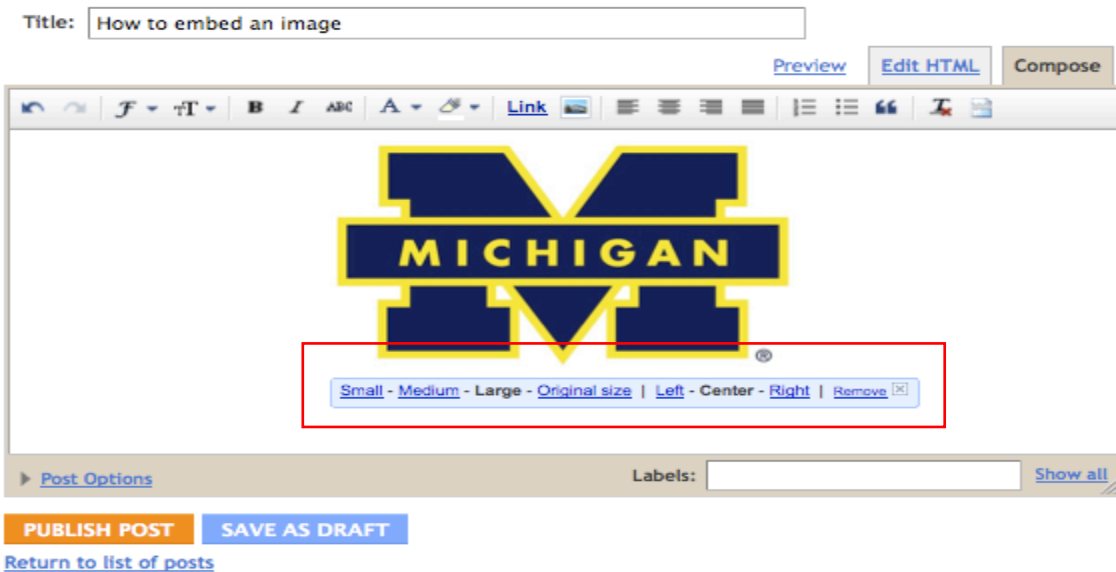
To upload an image, click the “Browse” button, find and select the image on your computer and click “Ok.”



To embed an image you found online by linking to it, paste the URL, or web address, of the image into the box and click “Ok.”



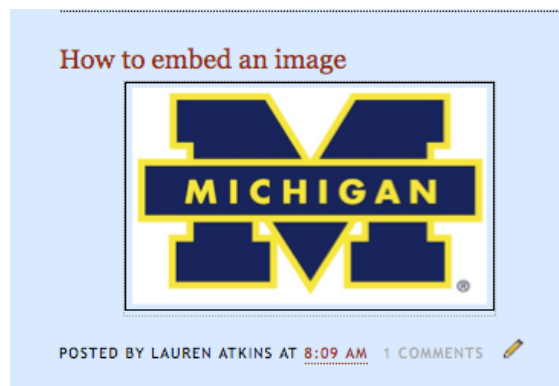
To change the size or alignment of the image once it has appeared inside your posting window, click on the image. An image tool bar will pop up at the bottom.



Here you can choose to make the image small, medium and large, as well as change the alignment, or remove it all together.

Just a note: in Firefox, it is possible to double click on the image and manipulate its size by pulling on the “handles” that appear around the edges. This is not generally possible in Safari or Internet Explorer.

To get an idea of how your image will look inside your post, click “Preview.” Be aware that your alignment, image size and the size of your posting space as dictated by your theme can affect how images and text are placed once the post is published. You may have to tweak things a bit here and there to get your desired effect.



For those who know HTML, you can click on the “Edit HTML” tab and insert images there as well. However, we do not recommend this for users who are not comfortable with using HTML code.

## How do I embed video?

Blog authors can embed video from YouTube very easily. First, go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and find the video you would like to embed.

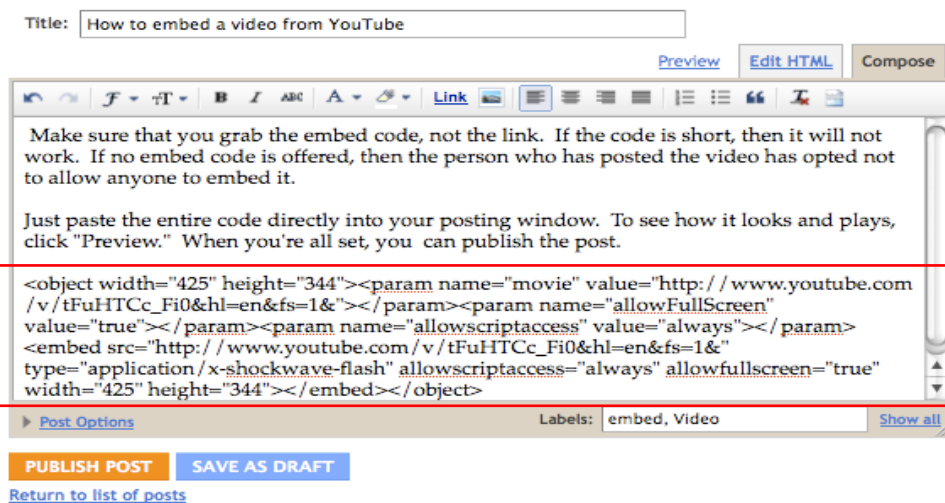
Select the embed code for that video.

The embed code can be found on the right side of the video's page, next to the name of the poster, the video's description and the URL. **You want to make sure to grab the embed code, NOT the URL.** The embed code is a long string of HTML code that will nestle a video player inside your post, so that readers can view it from within your blog, instead of linking out to YouTube.

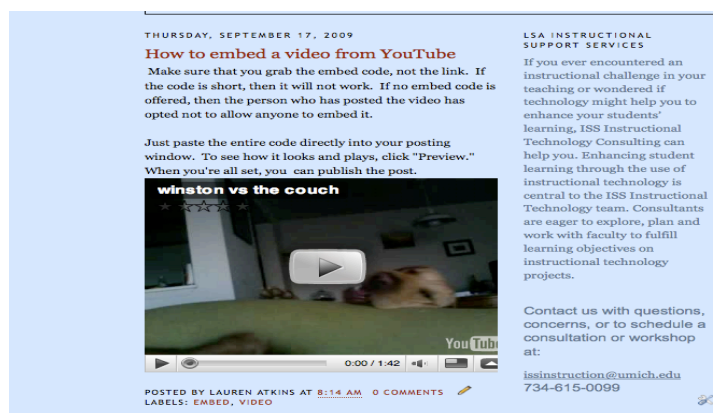


Click on the code and copy it. It should be a short paragraph of code; if you insert just the URL or a fragment of the code, it will not work.

Go back to your posting window and paste the entire block of code directly into your post.

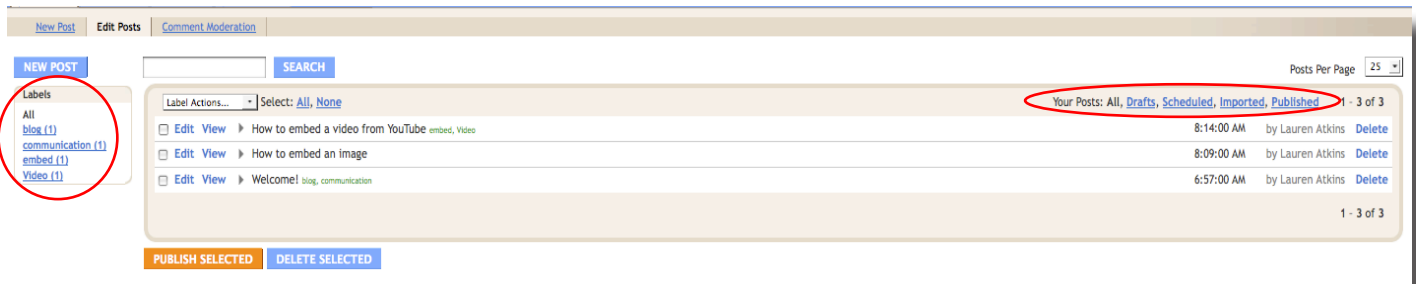


To see how your video looks, click the "Preview" button. If you are satisfied with your post, you can Save or Publish it.



## Edit Posts

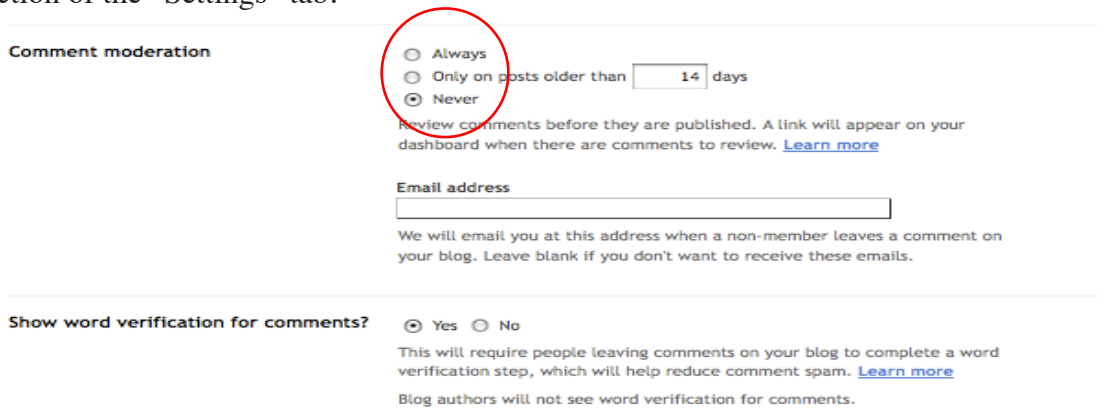
Perhaps you have saved some posts as drafts, or you'd like to go back and edit previously published posts. To do that, go to the "Edit Posts" link under the Posting tab.



In this screen, you can edit, view or delete any of your posts, or filter them by such criteria as Published, Scheduled, Drafts, label (tag), etc.

## Moderate Comments

Comment moderation means that you, as the blog's administrator, have decided that no reader's comments will be displayed on the blog until you have approved them. This feature can be turned on in the "Comments" section of the "Settings" tab.



If you choose to turn on this function, Blogger will save all received reader comments in a list for you to review. You can choose to publish or reject them as you see fit.





## The Settings Tab

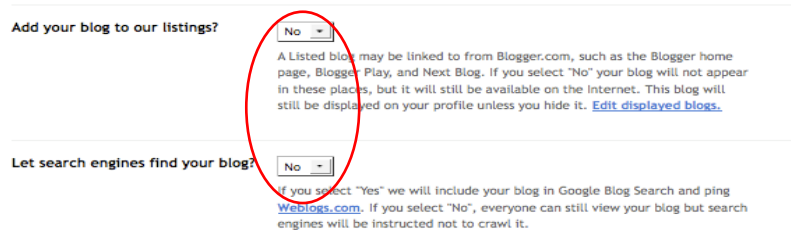


The Settings tab gives you control over a variety of publishing options for your blog. We will only cover a portion of the options available, as many will most likely not be changed from their default status by users.

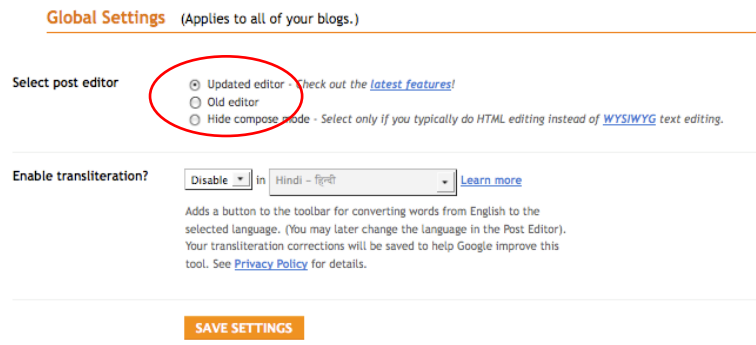
### Basic Tools

This includes the ability to import, export or delete your blog, as well as alter the title and description.

For those who want to keep their blogs private, we suggest you opt “No” for the options “Add your blog to our listings” and “Let search engines find your blog.”



For the most efficient use of your blog, you'll also want to opt for the “Updated” posting editor. Authors of language-related blogs may be interested in enabling the “Transliteration” feature, which adds a button to the toolbar for converting words from English to a selected language. Corrections you might make to the translations are saved and used by Google to help improve the tool.



Remember to “Save Settings” after making any adjustments.

### Publishing

Use this menu to change the URL of your blog if you desire, or if you'd like to move your blog to a custom domain name.

### Formatting

This menu allows you to adjust the appearance of the date and timestamp format, as well as the language, of your blog.

### Comments

This menu, obviously, dictates whether comments will be shown, who can comment, where the comment form will be and whether you will be moderating comments. For more privacy, users can opt to make commenting available only to Google Accounts or Members (i.e., authors and admins) of the blog. Limiting commenting ability in conjunction with limiting blog access will shield you from spam and unwanted readers.



## Archiving

This menu deals with the frequency at which your blog posts will be archived.

## Site Feed

Allows you to adjust the syndication feeds of your blog. Syndication feeds, or RSS feeds, are what enable your blog content to be pushed out to readers. RSS feeds are one of the bonuses of using a blog format over a traditional website.

## Email & Mobile

You can opt to send an email to specific addresses whenever a new post is added to the blog (generally unnecessary, particularly if readers subscribe to the RSS feed), as well as choose an email address by which to publish blog posts remotely. This means that instead of visiting blogger.com each time you want to publish a post, you can email content in from any internet-capable computer or smart phone.

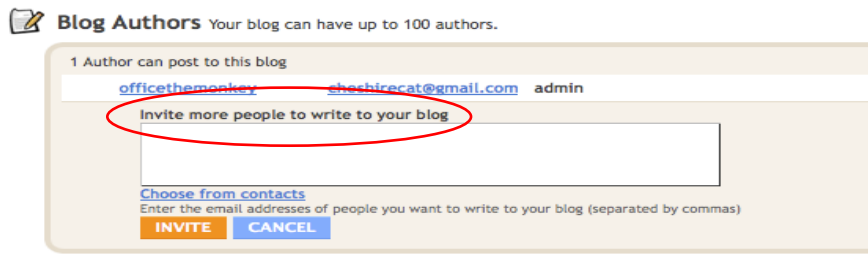
## OpenID

Lets you adjust OpenID settings. For more information on OpenID and what it means, visit <http://openid.net/>

## Permissions

This section is very important, particularly for those wanting to selectively share their blogs.

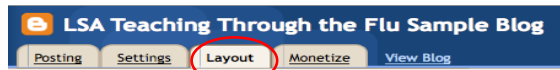
This menu allows you to add other authors to your blog by inserting their email addresses.



You can also limit who can read your blog: anyone, only blog authors, or only people you choose. For private class blogs, the “only people I choose” option tends to be the best. Select that option and enter in the email addresses of your intended readers; they will receive an emailed invitation to view your blog with their own Blogger or Gmail accounts.



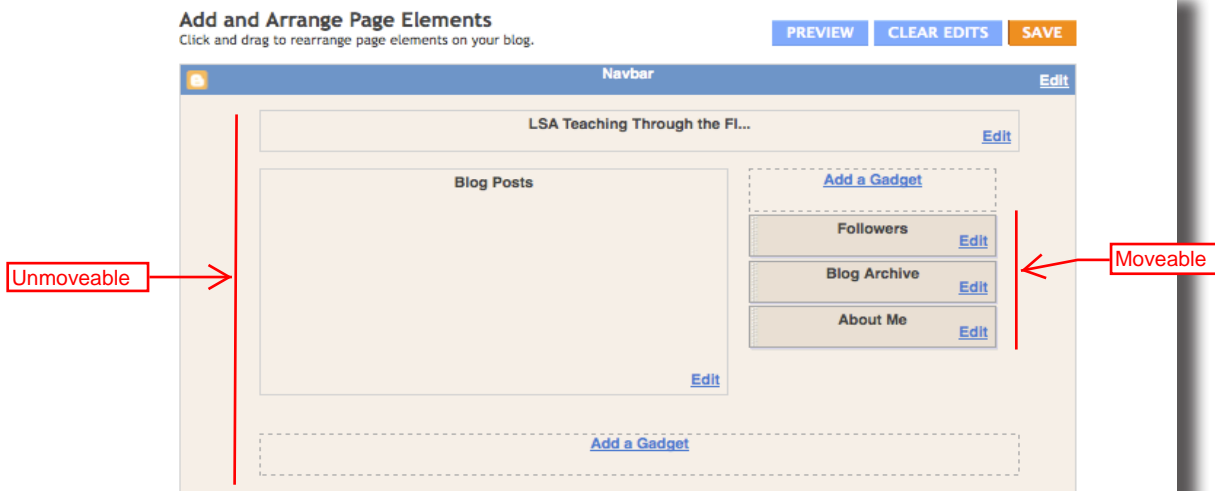
# The Layout Tab



The Layout tab allows you to switch or upload templates, and alter the colors and fonts of your templates.

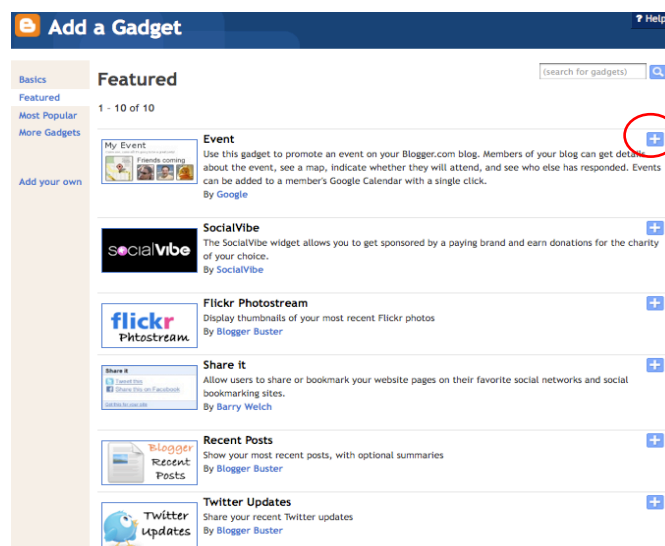
## Page Elements

In this section, you can edit, add, delete and move around the various modules of your blog template. Not all elements can be moved; just the darker shaded ones. To move them, click and drag them around the space and position them in the place you want them to be.



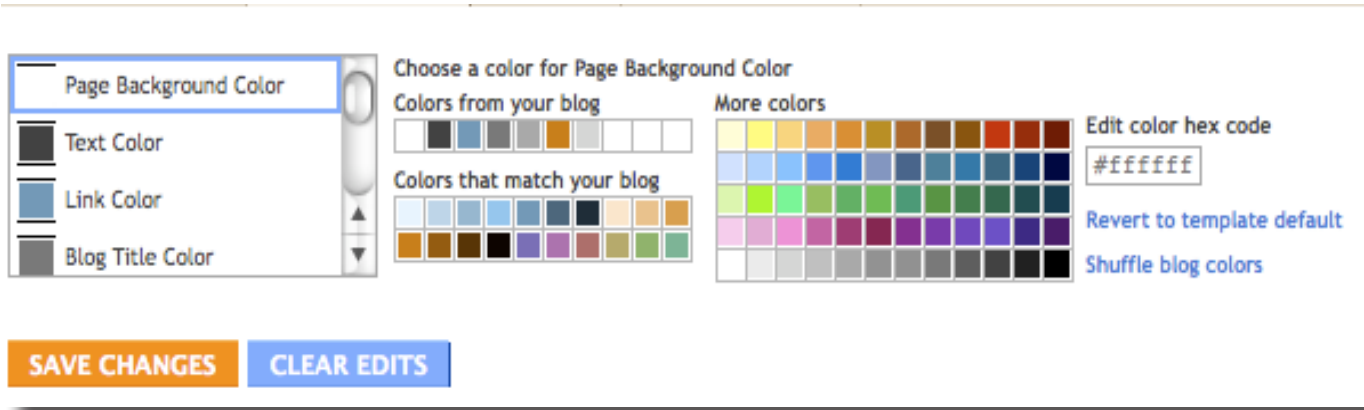
You can also add Google Gadgets to your page. Gadgets, or widgets, are little snippets of HTML code that you can use to add various elements to your page, such as calendars, text, RSS feeds, or even hooks into your Twitter or Flickr account.

To add a gadget, click on the “Add a Gadget” link. A dialog box will pop up. You can search or browse for a gadget you’d like to add. When you’ve found one, click the plus sign next to it to add it to your page. If you choose a gadget that connects to another account of yours, such as Twitter or Flickr, it will ask you for your user ID for that service.



## Fonts and Colors

Once you have chosen a template, you can adjust all the colors within that template. To do so, click on any color element (such as Page Background Color, Blog Title Color, etc) and then click on a color swatch to change its color. Blogger will give you a preview of your changes in the window below the color palette. If you want to save, click “Save Changes.” If you aren’t happy with the changes you’ve made, click “Clear Edits” and your template will revert back.



## Edit HTML

This section allows you to directly alter the HTML code of your template. We do not recommend this to any user who is not already familiar with using HTML. You can also upload a template here that either you have created yourself, or that you’ve downloaded from the internet. When downloading a template from online, you want to make sure to use the .xml file that should come in the download package. Keep in mind that occasionally you may find a template that does not work. **Uploading a template does not erase or change any of your actual posts; just the design of the blog.**

### Backup / Restore Template

Before editing your template, you may want to save a copy of it. [Download Full Template](#)

Upload a template from a file on your hard drive:




When you are all set, take a look at your blog and see what you’ve done. You can always go back and create more posts or make style changes using the toolbar at the top of the window:

cheshirecat@gmail.com | [New Post](#) | [Customize](#) | [Sign Out](#)

Questions?

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