



workbook

New York Times Bestselling Author
RUTH SOUKUP



Welcome to Blogging 101

If you are reading this workbook, I am assuming you either have recently started a blog or are interested in starting one, and that you have also read (or are about to read) my bestselling blogging guide, *How to Blog for Profit*, and are now feeling a little overwhelmed and unsure of where to start.

The good news is that you have come to the right place!

This workbook will walk you, step by step, through the process of not just setting up your self-hosted Wordpress blog, but determining what you will write about, setting up a structure for your blog, showing you how to navigate the basics of Wordpress, and establishing a strong foundation so that you are able to hit the ground running and easily implement all the action steps found in *How to Blog for Profit (Without Selling Your Soul)*.

My goal is to take the mystery out of blogging so that you feel less intimidated and more empowered to take action. But make no mistake—blogging takes work. You will have to be willing to dig in and learn new skills and commit to spending time and energy on your pursuit.

Are you ready to get started?

Let's do this!

XOXO, *Ruth*





Determine your what, why, & how

Blogging is a relatively new phenomenon, having only been around for about the last 15 years. There are still plenty of people who don't understand what a blog is or why a person would want to read one, much less write one! The fact that blogging is so new and so impacted by technology means that blogging is also constantly evolving.

The truth is, the blogosphere today looks very different than it did 15 years ago, and five years from now it will probably look nothing like it does today. To step into this world is to step into an environment that is always changing.

As such, I think it is really important for anyone who wants to venture into the world of blogging to take a few minutes to think about your motivation and your objectives for diving in. Why did you pick up this workbook in the first place? What will keep you going when things get rough, or when other people don't understand?

Take a few minutes to answer the questions on the following three pages. Be sure to answer honestly and as thoroughly as possible, and remember to come back and revisit your answers on a regular basis--especially on those days where you feel like giving up!



WHY do you want to start a blog?

WHAT do you want to write about?



WHY is your message important?

WHAT do you hope to accomplish through blogging?

HOW much are you willing to invest?

Of your time?

Of your money?



HOW do you plan to reach your goals?

WHAT words of encouragement do you want to give yourself?



Pick a name for your blog

It seems so simple, doesn't it? Just pick a name. How hard can it be?

Well, as it turns out, pretty darn hard sometimes!

The thing about your blog name is that once you go through the effort of finding a URL that is available and getting it all set up, and then letting people know where to find it, you are probably going to want to keep it for a while. While blog names can be changed (so don't panic if you are wanting to make a change), it is definitely easier to start with a name you are happy with.

Your blog name should capture the essence of your blog. It should be easy to remember (and easy to spell), and, ideally, it should be fairly short. In order to avoid confusion, it is also preferable that your URL be the same as your blog name, which means that your blog name needs to be fairly original, or you run the risk of having your preferred URL be taken already.

Coming up with a blog name means putting on your creativity hat and taking some time to do some serious brainstorming. If ideas aren't your thing, you may want to enlist the help of a trusted friend or perhaps even your spouse or kids.

Use the questions on the following few pages to help you through the process & take the mystery out of choosing the right name.



In **2-3 sentences** describe what you want your blog to be about:

Jot down as many **blog name ideas** as you can think of:



Now, using the name ideas you have already come up with, think of alternate names using **synonyms** of the words you have already chosen (use [Thesaurus.com](https://www.thesaurus.com)).

Write down your **top three choices** below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Is the **URL available** for any of them?

If yes, then pick your favorite!

If no, go back & try some more options.



Set up a self-hosted blog on Wordpress

If you haven't already, the next thing you will need to do is set up your self-hosted blog on WordPress.org. This simple tutorial will walk you through the steps of setting up a self-hosted Wordpress blog.

While it might seem faster or easier to start on a hosted platform such as Blogger or Typepad, the reality is that the only way to have true control over your own content is to be self-hosted. If you plan on blogging as more than just a hobby or want to use your blog as a way to build a platform for launching your book or product, you will want to have full control over everything you write. Wordpress has more or less become the industry standard and has the most options for themes and plugins, so that is what I firmly recommend.

There are many hosting companies out there, but for someone who is just starting out on a WordPress site, **Bluehost** is probably the easiest option for getting started. It is the only hosting service officially recommended by WordPress and has been the number-one recommended hosting service for their platform for almost 10 years.

If you **sign up through this special link** you'll get a special offer of shared hosting at \$3.95/month for 36 months, as well as a free domain name for a year!

<http://bit.ly/Bluehost395>

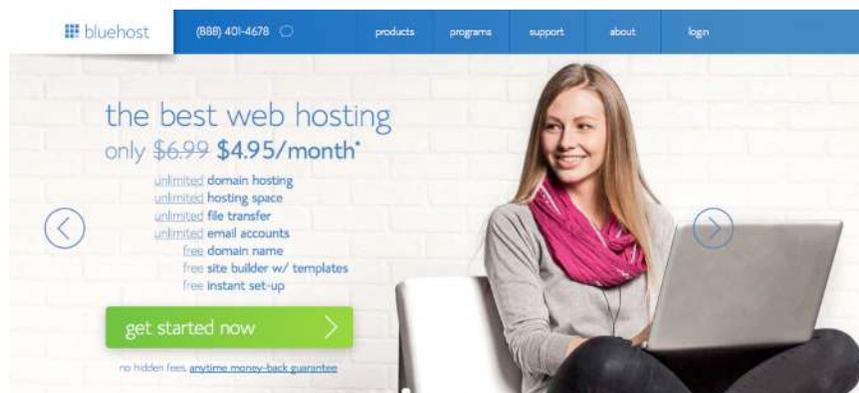
To set up your hosting account with Bluehost, follow the steps below. It will speed up the process to think of a domain name you want to use and to have your credit card for payment ready to go before you get started.



To set up your hosting account with Bluehost, follow the steps below. Before getting started, make sure you have completed step two! It also helps speed up the process if you have your credit card handy and ready to go.

Set Up Your Hosting Account

To get started, go to <http://bit.ly/Bluehost395>, then click “Sign Up Now.”



Next, you need to choose a domain name for your site. If you already own a domain name, you can enter it here, and you will just have to go through a few extra steps to make sure you get your DNS pointed to **Bluehost**. If you don't already have a domain name, you can purchase one from right in the sign up process, and the best part is, it comes free with your new hosting account purchase.

We appreciate your business and look forward to a great relationship.

new domain

Help me get my free domain!

.com

(eg. domainname.com)

Or

transfer domain

I want to use an existing domain

(eg. domainname.com)

Note: Bluehost will provide you the information you'll need for transferring your domain.



Once you've entered a domain name, you'll fill in your personal information.

account information

All fields are required unless otherwise noted.

First Name
 Last Name
 (optional) Business Name
 Country
 Street Address
 City
 State
 Zip-Code
 Phone Number Ext
 Use an international number
 *Email Address
 *Your receipt will be sent to this address.

Then, you'll choose which hosting package you want. Normal, shared hosting is priced at 12, 24 and 36-month terms. To help save you money, the longer term you purchase, the lower the monthly rate will be. For example, by choosing a 36-month hosting term, you can get the great introductory rate of \$3.95/month. There are few other offers provided at sign up, which you can include at your discretion.

	starter	plus most popular	business pro
	normally \$5.99 \$4.95 per month	normally \$9.99 \$6.95 per month	normally \$19.99 \$14.95 per month
	select	select	select
websites	1	unlimited	unlimited
website space	100 GB	unlimited	unlimited
bandwidth	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited
included domains	1	1	1
parked domains	5	unlimited	unlimited
sub domains	25	unlimited	unlimited
email accounts	100	unlimited	unlimited
email storage	500 MB per account	unlimited	unlimited
marketing offers	\$50 included	\$200 included	\$200 included
	select	over \$24/yr in extras Global CDN 1 SpamExperts select	over \$180/yr in extras Global CDN 2 SpamExperts 1 SSL 1 Dedicated IP 1 Domain Privacy SiteBackup Pro High Performance select



After you've filled in your information and chosen your hosting package, click the "Next" button to complete your purchase. You'll then be asked to create a password for your account. You can use the Password Generator to create a strong and secure password, or create one yourself. It is required to have both capital and lowercase letters, a number, and a special character (?!#, etc.) in order to have a strong enough password to protect your account.

Now that you are all signed up and are able to log into your account, you can get started installing WordPress!

Install WordPress

This may seem like the most complicated step, but Bluehost has worked hard to make this one of the easiest things for you to do by using the new MOJO Marketplace for installing WordPress and other applications. In your cPanel, scroll to the section titled "MOJO Marketplace" and choose the "One-Click Installs" button. This will take you to a page inside MOJO Marketplace called Scripts and Platforms. The blog section is at the very top, so all you have to do here is click on the WordPress icon.

bluehost pointsavvytraveler.com (shared)

hosting domains addons account cart help logout

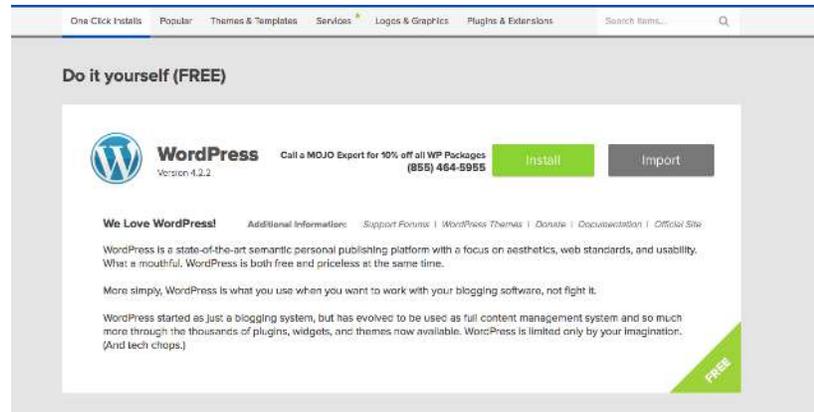
home cpanel server email website ftp databases manage ips install scripts

You want to build a great web presence.
Select a great site builder to make that easier!

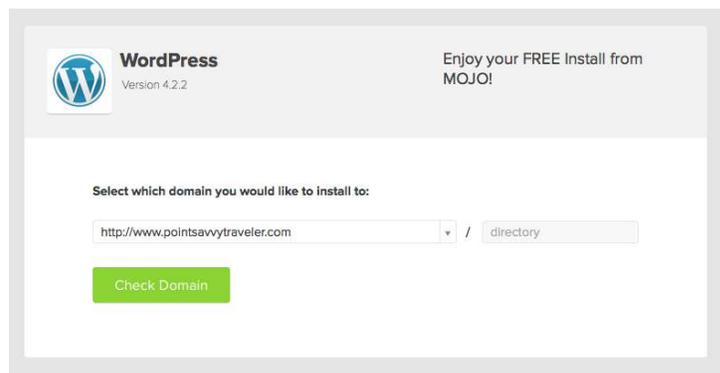
WordPress
WordPress is the worldwide leading platform for building blogs and websites. [Install now.](#)

- Many third party themes and plugins
- Easy to add content
- Great ecommerce plugins available
- Mobile ready
- Available tutorials get you up and running

concrete5 weebly Single Click Installation for Popular Web Applications



This will open the installation window. Click on the green “install” button that will start the WordPress installation process, which has a few easy steps:



Step 1:

Choose where you want to install WordPress. This can be any domain on your account, or a subdomain or a folder for one of your domains. Next, click on “Check Domain,” which will make sure the domain is assigned and pointing to your account. You may get a warning that you are overwriting files, but as long as you don’t have another website built yet, you can check the box and continue. This is mostly to make sure that you really want to install in that location. If you do have other sites built, you will want to make sure you’re not overwriting something important.



Step 2:

Show Advanced Options. This section allows you to set up your own username and password for your WordPress install. IT is recommended to use a different username than “admin” and a very strong password. Make sure that the “Automatically create a new database for this installation” box is checked, unless you have a database already set up that you want to use. After you’ve read the terms and conditions, check the box indicating that you’ve done so, then click “Install Now.”

Now you’ll see the progress page, which will show you how far along the installation is. Once WordPress is fully installed, it will provide you with your site URL, the admin login URL, your username, and password. You will get a copy of this information, except your password, in your email as well. Make sure to keep it in a safe place.

Now you can log into your WordPress site by going to the admin login URL. Enter your username and password, then click “Log In.” This will take you to your WordPress dashboard. From here, you can control everything to do with your WordPress site, such as creating pages, writing posts, and changing the appearance.



Learn to navigate Wordpress

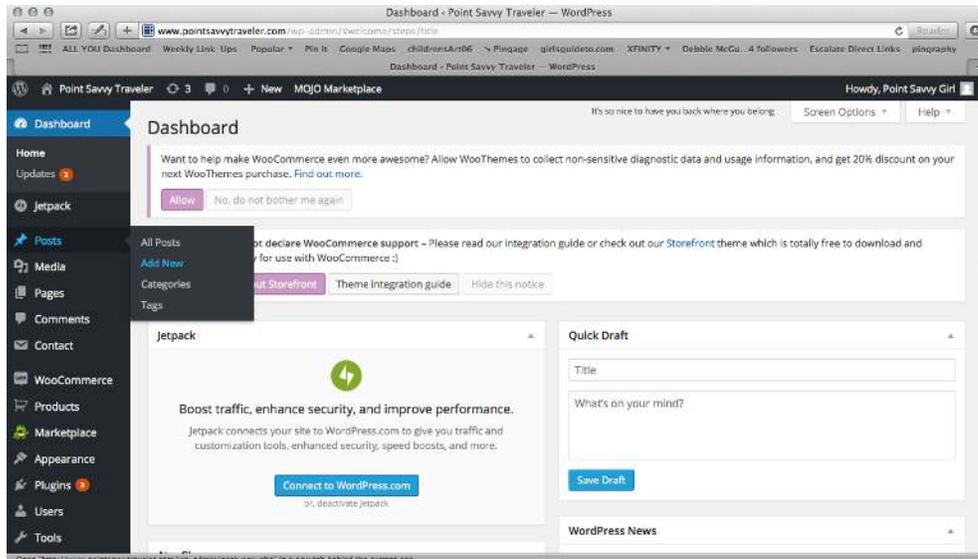
Wordpress is super easy to use...as soon as you get used to it. (Even if you are not very technical!) That said, it does take a little getting used to! Once you've set up your basic Wordpress blog, take some time to learn the ropes so that you are able to navigate your way around the backend.

At the very least, you should know how to login to your new site, how to start a new blog post, how to publish a blog post, how to create and select categories in order to organize your posts, how to create a page, how to add a widget to your sidebar, and how to install a plugin.

Username
Password
 Remember Me
[Lost your password?](#)
[← Back to Point Savvy Traveler](#)

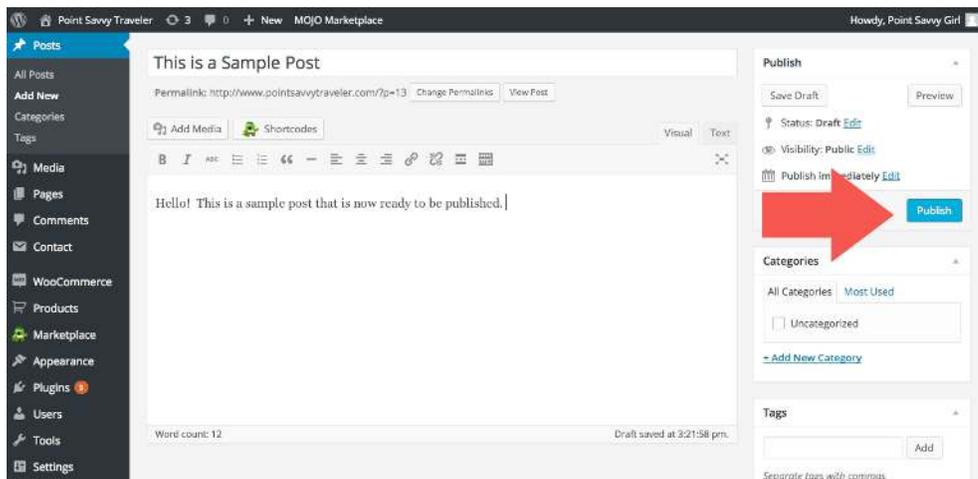
How to login to a Wordpress Site

1. Go to [YOUR SITE URL]/wp-admin/ to access your login page
2. Insert the username and password that you chose while setting up your site, then hit the "Log In" button. This will bring you to your site dashboard.



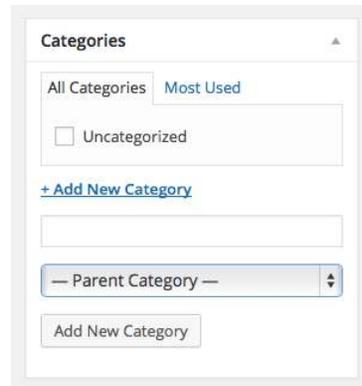
How to Start a Post

1. From your dashboard, hover on “All Posts”
2. Hit “Add New.” This will open up a new post.



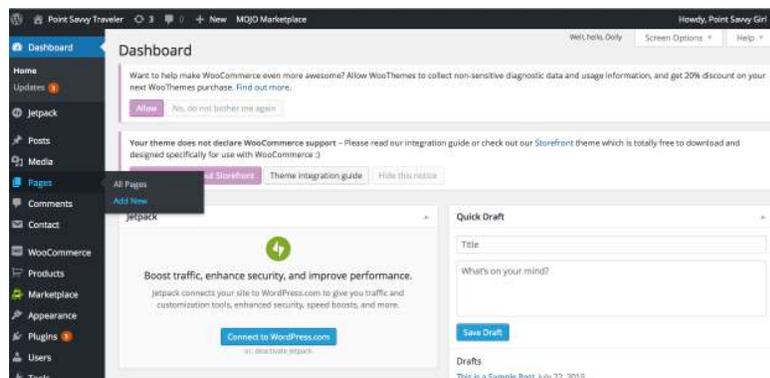
How to Publish a Post

Simply hit the “Publish” button on the right hand side of the post



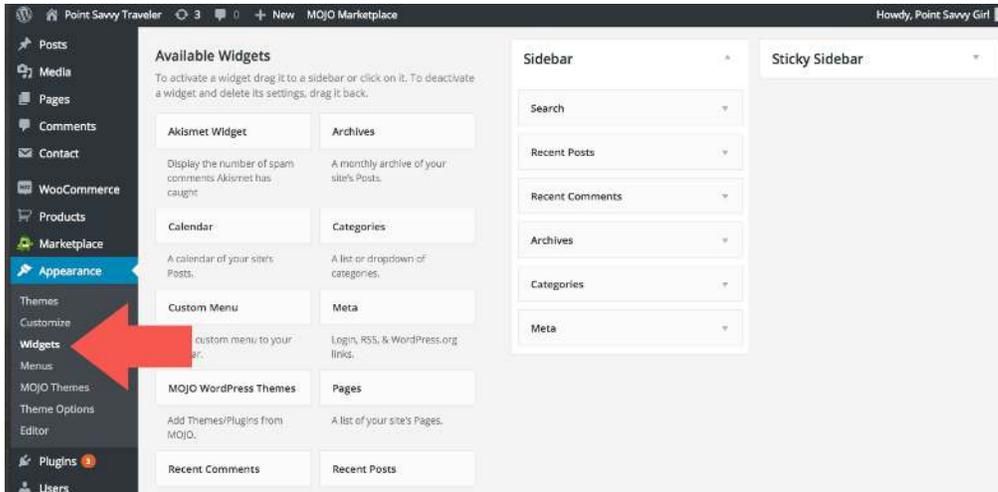
How to Create & Select a Category for Your Post

1. The category box is located to the right of the post box in your Wordpress dashboard.
2. To create a new category, simply select the “Add New Category” link. When you create the category, you can choose to keep it as a “parent” category, or to place it underneath another parent category. I like to use the parent category for my subtopics, and the child categories for my subcategories. (See Step 7 in this book for more details about creating an organizational structure — for your blog.)



How to Create a Page

1. From your dashboard, hover on “All Posts” & select “Add New”
2. Publish the same way you would publish a post.



How to Add a Widget

1. Under “Appearances,” select “Widgets” to go to the widget page
2. Drag and drop the type of widget you would like to add to the sidebar box. To add a box with HTML code (such as AdSense code), simply select the “Text” box & add the code.

Additional Resources

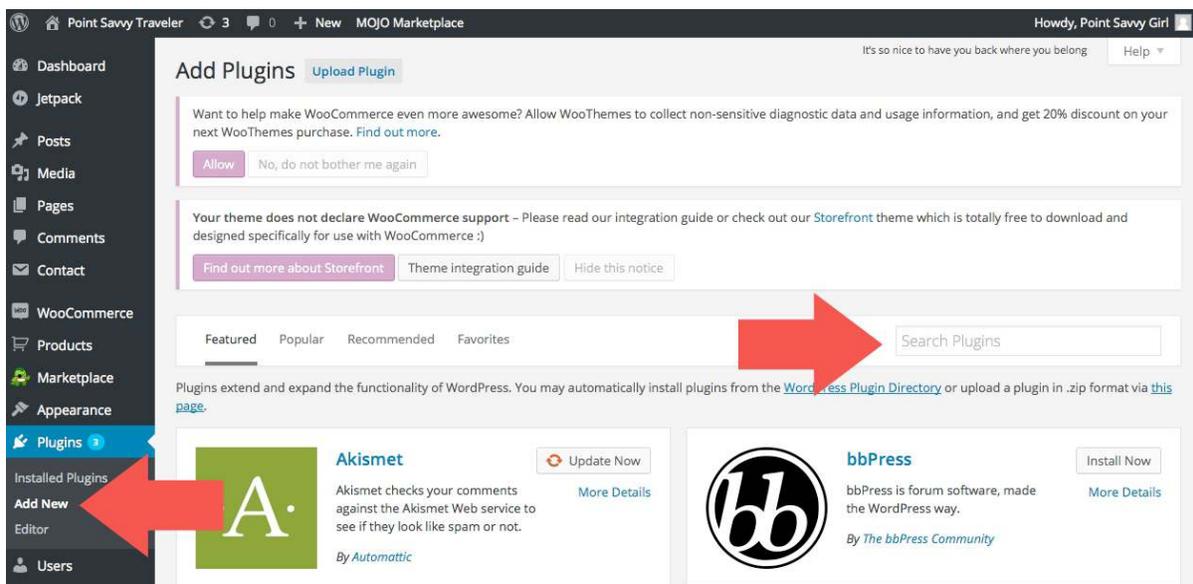
For more information on navigating Wordpress, you may want to check out the following resources:

- [Blogging for Dummies](#)
- [WordPress for Beginners](#)
- [WordPress Fast](#)
- [wpbeginner.com](#)
- [learn.wordpress.com](#)
- [creativebloq.com](#)
- [wpl01.com](#)



Install a few basic plugins

Plugins are perhaps the single best thing about using Wordpress! A plugin, for those of you who aren't familiar with the term, is basically just a particular software or feature that performs a specific function that you can install on your Wordpress site, allowing you to get the service or function you want without having to know any coding or programming. In other words, plugins are awesome!



How to Install a Plugin

1. Under "Plugins," select "Add New" to go to the new plugins page
2. Either select from the plugins that are already listed, or search for a different plugin using the search box.
3. Click the "Install Now" button to install the plugin.



These days, there are plugins for almost anything you could possibly think to do with your blog—SEO, blog commenting, advertising, stat-tracking, email pop-up boxes, shopping carts...and that is literally just the beginning. In fact, there are so many plugins available that the choices might become a little overwhelming!

While I wouldn't recommend going too crazy with installing every plugin you can find—too many plugins can really slow down your site, which is never a good thing—I do recommend that you take a few minutes to install at least a few very basic plugins that will help keep your site running smoothly, help keep away spam, and allow you to start creating the amazing blog you have envisioned.

Here are a few that you may want to consider:

- **Akismet or Antispam Bee** - An anti-spam plugin is probably the very first plugin you will want to install, as spam comments will begin to show up almost immediately.
- **Bottom of Every Post** - This plugin does one thing, and that thing is to add some content to the end of each of your posts.
- **Google Analytics Dashboard** - Google Analytics Dashboard gives you the ability to view your Google Analytics data in your WordPress dashboard. You can also allow other users to see the same dashboard information when they are logged in or embed parts of the data into posts or as part of your theme.
- **WP Supercache** - A caching plugin that helps your site load faster.
- **Yoast SEO** - Yoast WordPress SEO is the most complete SEO plugin available for WordPress. It offers everything you need to optimize your site.



Apply to Google AdSense

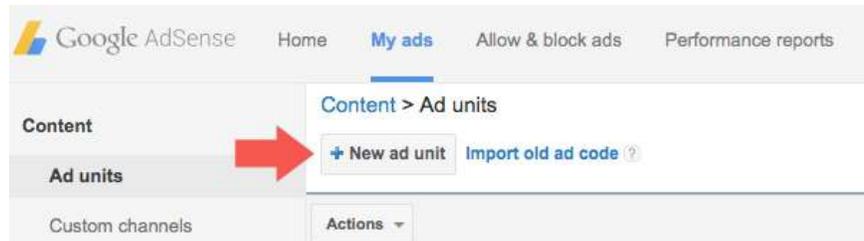
No, installing ads on your site will probably not make you rich. At least not any time soon. And quite honestly, it is too early for you to really start thinking about serious monetization just yet. You first need to focus on getting your blog set up, creating some amazing content, and building a loyal audience.

That said, if you think that you will want to have ads on your site someday, I think it is smart to install a few basic ads right away so that they are there from the very beginning. If your ads have always been there, your readers won't think anything of them. However, if you add them later, once your traffic has grown, you might get pushback from readers who have grown accustomed to them not being there. Better to add them now and then forget about them for a while.

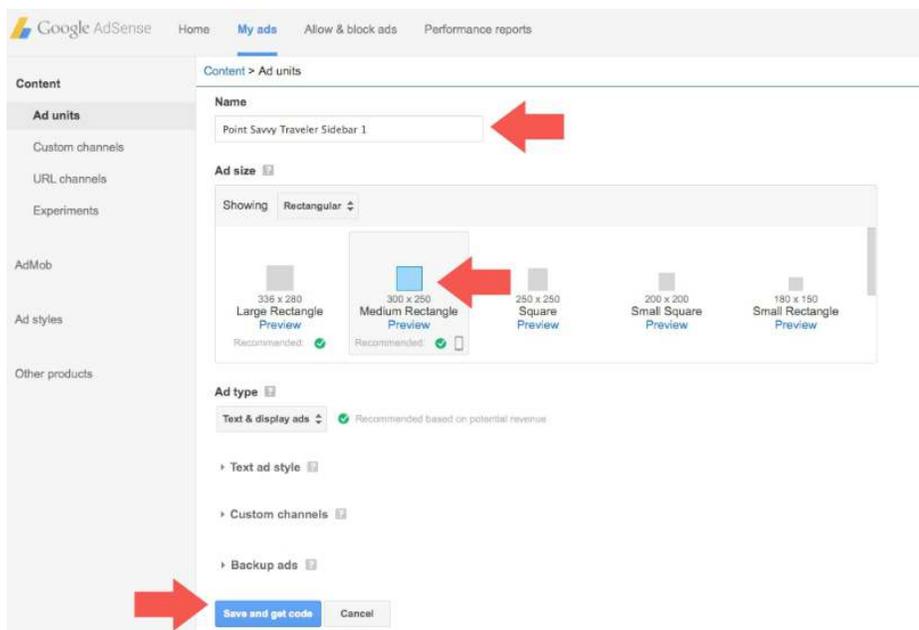
Luckily, applying to Google AdSense—the largest ad network—and installing your ads is very easy and takes just a few minutes.

The screenshot shows the Google AdSense landing page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Google Ads logo and the text 'AdSense'. To the right of the logo, it says 'Already have an account? Sign in'. Below the navigation bar is a blue horizontal bar with several menu items: 'Overview', 'Why AdSense', 'Products', 'How it works', 'Partners', 'Resources', and 'Success stories'. The main content area has the heading 'Get more value from your online content'. Below this heading, there is a paragraph of text explaining AdSense: 'AdSense is a free, simple way to earn money by displaying targeted ads next to your online content. With AdSense, you can show relevant and engaging ads to your site visitors and even customize the look and feel of ads to match your website.' Below the text, there is a video player with a play button icon. To the left of the video player, there is a blue button that says 'Get started now' and the text 'Or, contact sales'. Below the video player, there is a small caption: 'See how golisbon.com has grown with AdSense over the years.'

First, go to [Google.com/Adsense/Start/](https://www.google.com/adsense/start/) to apply for an AdSense account.



Once approved, login to your AdSense account and select “My Ads” and then “New Add Unit.”



To create your ad, first pick a name for your ad. While you can use the same ad code in more than one spot, I generally find it helpful to create separate code for each new ad so that I can track the performance. For sidebar ads, the standard size is generally the “medium rectangle-300x250” size.

Once you’ve named your ad and selected your size, simply click the “save and get code” button.



Ad code



✓ Ad unit successfully created

This code should only be used on [webpages](#) or [websites](#) that comply with our [program policies](#).

Code type [?](#) Asynchronous

Ad code [?](#)

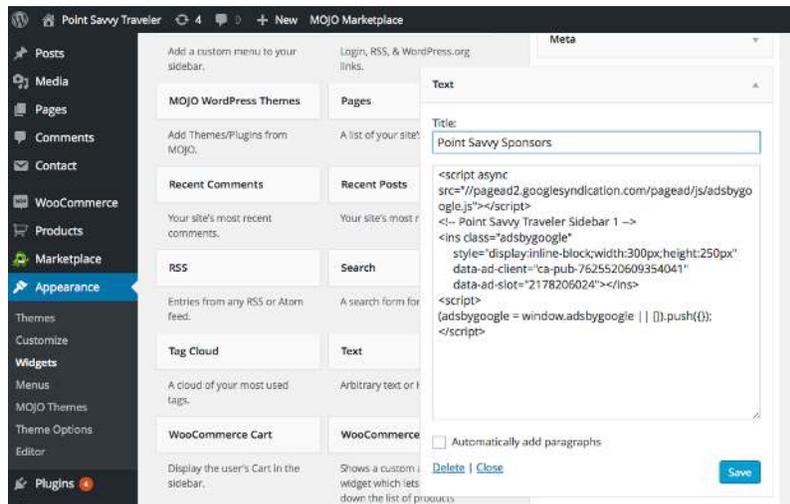
```
<script async
src="//pagead2.googlesyndication.com/pagead/js/adsbygoogle.js"></script>
<!-- Point Savvy Traveler Sidebar 1 -->
<ins class="adsbygoogle"
style="display:inline-block;width:300px;height:250px"
data-ad-client="ca-pub-7625520609354041"
data-ad-slot="2178206024"></ins>
</script>
(adsbygoogle = window.adsbygoogle || []).push({});
</script>
```

For more help with implementing the code, please see our [Code Implementation Guide](#).

Ad unit changes may take up to two hours to appear in performance reports.

Close

As soon as you hit the “save & get code” button, a box containing your ad code will pop up. Copy the ad code (make sure to grab the entire code by scrolling all the way down!)



Your last step is to add the code to your site. To do this, just go to your “widgets” page found under the “appearances” section. Select the “text” widget, then paste the ad code into the box and hit save. Your ad should begin showing up within about 15 minutes.



Craft a tagline & create a structure

If you want your blog to be successful, it needs to have a purpose and a point. In other words, both you and your readers need to be clear about what you are writing about. If your readers can't tell within the first 3-5 seconds of visiting your blog what it is supposed about—and what they can hope to get out of it—you run the risk of losing them. So make it obvious. Strive for clarity, not confusion.

One of the best ways to create clarity is by taking the time to craft a tagline for your blog—a pithy, one-line subtitle that lets your readers (or potential readers) know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, exactly what you are writing about.

It seems like a lot to pack in to one short pithy sentence, doesn't it?

The pressure of coming up with a good tagline can sometimes become overwhelming and even paralyzing. We don't want to move on until we've come up with the perfect tagline, but we can't think of one because we're terrified we might get it wrong.

So I'm going to start with a word of reassurance.

It's okay to get it wrong.

Of all the things on your blog that are pretty easy to change and fix, a tagline is probably the easiest. It is not the end of the world to change a tagline, and the truth is that your already loyal readers won't care or probably even notice. There is no tagline police waiting to arrest you.



But of course none of us want the wrong tagline, at least not permanently, so here are a few questions to ask yourself that might help you work through your indecision and come up with a tagline that manages to perfectly sum up your blog in exactly the right way.

In **10 words or less**, what is your blog about?

Don't worry about making this sentence sound pretty or witty, just sum up exactly what you say to a friend or family member if they asked you this same question.

What problems are you trying to **help your readers solve**?

On some level each and every one of us are writing to help someone else solve a problem, and on some level every reader is seeking the solution to a problem. Your job is to identify the problems that your blog will be solving.

What do you offer as the **solution** to those problems?

Once you've identified the problems you are trying to help your readers solve, you should also be able to identify the solutions that you are providing.



What are the words that **stand out** to you?

From the answers you've already given, are there any key words that stand out to you, either in the description of your blog or in the problems & solutions your blog is providing? Make a list of all the words that come to mind when you think about your blog.

How could you put those words together in **one sentence**?

Start brainstorming as many ideas as possible using the key words you've identified. Don't worry yet about making it sound pretty, just worry about getting the point across—what your blog is about, and what problem you are helping to solve. List at least 5-10 different ideas below.

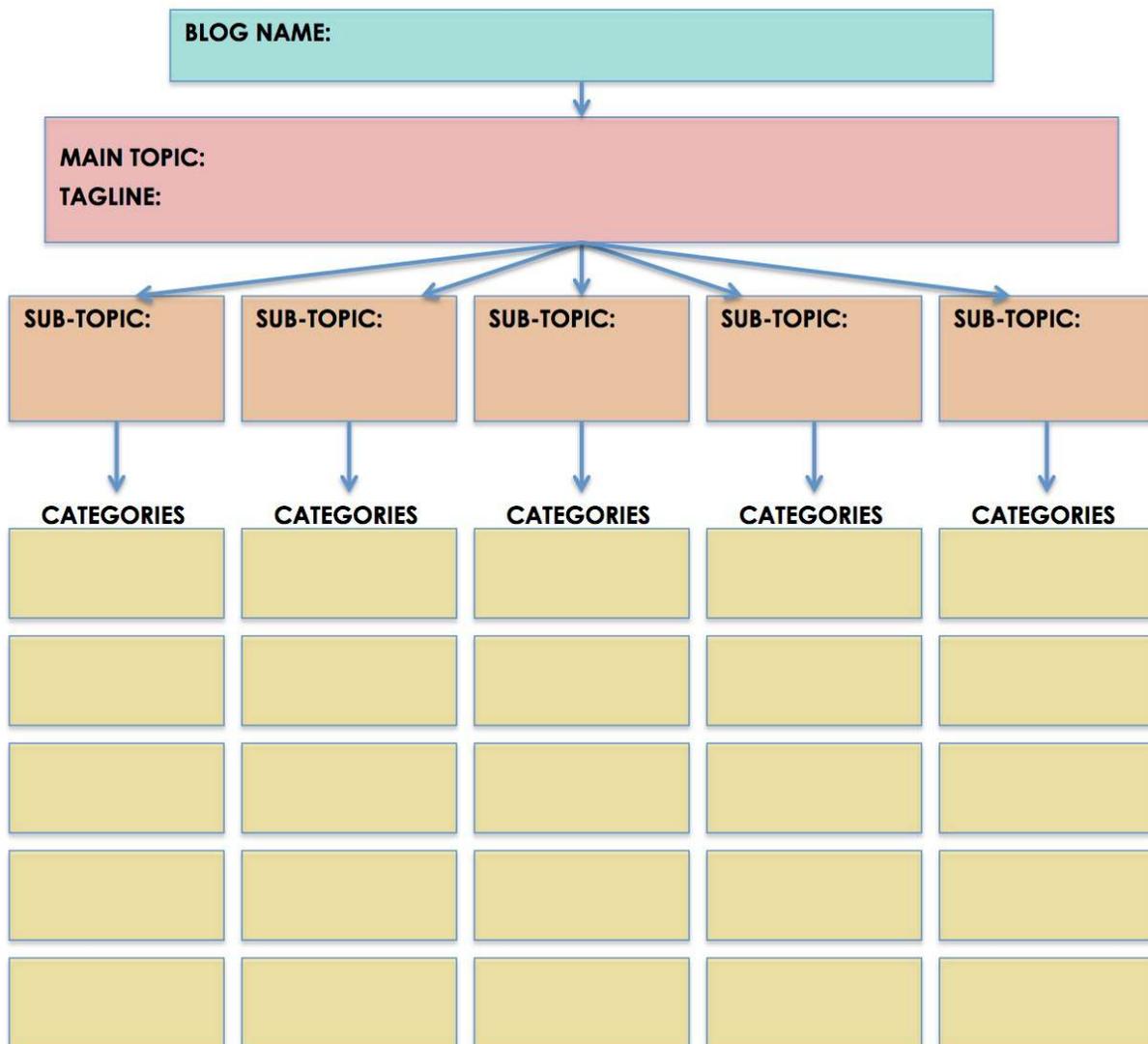
Of those ideas, which ones **do you like the best**?

Take your top two or three, and work on finessing them just a bit. Try adding a little pizzazz to the wording by swapping out synonyms if necessary. Try to avoid repeating any portion of your blog name in your tagline. Try to keep it short—ruthlessly edit out any unnecessary words, or rework it to make the point in fewer words



Once you've come up with a tagline, spend some time thinking about the structure of your blog—what are the subtopics you plan to write about within your main topic, and what are some of the subcategories that will fall under each of those subtopics?

Use the following chart to help you visualize what this looks like.





Start writing

At this point, the only thing left for you to do is to start writing! It never ceases to amaze me how many bloggers forget about this part, but the truth is that if you want your blog to be successful, you will have to write, you will have to write well, and you will have to write often.

I highly recommend that you spend at least 3–6 months writing as many high-quality blog posts as you can in order to build up a strong reserve of killer content. Give your blog substance & provide value to your future readers, and the rest will fall into place (eventually.) How to Blog for Profit has some fantastic advice on what makes killer content, and how to improve your presentation of that killer content.

At Elite Blog Academy, I always recommend that my students use what I like to call the FOCUS™ method for crafting blog posts. Very briefly, here is what that means:

F: First Impression

You will have about 3 seconds to convince a reader that your post is worth reading, which means that your first impression is vitally important. The TITLE of your post must sell it—it must grab the reader's attention, let them know without a doubt the central idea of the post, and if possible, what benefit they will gain from reading.



O: Opening

Much like the title, your opening paragraph is essential to drawing the reader into your post and engaging them with your content. Your opening must set the stage for your central idea and grab the reader's attention with an interesting illustration, bold statement, hypothetical question, startling statistic, or some other kind of clever hook.

C: Central Idea

The central idea is the heart of your post, the main point of why you are writing, and the sole focus of every illustration or sub-point. It is the one thing you want your reader to come away remembering from what you wrote, the essential memorable takeaway. It is imperative that your blog post have ONE and ONLY ONE central idea.

If you are having trouble realizing your central idea, ask yourself what you want your reader to believe or to learn after reading your post. If you have two answers, you have two central ideas. In that case, split your post into two posts!

U: Useful Logic & Illustrations

This is the meat of your blog post, the bullet points or sub-points that support your central idea, and the interesting facts, statistics, or personal illustrations that bring it alive and drive your point home.

S: Strong Conclusion

Don't abruptly end your post with nothing but your final bullet point. Your conclusion paragraph doesn't need to be long, but it does need to wrap up your sub-points and reiterate your central idea.



Creating a killer blog post is actually very simple as long as you are sure to include the five essential structural elements of FOCUS: a captivating **First Impression**, compelling **Opening**, clearly focused **Central Idea**, purposeful and **Useful Logic & Illustrations**, and a **Strong Conclusion**. When you begin to evaluate your blog posts to make sure that each post you write contains this structure, you will also begin to notice an immediate and dramatic shift in your audience response from blog posts that resonate.

Of course knowing how to write with FOCUS is one thing, but figuring out what to write about can also seem like a daunting task, especially when you are just starting out. Here are a few surefire ways to get those creative juices flowing & to help you begin thinking of new blog post ideas:

News events

What things are happening in the world right now that could inspire relevant topics for your blog? This doesn't necessarily mean you need to write a news piece, but perhaps it can give you an idea for what to write within the context of the bigger picture.

Example:

News Event: Ebola Outbreak

Possible Post Topics:

- Keeping your family safe from illness
- Improving your immune system
- Staying healthy while traveling
- Saving money on healthcare
- Stockpiling for emergencies
- Should we all become preppers?



Everyday life events

What are you doing right now that could inspire related content for your blog? It could be something as simple as watching TV, going out to eat, or cleaning the bathroom.

Example:

Life Event: Planting a Garden

Possible Post Topics:

- How to start a garden from scratch
- Does gardening really save money?
- What is square foot gardening?
- How to find a hobby you love
- How to freeze vegetables

Your own quirks & passions

What are the things you really like or care about that could be translated into a blog post? It could be a passion for Harry Potter or essential oils or the Walking Dead, or it could be something more all-encompassing such as homeschooling, getting out of debt, or raising a special needs child.

Example:

Passion: Starbucks Coffee

Possible Post Topics:

- What Starbucks can teach us about success
- The top 10 places to visit in Seattle
- DIY Pumpkin Spice Latte
- How to get Starbucks for free
- 10 places you can work for (almost) free



It doesn't really matter so much WHAT you write about, as much as it matters that you start WRITING. That you write and write and write, and that you write well and write often, and keep writing.

It is often said that content is king, and the main reason this phrase is used so often is that it is TRUE--your content is ultimately what will determine your success as a blogger.

As you begin to dive in to How to Blog for Profit, you will most likely walk away with a long list of things to start working on. The book is jam-packed with practical tips and ideas for how to grow your traffic and how to begin making money on your blog, and my hope for each and every single one of you is that you enjoy blogging as much as I have.

But my advice for you, before you dive in, is to simply make sure that you always keep one eye on your content. Focus first on providing genuine value to your readers, and let everything else be secondary. I promise it is the surest path to success.

xoxo, *Ruth*