

Remember to UNCLICK the *Remember me* box before you log in!

Exploring Your Blog

Go to your blog's Dashboard (your main control panel) and look around. Here are a few things to notice:

The Gray Admin Bar at top is always visible when you are logged in. This gives you an easy way to get back to your Dashboard from anywhere on WordPress.com. Just hover your mouse over *My Blog* and then click *Dashboard* from the drop-down menu.

When you're on the Dashboard, you can click your blog's name to go to your blog. Find all the basic parts of a blog:

- **Header** = where your blog name is shown.
- **Sidebar** = links and information to help your readers.
- **Hello world post** = your homework.
- **About page** = more homework.

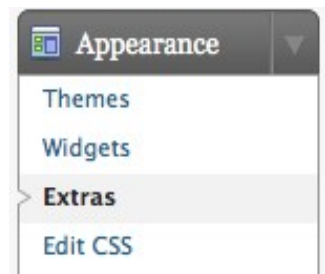
Go back to your Dashboard and take a look around. Can you find all of the following?

- **Sidebar Menu** = all sorts of different places to find information about your blog.
- **Right Now** = a quick glance at what's on your blog.
- **QuickPress** = an easy way to enter a short blog post and either *Save Draft* (if you plan to work on it more later) or *Publish* it right away.
- **Recent Comments** = a quick way to moderate or remove comments. A big part of the fun of blogging is interacting with your readers through comments, so DON'T delete people's comments unless they are mean or are spam. (But you *will* delete the sample comment as part of your homework.)
- **Recent Drafts** = the posts you have started but have not yet published.
- **Stats** = information about how many people have visited your blog recently. It does not count your own visits (when you are logged in).

In Class: Tweak Your Settings

Now let's get to work. Look in your sidebar for these options. If you don't see sub-menus, then click the drop-down arrow next to the main menu category.

- **Appearance > Extras** > UNclick the box for *Enable mShots site previews on this blog* so the pop-up windows won't annoy your readers. Then CLICK the box for *Hide related links on this blog*. Links are important, but never trust someone else (or a computer program) to make that sort of decision for you!
- **Appearance > Extras** > Optional: I have UNclicked *Show a like button* on my blogs, but other people like the like button. You may want to leave it clicked for now, so you can see how it looks and whether your readers use it.



Remember to click Update Extras!

- **Users > My Profile** > Type your internet alias into the *Display name publicly as* box. The rest of the page can be left blank, for privacy.
- **Users > My Profile** > When you get on your computer at home, if you have an avatar or photo that you like (perhaps one that you use on a social networking site), you can click *Add photo through Gravatar* and follow the directions.

Remember to click Update Profile!

- **Settings > General** > Set your *Site Title* to whatever you want to appear on your blog.
- **Settings > General** > Remove the default *Tagline*, and leave it blank OR enter a short phrase that describes your blog.
- **Settings > General** > Set your *Timezone* to match Chicago.

Remember to click *Save Changes!*

More Tweaks: How to Encourage Comments

- **Settings > Discussion** > All three of the *Default article settings* boxes should be checked.
- **Settings > Discussion** > Under *Other comment settings*, I only require the name and email (the top box).
- **Settings > Discussion** > For *Email me whenever*, check both boxes. If you DO want to moderate comments, then you will also check “An administrator must always approve the comment.”
- **Settings > Discussion** > Yes, there’s still more! In the *Comment Moderation* section, there is a big box. Type into it every nasty, hateful four-letter word you can think of (or have your parents do this), one word per line. Any comment that contains any of these words will automatically be held for moderation, no matter what your other settings are.
- **Settings > Discussion** > Be careful: do NOT enter any words in the *Comment Blacklist* box!
- **Settings > Discussion** > Almost done! Check the *Subscribe To Comments* and *Subscribe To Blog* boxes, because those options are very helpful to your readers.
- **Settings > Discussion** > Pick the type of *Default Avatar* you want to use (for commenters who don’t have their own pictures).

Remember to click *Save Changes!*

Now for Some Fun

- **Appearance > Themes** > Finally, time to play! WordPress.com offers more than 90 blog themes to choose from, so you should be able to find at least one that matches your personality. Click *Preview* to see what the theme looks like. Click *Activate* if you want to keep it.

Homework

1. **Edit the *Hello world* post to tell about yourself.** Remember to follow Internet safety! No full names or other specific details, but share with us a little about your hobbies, favorite books to read, favorite subjects in school, pets, or other interesting things. Be sure to click *Update* to save your changes!
2. **Delete the sample comment.**
3. **Edit the *About* page to tell about you.** Feel free to copy part of what you wrote in your *Hello world* post. Remember to click *Update*.

