

Blogging for Special Educators

Closing the Gap Conference 2006

Troy Kruger, MS, OTR/L

Intermediate School District #287

Introduction

Web Blogging is a new, contemporary approach to sharing information on the Internet. It has become very popular due to its ease of use and lack of financial burden. Educators have been using Blogs primarily in the fields of secondary and higher education. Teachers have been using their own Blogs to post information regarding their classrooms in order to quickly share important information to a wide audience including students, administrators, peers, care takers and community liaisons. Students have been using Blogs to support their written work and to gain access to a worldwide network of peer and professional community to support their educational needs.

Special education students and their teachers may have a tremendous need and use for Blogs. Students can use Blogs as a way of providing alternative methods to traditional paper/pencil written work. They have immediate access to background and research information on the Internet, so producing work on the Internet is a natural way for them to complete literacy projects when traditional methods aren't meaningful to them. Existing computer access and written language technologies can continue to be used to support written language using Blogs. Blogs can also be helpful to communicate and coordinate special education teamwork and information sharing. Student directed on-line work portfolios could be used to motivate students to produce quality work they are proud of. There are also safeguards that can easily be implemented to provide safety and anonymity to student Blogs.

Special education teachers can also use Blogs to keep track of and sort their professional research projects and online activities databases. Curriculum supports found on the web can be saved and organized for use later using a teacher Blog. Favorite web sites including activities students can interact with can also be stored and indexed on teacher or student Blogs. The possibilities are extensive.

Now that you know how it can be useful, let's create your own Blog right now!

Free Blogs can be set up at the following web address: www.blogger.com




1. This is the screen you get when you visit www.blogger.com. Assuming you have done this before, you first need to set up an account. You can start this process by clicking the large orange arrow, “Create Your Blog Now”.

Blogger™ Push-Button Publishing

1 CREATE ACCOUNT ▶ 2 NAME BLOG ▶ 3 CHOOSE TEMPLATE

1 Create an account

Choose a user name	<input type="text" value="CTG2006"/>	You'll use this to sign in for future visits.
Enter a password	<input type="password" value="*****"/>	Must be at least 6 characters long.
Retype password	<input type="password" value="*****"/>	Enter it again just to be sure.
Display name	<input type="text" value="Troy"/>	The name used to sign your blog posts.
Email address	<input type="text" value="whatever@mail.com"/>	We will never share your address with third parties without your permission.
Acceptance of Terms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I accept the Terms of Service	Indicate that you have read and understand Blogger's Terms of Service

CONTINUE 

- Next, you will see this screen. Here is where you must choose a unique user name. These are free services, so usernames will be hard to come by. Think of something unique and that you can remember. If it's not available, you will be prompted at the next step to choose a different one. In the example above, I chose CTG2006.
- Choose a password and type it in the 2nd and 3rd boxes.
- Choose a Display name. If setting up for a student, consider using a nick name or pseudonym.
- Type in an email address. You can make one up if you are worried about getting SPAM.
- Read and accept the terms and click the orange arrow.

This is my User name: _____

This is my Password: _____

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2 Name your blog

Blog title Enter a title for your blog.

Blog address (URL) .blogspot.com You and others will use this to read and link to your blog.
[Check Availability](#)
 This blog address is available.


Word Verification

 Type the characters you see in the picture.



OR

Advanced Setup Want to host your blog somewhere else? Try [Advanced Blog Setup](#). This will allow you to host your blog somewhere other than Blogspot.

CONTINUE 


7. Now you get to name your blog. Choose an appropriate Title in the first box.
8. The next box asks for your URL or web address you would like your blog to be named. Again, choices are limited, so be unique and make it something you can remember. I chose ctgblog. That means that my blog could be accessed from any computer with internet by typing:
www.ctgblog.blogspot.com.
9. Click the “Check Availability” button and make selections until your choice is available.
10. Word Verification: type the text you see in the box and then click the orange continue arrow.

This is my Blog address: _____

Blogger™ Push-Button Publishing

1 CREATE ACCOUNT ▶ 2 NAME BLOG ▶ 3 CHOOSE TEMPLATE

3 Choose a template




Minima
Created by: Douglas Bowman

[preview template](#)




Minima Black
Created by: Douglas Bowman

[preview template](#)



Dots



Son of Moto

You can easily **change the template later**, or even create your own custom template design once your blog is set up.

CONTINUE →

11. Choose a template to create the overall “look” of your blog. Choose one that is pleasing to you. Don’t worry, you can change your mind at any time, even after your Blog content is all created.

Blogger™ Push-Button Publishing

! **Your blog has been created!**

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.

START POSTING →

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Buzz](#) | [Help](#) | [Language](#) | [Developers](#) | [Gear](#) | [Privacy](#) | Copyright © 1999 - 2006 Google

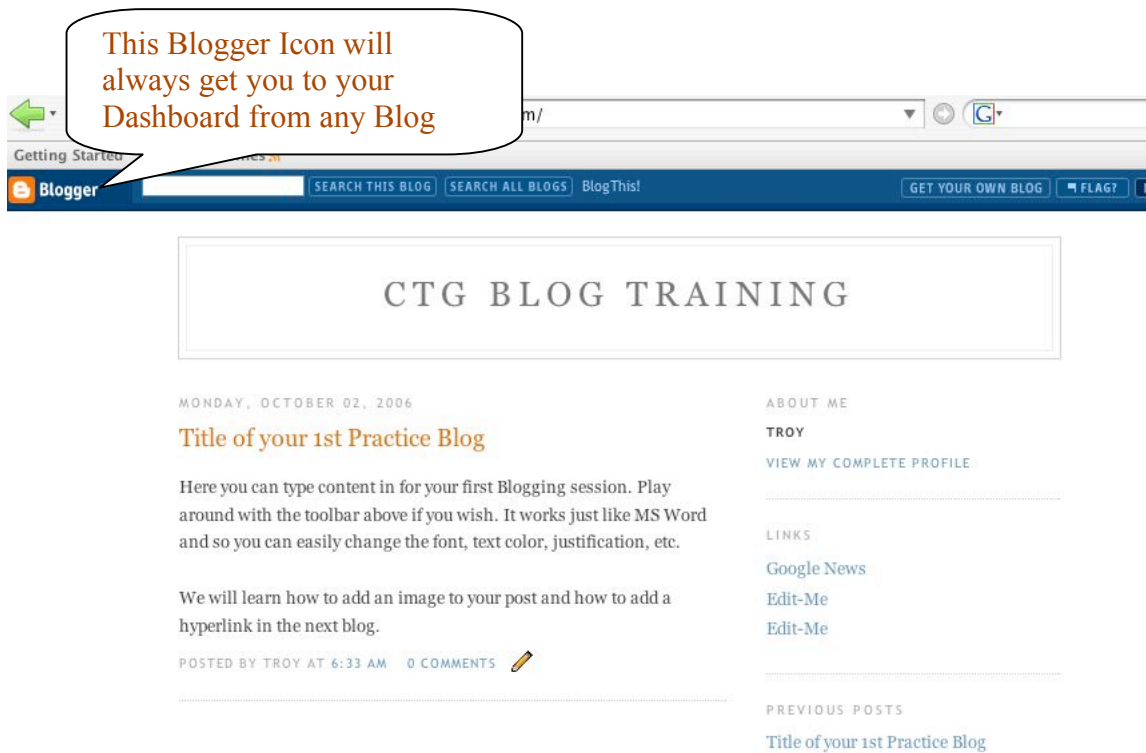
12. Yeah, you did it!

The screenshot displays the 'CTG Blog Training' interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the logo and a 'Back' button. Below the header are four tabs: 'Posting', 'Settings', 'Template', and 'View Blog'. Underneath these tabs is a navigation bar with 'Create', 'Edit posts', 'Moderate comments', and 'Status' links. The main content area features a 'Title' field containing 'Title of your 1st Practice Blog'. To the right of the title field are 'Edit Html' and 'Compose' buttons. Below the title is a rich text editor toolbar with options for font, size, bold, italic, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, and undo. The editor area contains the text: 'Here you can type content in for your first Blogging session. Play around with the toolbar above if you wish. It works just like MS Word and so you can easily change the font, text color, justification, etc.' followed by 'We will learn how to add an image to your post and how to add a hyperlink in the next blog.' At the bottom of the editor, there are 'Post and Comment Options' and keyboard shortcuts: 'press Ctrl with: B = Bold, I = Italic, S = Publish, D = Draft'. Below the editor are two buttons: 'Save as Draft' (dark blue) and 'Publish Post' (orange).

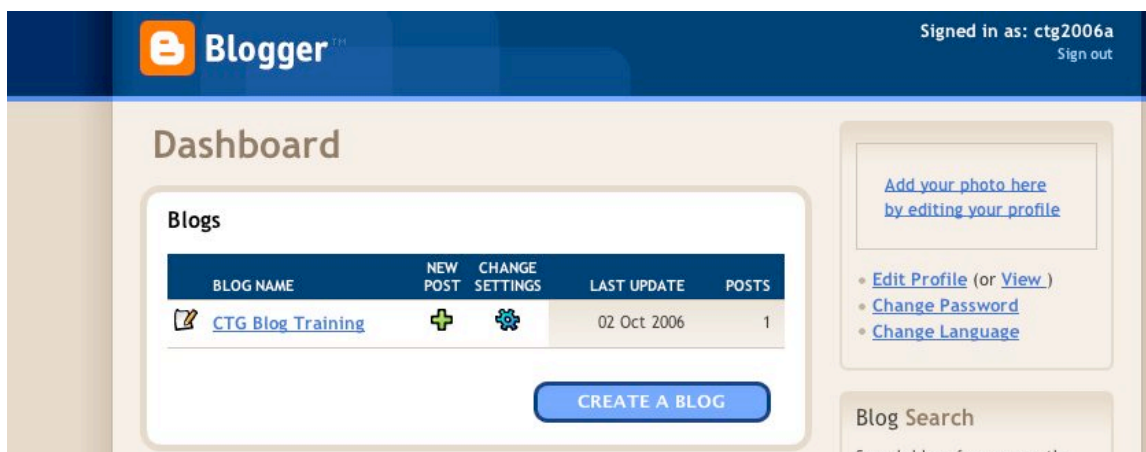
Now that your blog is up and running, it's time to start adding content. The window on your screen should look similar to a formatting window you have seen with word processing programs. There is a tool bar at the top you should familiarize yourself with. Start typing and have some fun. Always Publish your Post with the orange button when you are done.



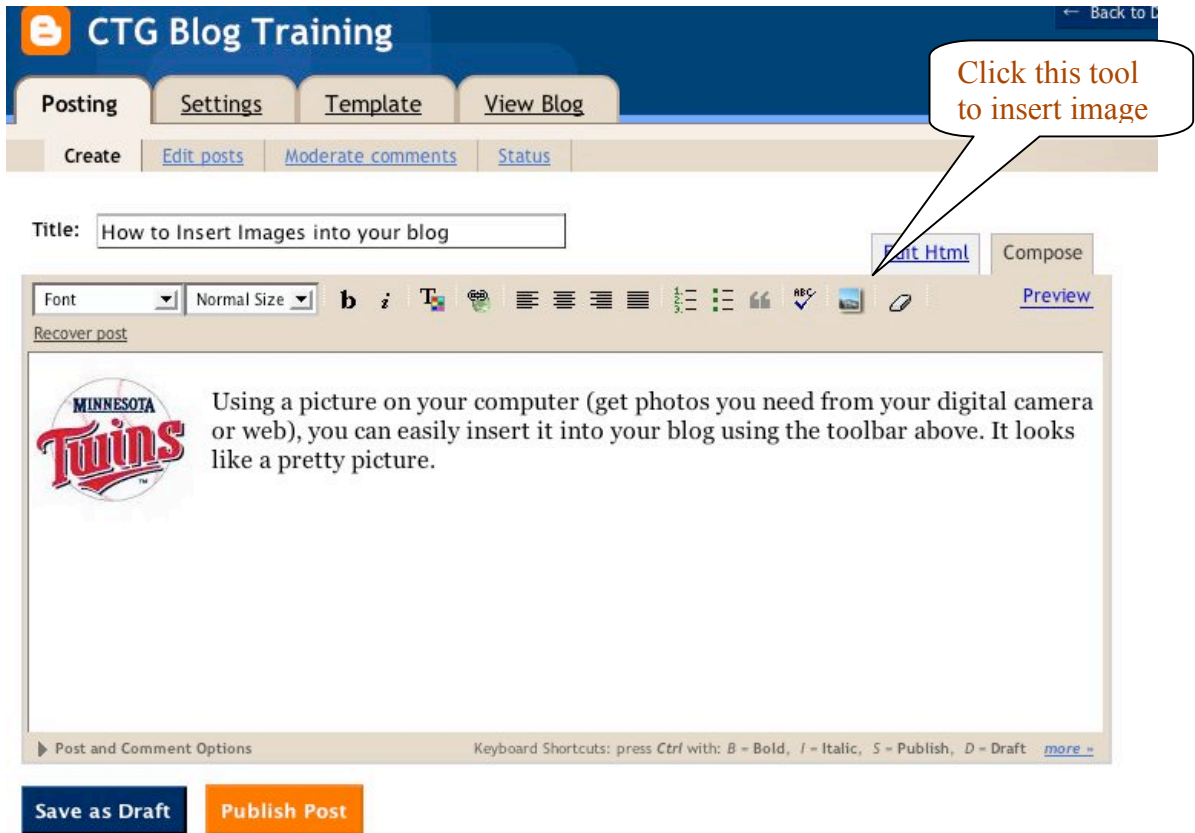
You will get this screen when you are done. You can view your blog and posts by clicking the “View Blog” text.



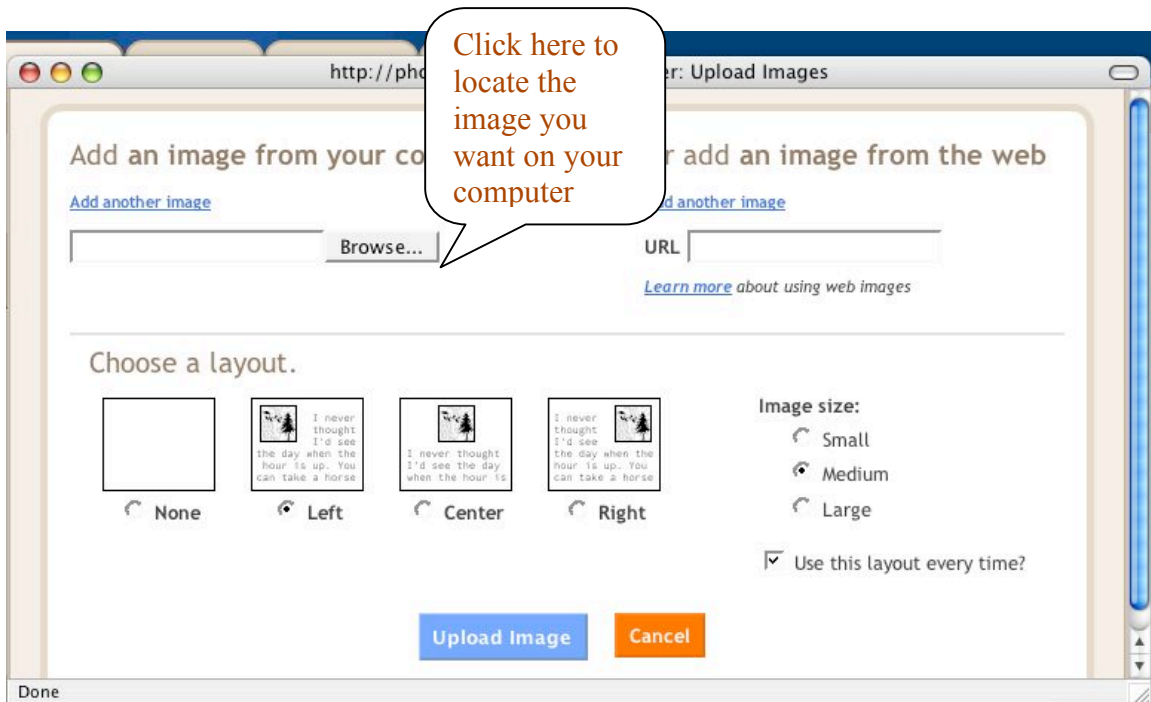
Above is a shot of what my practice blog looks like after following the above steps. Please find the Blogger nav bar located at the top of your Blogging window. The orange B icon is how you get to your Dashboard. You will need to do this to change any settings on your blog and navigate your post editing. Below is a screen shot of my Dashboard after clicking the icon. From here I can add new posts to my blog and change settings.



Let's practice adding an image to a blog post.



Start by making sure you have a picture on your computer that you want and know how to find. Type some text and when you are ready to insert the picture, click the insert image icon on the tool bar.



You will then get a popup window like the one pictured above. Click the Browse button to find your picture. Then select where you want it to appear in relation to your text and how big you want it. Press the blue “Upload Image” button to upload your image. View your blog and hit refresh on the browser and now your text and image is on the screen and published.

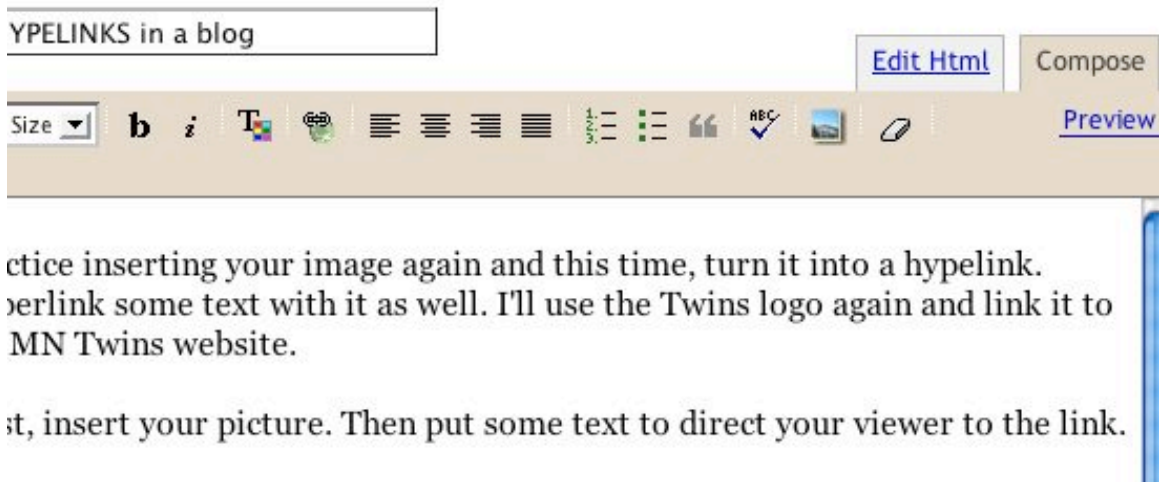
Next, we’ll learn how to insert a hyperlink to your blog. Hyperlinks are clickable text or pictures that send you to another website. They are very useful and easy to do with Blogger.

The screenshot displays the 'CTG Blog Training' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'Posting', 'Settings', 'Template', and 'View Blog'. Below these are buttons for 'Create', 'Edit posts', and 'Moderate comments'. The main content area shows a post titled 'How to insert HYPELINKS in a blog'. A callout bubble points to the title with the text 'Hyperlink/link icon'. The editor toolbar includes options for font, size, bold, italic, text color, background color, bulleted list, numbered list, link, unlink, undo, redo, and preview. The post content includes the Minnesota Twins logo, followed by the text: 'Practice inserting your image again and this time, turn it into a hypelink. Hyperlink some text with it as well. I'll use the Twins logo again and link it to the MN Twins website.' Below this, it says 'First, insert your picture. Then put some text to direct your viewer to the link.' and provides a blue hyperlink: 'Click here or picture for MN Twins website.' The final paragraph explains the procedure: 'Highlight your text by clicking a dragging and then click the link icon on the toolbar. Type in the web address in the popup box or paste it from your clipboard using copy/paste. Click the picture to select it and then click the link icon again from the toolbar to repeat the procedure. Now when you click the text or picture, you will be directed to the twins website.' At the bottom, there are 'Save as Draft' and 'Publish Post' buttons.

For this example, I used the Twins logo again and linked it to the MN Twins website.

First, insert your picture. Then put some text to direct your viewer to the link.

Highlight your text by clicking a dragging and then click the link icon on the toolbar. Type in the web address in the popup box or paste it from your clipboard using copy/paste. Click the picture to select it and then click the link icon again from the toolbar to repeat the procedure. Now when you click the text or picture, you will be directed to the twins website.



Publish your post and view your changes. Check to make sure your links work.

Next, we'll explore how to make your Blog as safe as possible for your students using some advanced security features.

The image shows the Blogger Settings interface for a blog titled 'CTG Blog Training'. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Posting', 'Settings' (highlighted with a callout box labeled 'Settings Tab'), 'Template', and 'View Blog'. Below these are sub-tabs: 'Basic', 'Publishing', 'Formatting', 'Comments', 'Archiving', 'Site Feed', 'Email', and 'Members'. The 'Basic' sub-tab is active, showing the following fields:

- Title:** A text box containing 'CTG Blog Training'.
- Description:** A large text area with a callout box saying 'Put a description here'. Below the text area is the label '500 Character'.
- Add your Blog to our listings?:** A dropdown menu set to 'Yes' with a callout box saying 'Select "NO" here'. Below this is the text: 'A Public blog appears in your Blogger Profile. If you select "No" we will not show your blog anywhere on Blogger.com, but it will still be available on the Internet.'
- Show Quick Editing on your Blog?:** A dropdown menu set to 'Yes'. Below this is the text: 'When you're logged in to Blogger, edit your posts from your blog with one click.'

Access your blog via your Dashboard and notice the top folder tabs. Select Settings tab. You now have sub folder. This is the Basic folder view. Follow the callout box instructions to make your blog most secure.

Comments

Show Hide

Choose Hide

Note: Selecting "Hide" does not delete existing comments - You can show them at any time by re-selecting "Show".

Who Can Comment?

Only Members of this Blog

Only Members

Comments Default for Posts

New Posts Have Comments

Backlinks

Show Hide

Note: Selecting "Hide" does not delete backlinks - You can show them at any time by re-selecting "Show".

Backlinks Default for Posts

New Posts Have Backlinks

Comments Timestamp Format

9:03 AM

Show comments in a pop-up window?



Show

Date Header Format

Archive Index Date Format

Timestamp Format

Time Zone

Date Language

- [UTC -06:00] America/Cancun
- [UTC -06:00] America/Chicago
- [UTC -06:00] America/Costa_Rica
- [UTC -06:00] America/El_Salvador
- [UTC -06:00] America/Guatemala
- [UTC -06:00] America/Managua
- [UTC -06:00] America/Menominee
- [UTC -06:00] America/Merida
- [UTC -06:00] America/Mexico_City
- [UTC -06:00] America/Monterrey
- [UTC -06:00] America/North_Dakota/Center
- [UTC -06:00] America/Rainy_River
- [UTC -06:00] America/Rankin_Inlet
- [UTC -06:00] America/Regina
- [UTC -06:00] America/Swift_Current
- [UTC -06:00] America/Tegucigalpa
- [UTC -06:00] America/Winnipeg
- [UTC -06:00] CST
- [UTC -06:00] CST6CDT
- [UTC -08:00] America/Los_Angeles

Select your time zone

English (United States)

Show comments in a popup window?

Yes No

Select NO

Show word verification for comments?

Yes No 

Select YES

Enable comment moderation?

Yes No 

Select YES

Email address

We will email you at this address when a non-member leaves a comment on you receive these emails.

Show profile images on comments?

Yes No

Don't Forget to Save your Settings for each page you change

Comment Notification Address

We will email yo


Save Settings

Select the Members tab

Posting Settings Template View Blog


Basic Publishing Formatting Comments Archiving Site Feed Email Members

Current Team Members

Name	Username	Email	Admin 	Remove
	ctg2006a	whatever@mail.com	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Add Team Member(s)

Click here to add new members

 **CTG Blog Training** ← Back

Posting Settings **Template** View Blog

[Basic](#) [Publishing](#) [Formatting](#) [Comments](#) [Archiving](#) [Site Feed](#) [Email](#) **Members**

New User(s)

enter email addresses of invited uses here

and here

and here

Enter email addresses of members to invite. Do not enter the address of a mailing list: invite each member individually.

Message(Optional)

Good idea to announce the blog and invite participation. Your invites will have to register with Blogger and accept membership to your blog prior to posting comments.

Enter any comments you want to post

Save

Save Settings

You will receive an email notification when your invites have been accepted or declined, so make sure the address in [your](#)

Need email addresses for members

Save

That's it. Enjoy your blogging! If you need more help or want to see this sample blog in action, visit: <http://ctgblog.blogspot.com/>