

Principal 2.0: The Connected Administrator

An eBook by
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CONTENTS:

- [Who is Principal 2.0? \(With Special Guest 'WHY'\)](#)
- **Becoming Principal 2.0**
 - [Twitter Basics](#)
 - [Your home page](#)
 - [Your profile](#)
 - [Following](#)
 - [@replies and @mentions](#)
 - [Favorites](#)
 - [Direct Messages](#)
 - [Retweeting](#)
 - [URL shortening](#)
 - [Hashtags](#)
 - [HootSuite and TweetDeck](#)
 - [One final tip](#)
 - [Tweeting With Hootsuite](#)
 - [Google Reader Part One: Finding and Subscribing to Feeds](#)
 - [Locating Feeds \(a.k.a. Finding Stuff to Read\)](#)
 - [A Bundle of Blogs to Follow](#)
 - [Google Reader Part Two: Managing Feeds](#)
 - [The Home Page](#)
 - [Your Subscriptions](#)
 - [Managing Subscriptions](#)
 - [Subscribing as you Surf](#)
 - [Putting Google Reader into your homepage with iGoogle](#)
 - [Great Blogs to Follow](#)
 - [Blogger Basics](#)
 - [Signing Up](#)
 - [Creating a new blog](#)
 - [Your First Post](#)
 - [Other Features](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

Who is Principal 2.0? (with special guest 'WHY')

A principal is called upon to do so many things. However, as we move forward through the 21st century, many administrators are embracing the power of connectivity. They are discovering just how much they can accomplish as part of a larger network of colleagues, all connected, discussing, and sharing via the internet and social media.

We believe that the benefits of connecting, of transforming from “just” a principal into Principal 2.0, are countless. This guide aims to help you do just that.

Let's start by taking a look at just who Principal 2.0 is? He/she is someone doing all of these things, and more:



We'd put the emphasis on connecting, learning, modeling, and sharing. These are key behaviors of a connected administrator. But to simplify things even more, we feel Principal 2.0 can be defined by the following formula:

Toolkit + Network = Principal 2.0

The Toolkit

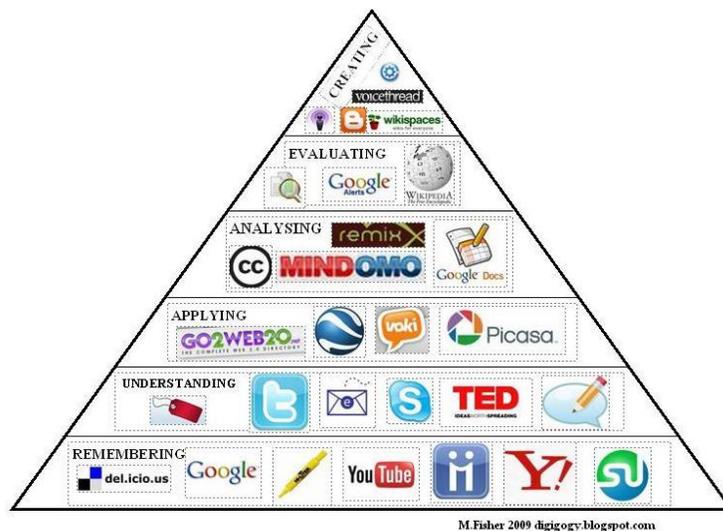
We believe every educator and student needs to possess and maintain a 21st century “toolkit.” In this toolkit are all the tools they know how to use to create, share, and distribute content. This toolkit enhances learning (for educators AND students) and makes connecting with learners around the world simple.

It is becoming evident that we are preparing students for the wrong century, for days gone by. The tools we're using to engage them and the means in which we are teaching them are completely outdated. Many educators' toolkits are more this:



Photo Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/michaelmartine/50385719>

When they should be look like this:



Which tools are you using in your school? Tools from a soon-to-be forgotten era? Or tools of a new the already a decade old century? We aren't teaching the same students we were just 10 years ago. This is an undeniable fact. It's time to adjust. And it's up to you as a school administrator to lead the way!

The Network

Chances are, if you're not a connected administrator, your personal learning network (PLN), the people you learn with and from, consists of only a handful of people. Teachers in your building, principals and administrators in your districts, educator friends, and maybe a few others. We completely understand. Our learning network used to be us and six other teachers. We'd chat in the mornings while running copies about what we were working on and any new ideas we had. Even when you throw in the occasional team meeting, there still wasn't as much sharing as there could have been.

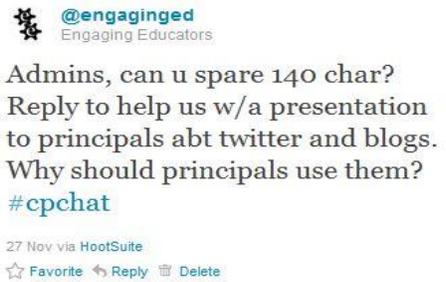


Photo Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/60057912@N00/4398849331> edited with permission

Now, though, thanks to twitter, our learning network consists of over 1900 educators from around the world. Add to that the folks who read our blog and the blogs we read and you're looking at a network of over 2,000 people with whom we can discuss important topics with, learn from, and ask for help.

Think about it this way...how many amazing 2nd (or 4th or 11th) grade teachers or principals do you know personally that you could turn to for help, ideas, or inspiration? One? Three? Five? Thanks to my PLN, we "know" hundreds of each.

Here's an example...we wanted some firsthand opinions about the power of twitter, blogs, and PLNs for administrators. So we asked for comments via twitter:



Within 6 hours, we had responses from several "rock star" principals...





bhsprincipal Patrick Larkin
[@engaged](#) Principals need to model Connected Learning
bit.ly/r4AFDf #cpchat
3 hours ago



@gcouros
George Couros

[@engaged](#) Twitter opens up some amazing connections to others; blogging helps us connect to ourselves through reflection.

2 hours ago via [TweetDeck](#)

☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply



@NMHS_Principal
Eric Sheninger

[@engaged](#) Together we r better: knowledge acquisition, resource/idea sharing, feedback, discussion, prof dev; all this 24/7 from anywhere

27 Nov via [UberSocial for BlackBerry](#)

☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply



johnccarver John C. Carver

[@engaged](#) Hey Supts need to be using Twitter too! Best PD I have ever been a part of! Time for NEW THINKING!

2 hours ago



We even got an email response:

I believe that twitter and other social learning media connect, invite, inform ideas that principals must explore to lead within today's educational communities. Accessing social learning media advantages principals who choose to share resources, consult, and engage peer to peer with educators from diverse backgrounds – I don't think an administrator can be at the top of his or her game and not utilize social networks online as a learning tool.

-Pam Moran (@pammoran)

Powerful stuff. And an excellent demonstration of the power of the network. And we don't throw around the phrase "rock stars" lightly. These are leaders in their field—administrators doing incredible things for students all across North America. We aspire to their level of talent and thank them for their contributions.

A side note on modeling...

If the leaders
don't get it,
it's not going
to happen.



--image created by Scott McLeod

We think it's important to discuss the importance of administrators serving as models for teachers and students. By being leaders and innovators when it comes to social media and technology, principals can demonstrate just how amazing these tools can be. Connected administrators can drive change and inspire educators to harness the power of the learning network and demonstrate to students how to properly, responsibly, and safely interact online.

Further Motivation

If this hasn't motivated you to start connecting, here's a quick activity to try...

1. Go to <http://search.twitter.com>

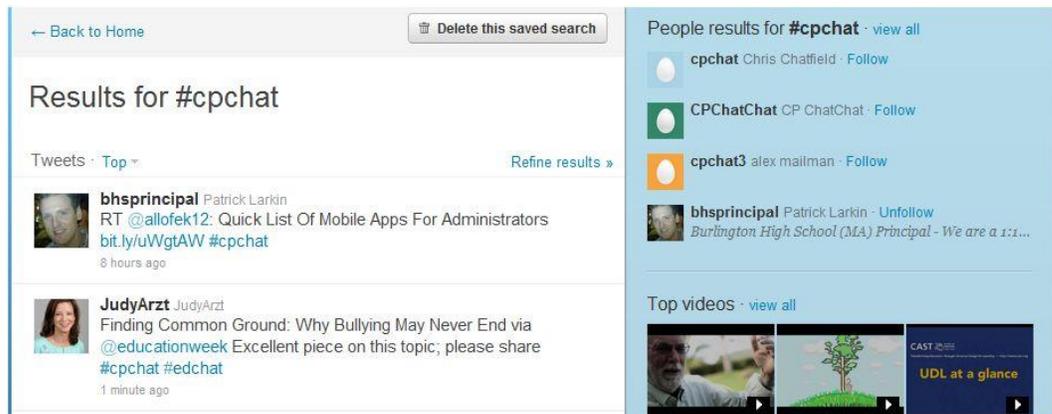


See what's happening **right now**

Tip: use operators for advanced search.

Trends: Detroit trends - change : #myholidaystyle Promoted #20factsaboutme
#RandomFacts #TebowTime Percy Harvin Broncos Giants Vikings
Cam Newton Denver

2. Type #cpchat into the search field. #cpchat is the hashtag for “Connected Principals chat.” Tweeting principals add it to links they share to make their tweets easier to find. You don’t have to have a twitter account to search twitter!
3. Scroll through the results, you’re bound to find valuable resources:



4. Try this again with the search term #edchat and your results will be even better!

NOTE: For more information about signing up for and using twitter, check out the “Twitter Basics” section of this ebook!

The following sections show you how to use three easy and powerful tools: twitter, Google Reader (for subscribing to blogs)and Blogger for setting up and maintaining a blog.

[Return to contents](#)

Twitter Basics

Twitter is a micro-blogging platform, used by millions worldwide. They give you 140 characters to answer the question: *What's happening?*

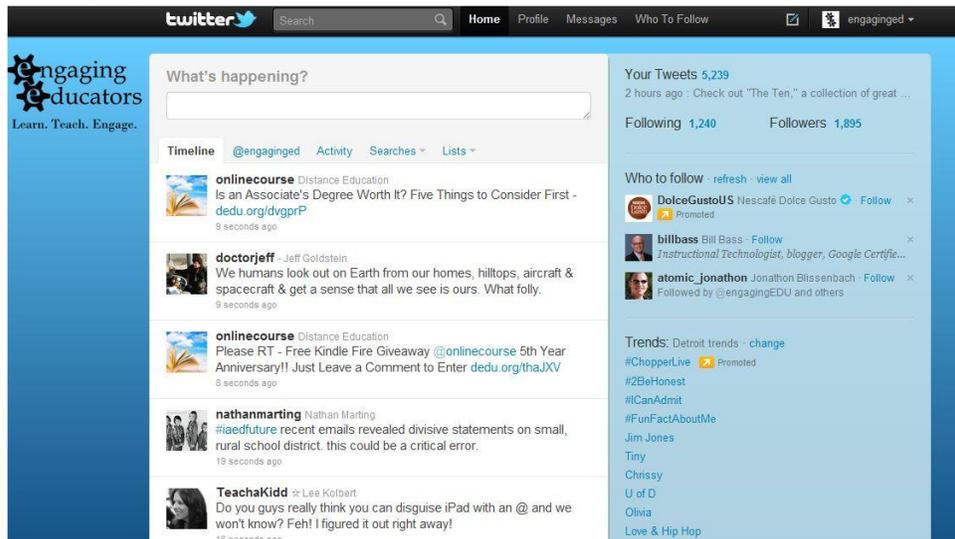
Why do you need Twitter? As educators, we are continually seeking out knowledge and new information in order to better our teaching. The phrase Personal Learning Network (PLN for short) refers to the group of people that help guide and shape your own learning. Currently, your PLN probably consists of the people you work closely with on a daily basis. Imagine expanding your PLN by a hundred or more people from around the globe. Twitter can make that happen. Twitter has quickly become a unique and important way for educators to connect, collaborate, and learn. Teachers follow each other's posts, ask each other questions, share ideas, post links, and more.

Another possible use is as a communication tool with students and parents. Twitter is well suited for quick, short updates about classroom events, due date reminders, and more.

To get started, you'll need a Twitter account. Go to www.twitter.com and click "Sign Up Now." All you need to provide is your name and email address. You'll choose a username and a password. Your twitter profile can now be found at www.twitter.com/yourusername .

Let's take a look at the top ten twitter basics:

Your home page



This is what you see upon logging into Twitter. From here you can read the posts (a.k.a. tweets) of the people you follow, post a tweet of your own in the status update box, check to see who is following you, search and more.

Your profile

The screenshot shows the Twitter profile for 'Engaging Educators' (@engagined). The profile header includes the name, bio, and location (Detroit, MI). The bio states: "It's time to change education. It's time to engage. We are classroom teachers with 18 years combined experience and we want to help." The profile also shows a list of tweets, including one from 2 hours ago and another from 13 hours ago. The 'Following' section lists several users, including ShiftParadigm, davidwees, and millerg6.

Looks a lot like your Home Page, except it shows only tweets you've sent. It's what people see when they click on your username. It has a unique URL: www.twitter.com/yourusername. For example: www.twitter.com/engagined. Also, it shows some thumbnails of the people you follow. Again, you can also view (by clicking on the numbers) the people following and being followed.

Following

On your home page, you see the tweets of people you follow. Only the people that follow you see your tweets on their home page. The best way to get people to follow you is to follow them! If you find a user you'd like to follow, go to their profile and click "Follow." Their tweets will now appear on your home page.

Other notes on following...

*Having trouble discovering people to follow? Go to the profile of a tweeter you respect/enjoy. Click on the number of people they themselves are following. Find people to follow from the list. You can do the same thing with people that are following them.

*Not happy with someone you're following? You can always un-follow by clicking on the list of people you're following on your home page or profile, then choose "un-follow" from the drop down menu beside their name. Or by going to their profile and doing the same thing.

*One of the best places to find educators to follow is <http://twitter4teachers.pbworks.com>. This is a wiki page organized by category (elementary teachers, science teachers, etc.). It contains links to hundreds of teachers and administrators who use twitter.

See our list of "top tweeters" at the end of this section with some suggestions on whom to follow.

@replies and @mentions

An @reply is Twitter-speak for a reply to someone's tweet. If you want to reply to what someone tweets, hover your mouse over their tweet. It'll turn blue. Simply click "Reply":



This will automatically generate a pop-up window with tweet that begins with the @ symbol and the person's username:

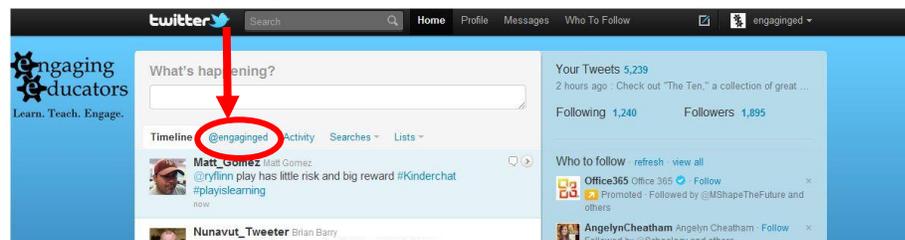


Notes on @replies and @mentions:

*You can also manually reply to a user by simply typing a tweet with that begins with @ and their username. In fact, you should also use this technique whenever you mention another Twitter user in a tweet. For example: "I hope @The_Real_Shaq has a great game tonight!"

*@replies are PUBLIC (and searchable...like every other tweet). They will appear on your profile page and they will show up in the feed of the person you mentioned AND the feed of anyone *who follows both you and that user*.

*Twitter allows you to view all the tweets that mention you by username. Just click "@yourusername" on your homepage and you'll see a list of every tweet that includes your username in anyway, along with a list of recent activity, including follows and retweets of your tweets:



Favorites

Often, members of your PLN will share links to useful sites. Or, you might see a tweet that you like or want to remember. Twitter offers you the option of “marking” favorite tweets. To do so, hover over the tweet and click the STAR or the word “Favorite:”



To view your Favorites, click the “Favorites” link on your profile page:



Direct Messages

A Direct Message, or DM, is just that, a message sent directly to another Twitter user. But, this user *must be someone that is following you*. You can send DMs directly from the person’s Twitter profile. Just click the envelope:



You can also send a direct message by entering d + username + message in your status update box.

Retweeting

If you see “RT” at the beginning of a tweet, or if you see a tweet with this at the bottom:



that means it’s a retweet. A retweet is a tweet that someone else posted that someone saw and found useful or valuable. They retweeted it to share it with their followers, potentially increasing the number of people who will see the original tweet.

If you see a tweet you like or one that has a useful link, retweet it to share it with your PLN. There are two ways to do this:

1. Just copy and paste the tweet into your status update box. Be sure to put “RT” and the person’s username (preceded by the @ symbol) at the beginning of the retweet.
2. Hover over the tweet, and click “Retweet.”

URL shortening

One of the most useful things to do within your PLN is share links. However, some URLs are so long that they use up much of your 140 characters. Several websites offer you the ability to shorten URLs. Simply paste in the original, copy shortened version and paste it into your tweet. Two popular URL Shorteners are <http://tinyurl.com> , <http://goo.gl>, and <http://bit.ly> .

Hashtags

A hashtag is used to mark keywords or categories in a tweet. For example, if you post an educational technology-related tweet, you could add the hashtag “#edtech.” To add a hashtag to your tweet, be sure you precede it with the # symbol. Hashtags make it easier for other users to find your tweets via search.

Notes on hashtags:

*Hashtags can appear anywhere in a tweet.

*Clicking on the hashtag in someone’s tweet will show you all the tweets that have been tagged in the same way.

HootSuite and TweetDeck

If you really get into Twitter, you might want to consider these two third-party applications. They each automatically update, have easy to use interfaces, and built-in URL shortening. In addition, each allows you to tweet from multiple Twitter accounts. www.hootsuite.com is web-based and www.tweetdeck.com requires you to download and install a program. (See [our Hootsuite guide](#) immediately following this section for more details).

The @engaged Top 50 educators to follow on twitter (in no particular order):

@engaged 😊	@coolcatteacher	@mcleod	@stumpteacher	@jdthomas7
@larryferlazzo	@innovativeedu	@thenerdyteacher	@techsavvyed	@tomwhitby
@shellterrell	@rmbyrne	@teachingwithsoul	@web20classroom	@mbteach
@angelamaiers	@pernilleripp	@plugusin	@cybraryman1	@kylepace
@wfryer	@joe_bower	@MissNoor28	@ewanmcintosh	@elemenous
@willrich45	@jenniferlagarde	@NMHS_Principal	@bhsprincipal	@courosa
@l_hilt	@gcouros	@21stprincipal	@colonelb	@SNewco
@auntytech	@russeltarr	@mrwejr	@johntspencer	@garystager
@pammoran	@timbuckteeth	@mrsebiology	@techlearning	@MindshiftKQED
@edutopia	@langwitches	@jackiegerstein	@bigthink	@simplek12

One final tip

One of the best ways to get involved in all that twitter has to offer is to follow and join in during regularly scheduled twitter chats. Chats cover all kinds of topics, from general education (#edchat) to grade and subject level specific chats such as #5thchat and #mathchat to special interest chats such as #titletalk and #urbaned chat.

For a complete schedule of chats, check out the [Cybraryman's Twitter Chat Page](#) and our blog post about how to participate in a twitter chat.

[Return to contents](#)

Tweeting with Hootsuite

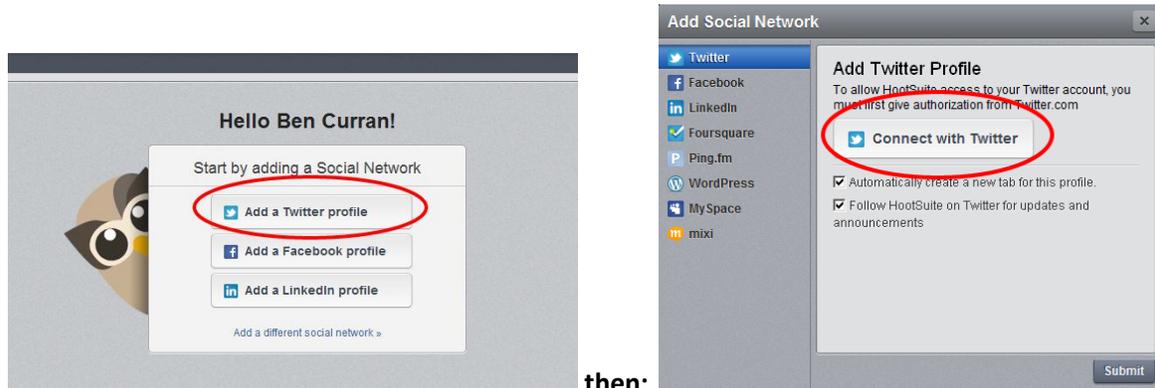
Hootsuite is an online platform that makes twitter use a snap. It allows you to read and send tweets, monitor mentions, retweets, favorites, and messages, and conduct searches and follow hashtags with ease. This guide should help you get started with this online tool.

Signing up

Go to hootsuite.com and sign up for a free account.

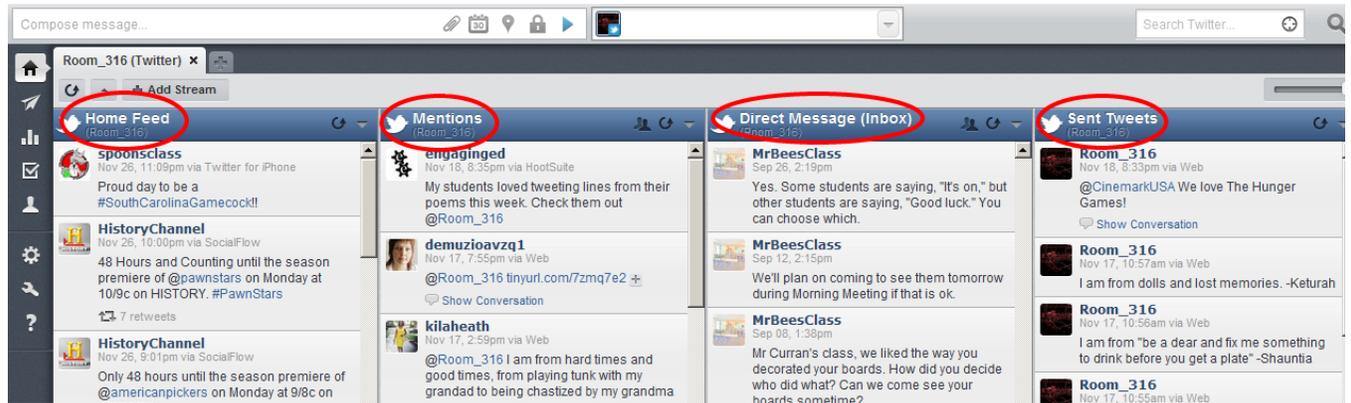


Then, add a twitter profile:

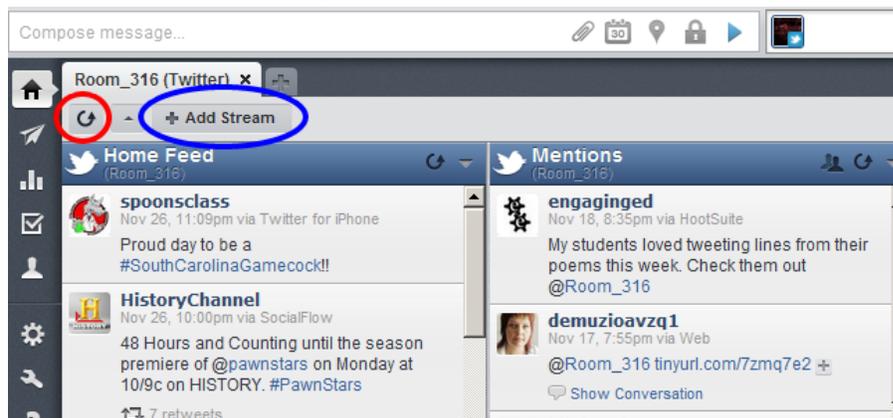


The Hootsuite Interface

This will open the Hootsuite interface, which is composed of a set of columns, called streams:

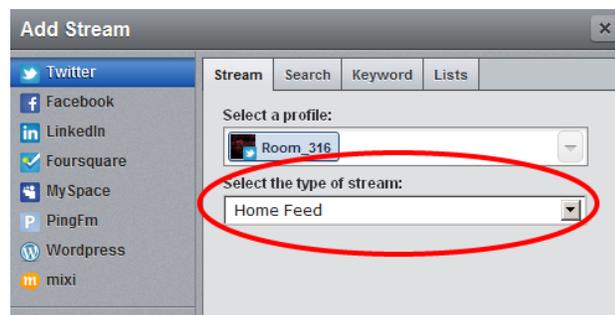


These columns auto-refresh every 30 seconds (unless you change the default settings). You can also manually refresh your streams, by clicking the refresh button (circled in red below):

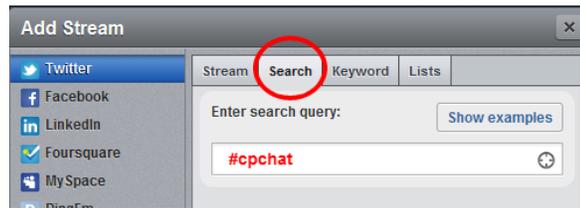


Reorganize the streams by simply dragging and dropping the columns. Click and hold on the blue title banner at the top of a stream and drag it to where you want it to appear on your Hootsuite page. Use the dropdown menu in each column header to delete the stream, if you'd like.

Want to add a stream? Use the button circled in blue above and add any of a number of other options, including favorites, searches, and more:

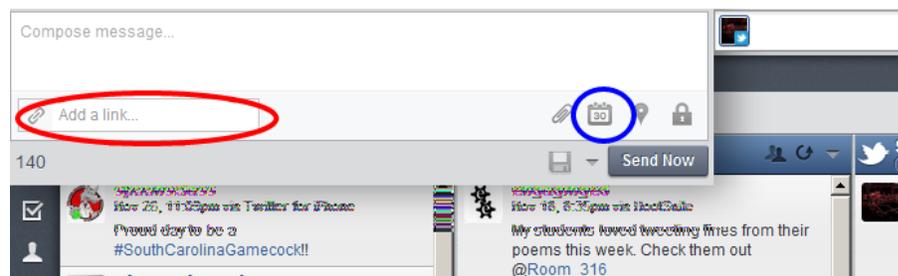


OR add a search with the “Search” tab:



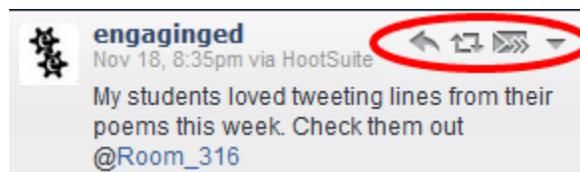
Sending Tweets

Just click in the “Compose message” field at the top to send a tweet. In this field you can also add a link by pasting the URL into the link field (links will be auto-shortened by Hootsuite). You can also schedule a tweet for a later date/time by clicking the scheduling button (circled in blue below):

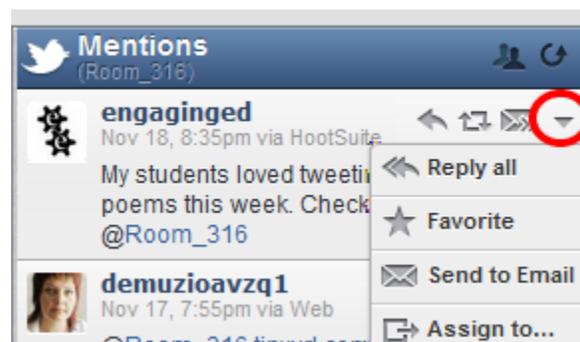


Reading, Replying and More

When you examine an individual tweet in one of your streams, you’ll notice some icons in the upper right corner:



These allow you to reply, retweet, and message with one click. More options become available from the drop down menu:



[Return to contents](#)

Google Reader Part One—Finding and Subscribing to Feeds

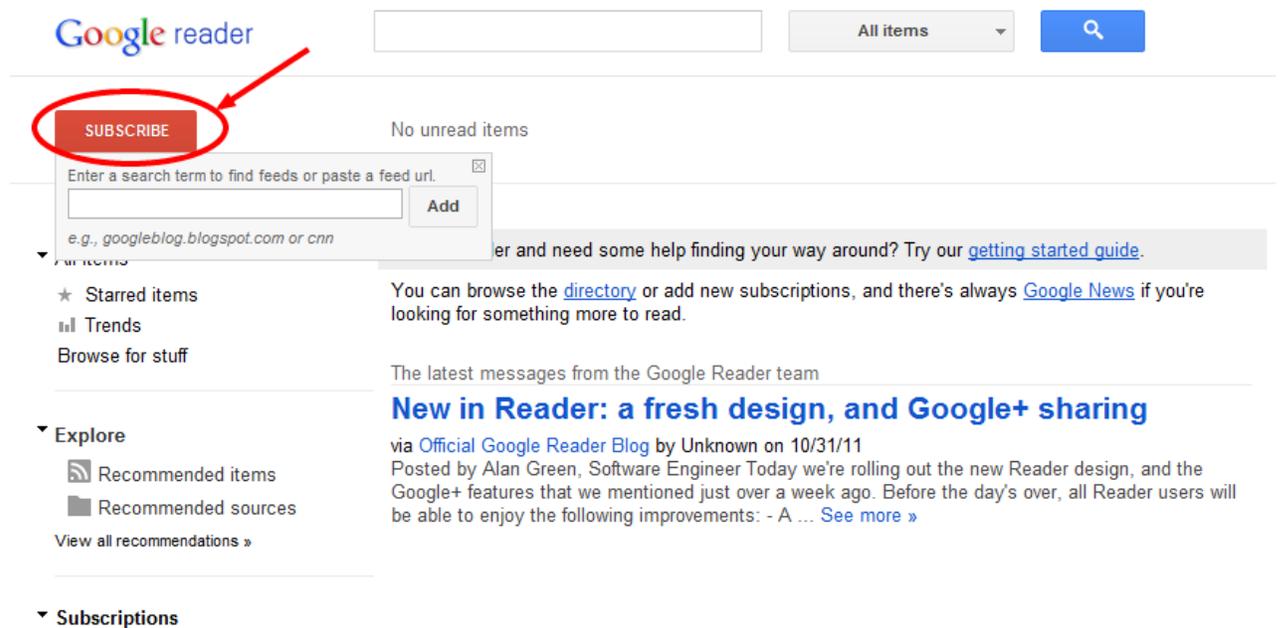
RSS, short for “Really Simple Syndication” or “Rich Site Summary” depending whom you ask, provides instant updates of websites that change frequently, such as blogs, news headlines, podcasts, etc. These updates, thanks to RSS feeds, are delivered directly to subscribers via a tool called a feed reader. Subscribing to RSS feeds through a feed reader can bring countless resources to your attention, allowing you to stay up to date with educational trends and serve as an excellent professional development resource. Our feed reader of choice is Google Reader.

In the first activity, we’ll locate and subscribe to feeds. We’ll focus mainly on education blogs, but these steps can be used for any site with a feed.

Locating Feeds (a.k.a. Finding Stuff to Read)

Here are three ways to find feeds to subscribe to...

1. *Use Google Reader’s search option:* Log in to www.google.com/reader . Clicking the “Subscribe” button will open a search field. You can enter the URL of the blog itself if you know it OR the URL of the feed (we’ll get to that later) OR you can simply enter search terms such as “writing” or “NPR” or “educational technology.”



Google Reader will provide you with a list of matching blogs. Here's what the results for a search for "Education" looks like:

The screenshot shows the Google Reader interface with search results for "Education". The sidebar on the left includes a "SUBSCRIBE" button and a "Browse for stuff" option. The main content area displays four search results, each with a "Subscribe" button. A red circle highlights the "Subscribe" button for the "Education News - The New York Times" result, with a red arrow pointing to it.

Subscribers	Feed Title	Description	Posts per week
1,891	U.S. Department of Education	Provides information about the Department's offices, programs, information and assistance services, funding opportunities, education statistics, publications, and ...	10.7
1,076	National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a part...	The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects, analyzes and ...	1.9
30,623	Education News - The New York Times	Find breaking news & education news on colleges & universities, teachers, public & private schools, tuition, scholarships, financial aid & student loans	88.7
9,674	Education The White House	Jul 18, 2011 ... "A world-class education is the single most important factor in determining not just whether our kids can compete for the best jobs but whether ...	61.8

Simply click the "subscribe" button to receive updates and subscribe to this feed. It will then appear in the "Subscriptions" menu in the sidebar.

Another way to find feeds is to use Google Reader's "Browse for stuff" tool. Access it from the sidebar:

The screenshot shows the "Browse for stuff" tool in Google Reader. The sidebar on the left has "Browse for stuff" circled in red. The main content area has tabs for "Browse", "Search", and "Recommendations", with "Search" circled in red. Below the tabs, there is a section for "Search by keyword" with a search box and a "Search for feeds" button. There is also a section for "Stay connected to friends & family" with a dropdown menu for social media platforms and a "Subscribe" button.

You'll be given the option to search or receive some recommendations (although there won't be any until after you have subscribed to one or more feeds). You can also find recommendations in the "Explore" section of the sidebar.

2. Paste in the URL directly

Got a blog you know you want to subscribe to? Just click that SUBSCRIBE button and paste its URL (web address, such as <http://freetech4teachers.com>) into the field and hit the enter key. You'll automatically be subscribed and the feed will be added to your subscriptions menu.

TIP FOR FINDING GREAT FEEDS: *Look for Blogrolls.* Many bloggers keep a list of their favorite blogs in their sidebar. This list, called a blogroll, is a great way to find new blogs. If you like the blog you're reading, you might like some of the blogs the blogger links to:



3. Subscribe directly from the webpage itself

Sometimes, if a webpage has an RSS feed, you can subscribe directly from the page. How do you know if a page has an RSS feed? You can, of course, look for the letters "RSS" or the words "feed" or "subscribe. Also keep an eye out for  the universal RSS logo: Any page that has this logo on it has an RSS feed.

You can also be on the lookout for this button:



Clicking this button will open up

this page:

Your **Google homepage** brings together Google functionality and content from across the web, on a single page.



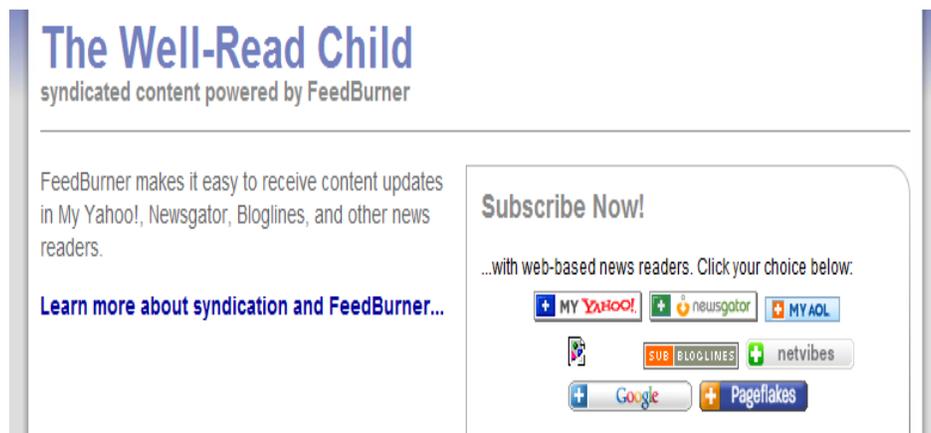
or

Google Reader makes it easy to keep up with the latest content from a large number of sites, all on a single reading list.



Just click the "Add to Google Reader" button and this feed will be automatically added to your Google Reader subscriptions menu

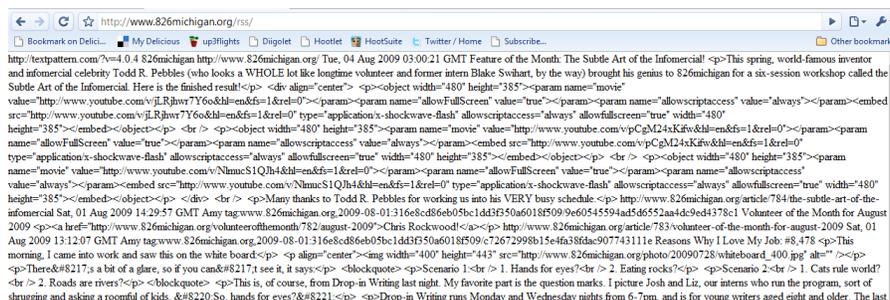
At times, clicking on the RSS icon or on a link that says “Subscribe” or “Feed” will often bring up a page that looks like this:



From here, follow the steps described above: click the aforementioned “+ Google” button and click “Add to Google Reader.”

Note: Having trouble finding the RSS link? Some blogs and sites hide it at the very bottom of their homepages for some reason.

Another note: Some blogs are not this user-friendly. Clicking the RSS icon will bring up the actual RSS feed, a string of seemingly indecipherable code that looks like this:



If this is the case you need to hit your browser’s back button and follow these steps:

1. Right click (ctrl+click for Apple) on the icon or feed link and select: “Copy link address.”
2. Open Google Reader and click “SUBSCRIBE”
3. Paste the link address into the field that appears and click the enter key. The feed will be added to your subscriptions.

A Bundle of Blogs to Follow

Want a list of blogs to follow? Check out our bundle of 50+ blogs, that you can subscribe to with one click:

bit.ly/EEblogbundle

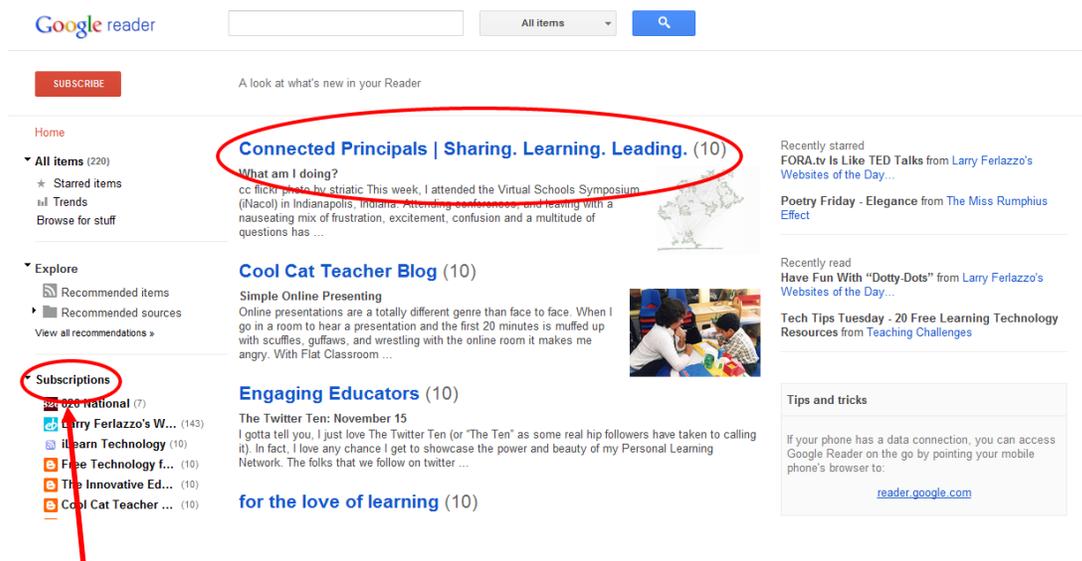
[Return to contents](#)

Google Reader Part Two—Managing Feeds

By now you're subscribing to several blogs and feeds using Google Reader. Eventually, your RSS feeds might prove overwhelming and difficult to navigate. Google Reader offers several features to reduce these problems. Here are some things you should know about and use...

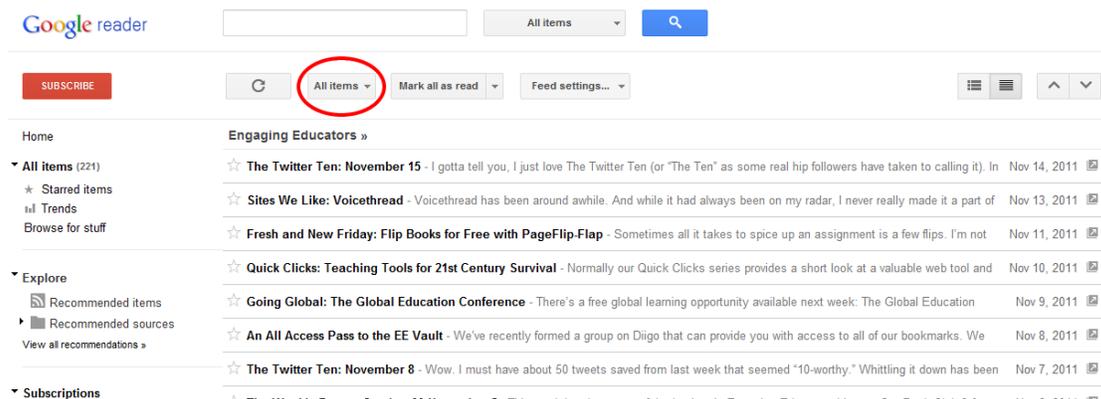
The Home Page

This is what you see when you see whenever you open Google Reader. It shows you which of your subscriptions have the newest items and gives previews of the new items. Click on the feed's name to open it and show all its recent posts. Or click directly on the post. To return to this view at any time, click the "Home" link in the sidebar:



Your Subscriptions

All the sites you subscribe to are listed at the bottom of the sidebar on the left. The number of unread items is noted in parentheses. Clicking on any one of the feed names will take you to a list of the feed's items, with the unread items highlighted in bold, as pictured below:



Now's a good time to make the list more manageable by switching the "All items" option to "New Items" from the drop-down menu.

Clicking on any item opens it for you to read. Clicking an unread item automatically marks it "read." Or you can just click the "Mark all as read" button if you don't like looking at large numbers of unread items in your sidebar.

Clicking on an individual item will open it (and clicking it again will close it). Some blogs give the full article others give you a portion of it, requiring you to click on the item's Blue title to go to the actual blog and read the rest. Clicking the little gray box with the arrow in it will take you to the blog, too:

The screenshot shows the Google Reader interface. At the top, there's a search bar and a dropdown menu set to "All items". Below that, there's a "SUBSCRIBE" button and several utility buttons: a refresh icon, "9 new items", "Mark all as read", and "Feed settings...". The main content area is divided into a sidebar on the left and a main feed on the right. The sidebar has sections for "Home", "All items (220)", "Explore", and "Subscriptions". The main feed shows an item titled "The Twitter Ten: November 15" which is circled in red. Below the title, there's a brief description and several links to related content.

The menu bar that appears at the bottom of an open item offers some useful options:

The screenshot shows the menu bar at the bottom of an open item. The menu bar is circled in red and contains several options: a star icon, a "+1" icon, an "Email" icon, a "Keep unread" checkbox, and an "Add tags" icon. Below the menu bar, the title of the item is visible: "Fresh and New Friday: Flip Books for Free with PageFlip - Si".

Some details...

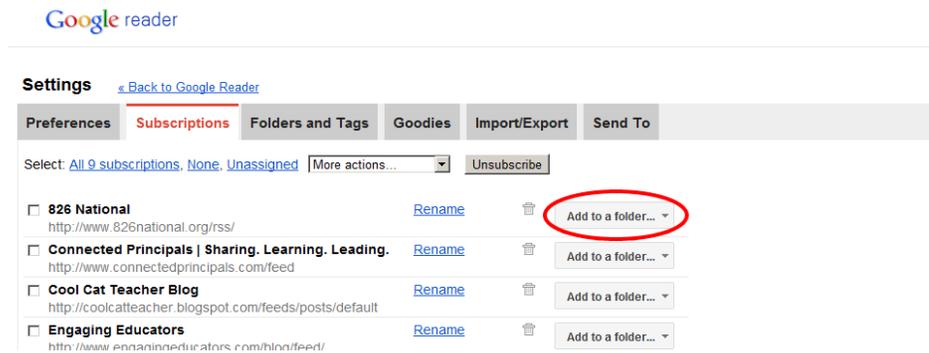
- "Star" Clicking the star turns it yellow and marks this as a favorite item. This is useful for posts you want to remember or come back to later. This can also be done by clicking the star in front of the post's title. NOTE: To see all items you've starred, click "Starred Items" in the sidebar.
- "+1" is Google's rendition of the "like" option you find on facebook. Giving a post +1 will show up on your Google+ profile (if you're a Google+ user). "Share" shares this site with people following you in Google Reader. See step 4 below for more information on sharing and following.

- “Email” allows you to email the post.
- “Keep Unread” does just that, keeping this post unread so that it stays visible within this subscription.
- “Add Tags” assigns categories to a post. (Similar to tags in flickr or diigo) You can then search or sort posts by tag.

Managing Subscriptions

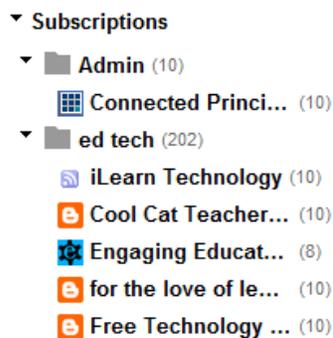
Your feed reader can get a little cluttered as your subscriptions start adding up. Google Reader allows you to stay organized by creating folders for your subscriptions. Start by hovering your mouse over the Subscriptions section of the sidebar. A little black triangle will appear to the right of the word “Subscriptions.” Click it and choose “Manage Subscriptions” and you’ll see:

Click the “Add to a folder...” button and select either “New folder” or a folder you’ve already created. Once you’ve done this for your feeds, when you go back to Google Reader, your subscriptions look like this:

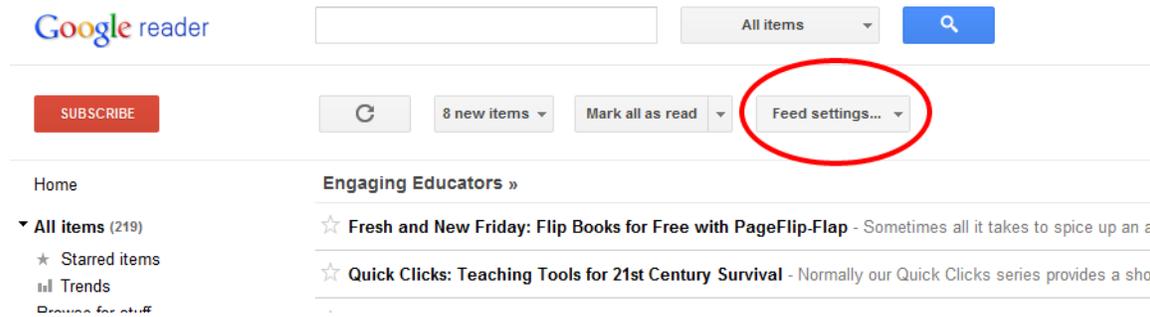


Click the “Add to a folder...” button and select either “New folder” or a folder you’ve already created.

Once you’ve done this for your feeds, when you go back to Google Reader, your subscriptions look like this:



From now on, when you add subscriptions you can add them to a new folder three ways: using “Manage subscriptions,” dragging the new subscription into a folder in the subscriptions menu, or by clicking “Feed settings” when viewing an individual subscription:



Subscribing as you Surf

Google Reader offers a helpful bookmark button for your toolbar. Clicking it while you’re looking at a site with a feed will add the subscription to Google Reader. To get this bookmark, click gear in the upper right hand corner and choose “Reader settings.” Next, click the “Goodies” tab. Then scroll down to “Subscribe as You Surf.” Follow the directions to drag the “Subscribe...” link to your bookmarks toolbar.

Putting Google Reader into your homepage with iGoogle

Making time for your feeds is important. One way you can make sure this happens is by using iGoogle. iGoogle is a personalized homepage that you build using different “gadgets.” These can include weather, news, sports and stock updates, games and more. One available gadget is a Google Reader gadget. Adding to iGoogle makes your feeds available right away every time you launch your browser. Here’s what to do...

Go to <http://igoogle.com> and click ADD GADGETS:



Use the “Search Gadgets” field on the page that opens to search for “Google Reader.” (It will be at the top of the list of search results) Then just click “Add it Now.”

When you return to iGoogle, you'll see your Google Reader gadget there. You can scroll through and read your feed items right on this page.

The final step is to make iGoogle your homepage. If you don't know how to do that, go to this link for instructions: <http://www.google.com/help/ig/hp/>

Great Blogs to Follow

Want some blogs to follow? We created a bundle of 50+ education and technology blogs that might be of interest. You can subscribe to them all at once OR see them listed individually. Here is the link to the bundle:

<http://bit.ly/EEblogbundle>

[*Return to contents*](#)

Blogger Basics

Blogger is a blogging platform owned and operated by Google. You can access all your blogs and post using your Google or Gmail account.

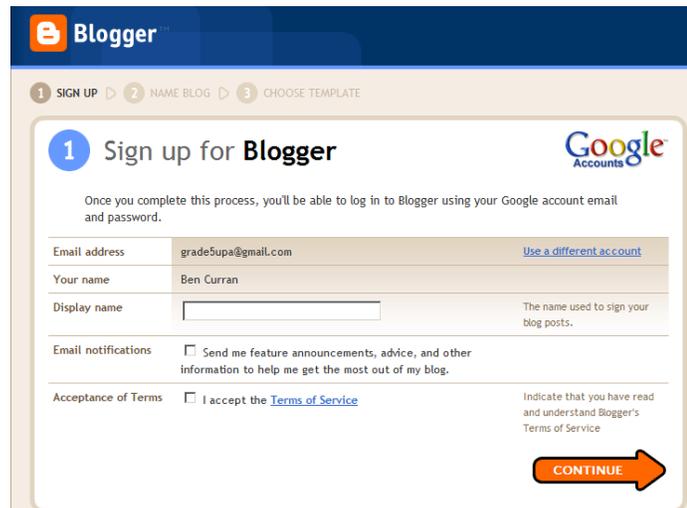
Why should you blog? Blogging is the most powerfully reflective 21st century tool available. Taking time to think and write about your teaching and your thought processes can improve your work in the classroom in countless ways. Whether as it's a way of telling stories, sharing resources and ideas, or analyzing successes and failures, blogging not only leads to better teaching, but also allows you to make a contribution to the world of educators. Blogs can also serve as terrific tools for providing parents with a "window" into your school or classroom.

Why Blogger? Simply put, it's easy. And because a Google account gives you access to so many other useful tools—Gmail, Google Maps, Google Docs, YouTube, and more—using Blogger just makes sense.

Here we provide a brief guide to getting started with Blogger.

Signing Up

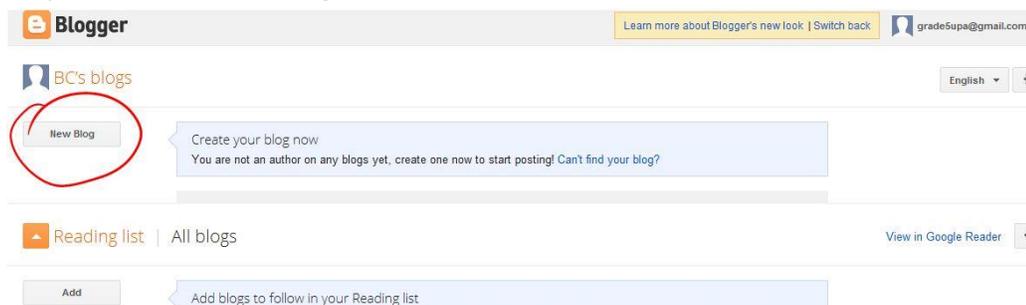
When you go to Blogger.com for the first time, you are prompted to log in with your Google Account and sign up for a blog. You choose a display name and accept the terms of service.



The screenshot shows the Blogger sign-up interface. At the top, there's a blue header with the Blogger logo and a progress indicator showing three steps: 1. SIGN UP, 2. NAME BLOG, and 3. CHOOSE TEMPLATE. The main content area is titled "1 Sign up for Blogger" and includes the Google Accounts logo. Below the title, there's a message: "Once you complete this process, you'll be able to log in to Blogger using your Google account email and password." The form contains several fields: "Email address" with the value "grade5upa@gmail.com" and a link "Use a different account"; "Your name" with the value "Ben Curran"; "Display name" with an empty text box and a note "The name used to sign your blog posts."; "Email notifications" with a checkbox and the text "Send me feature announcements, advice, and other information to help me get the most out of my blog."; and "Acceptance of Terms" with a checkbox and the text "I accept the Terms of Service". At the bottom right, there is a large orange arrow button labeled "CONTINUE".

Creating a new blog

From there, you'll click the New Blog button...



The screenshot shows the Blogger dashboard for a user named "BC's blogs". At the top, there's a header with the Blogger logo, a link "Learn more about Blogger's new look | Switch back", and the user's email "grade5upa@gmail.com". Below the header, there's a navigation bar with "BC's blogs" and a language selector set to "English". The main content area features a "New Blog" button circled in red, a "Create your blog now" button, and a message: "You are not an author on any blogs yet. create one now to start posting! Can't find your blog?". At the bottom, there's a "Reading list" section with an "Add" button and a message: "Add blogs to follow in your Reading list".

...and then you'll give your blog a title, choose an address and a design template (all of which can be changed later):

Blogs List > [Create a new blog](#) ✕

Title

Address !
Sorry, this blog address is not available.

Template


Dynamic Views


Simple


Picture Window


Awesome Inc.


Watermark

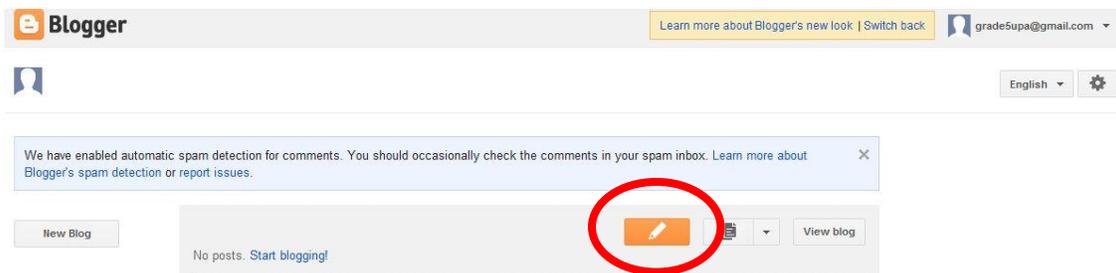

Ethereal

You can browse many more templates and customize your blog later.

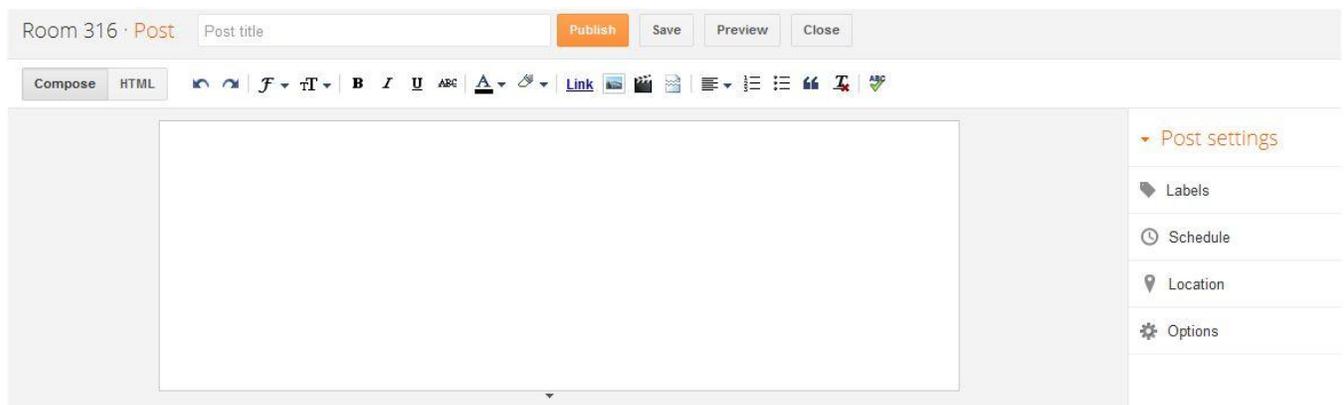
Create blog! Cancel

Your First Post

Just click the pencil button any time to create a new post:



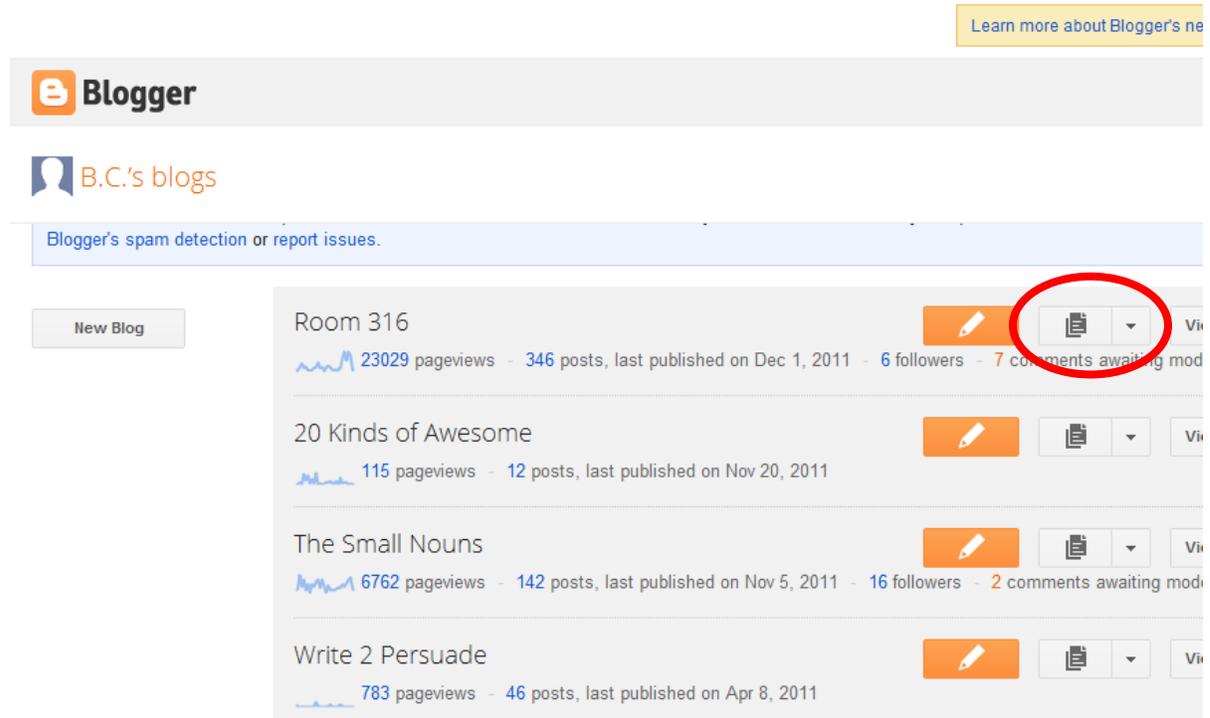
The interface is simple and easy to use:



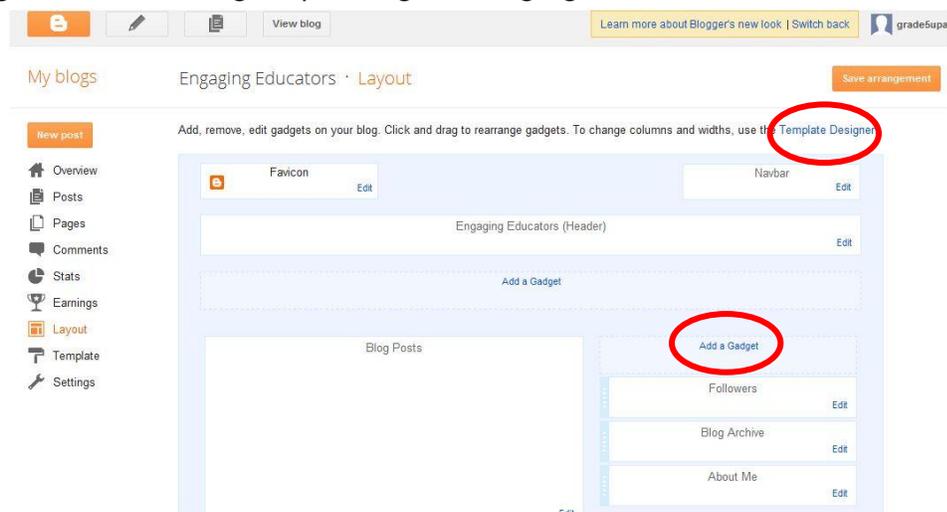
Adding text, images, videos, and links is a snap. And you can use the sidebar to organize your posts with labels, schedule posts for a later date/time, and more.

Other Features

Once you create some blogs, your Blogger dashboard will look like this:



From the dropdown menu, you have several options, one of which is “Layout.” Clicking “Layout” allows you to change the look and design of your blog and add gadgets to the sidebar:

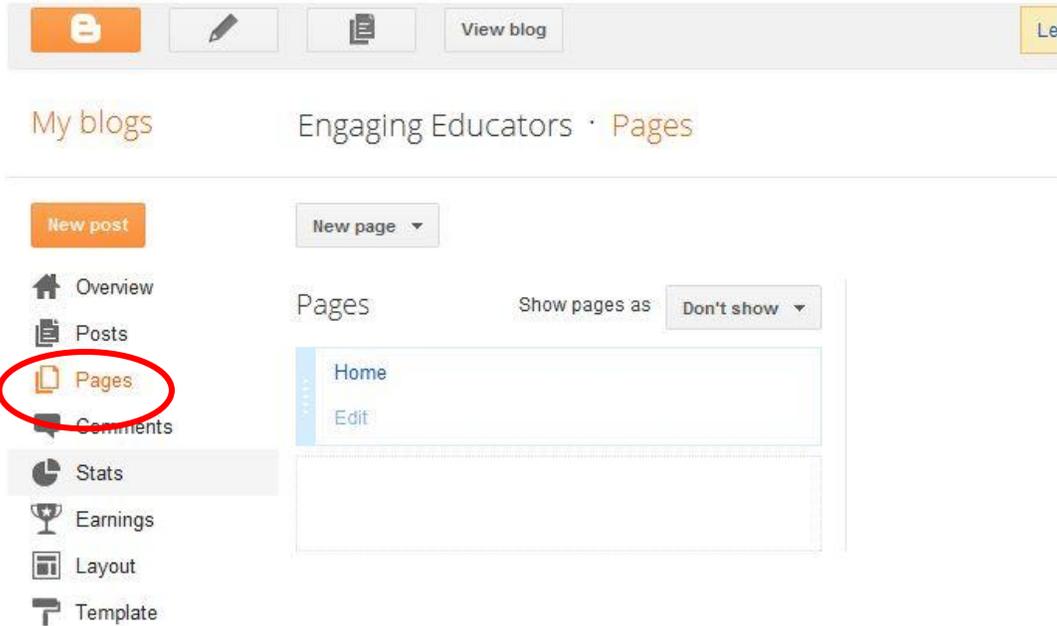


Drag the rectangles to rearrange, or click “edit” in any rectangle to make changes. The “Template Designer” link allows you to change the background, fonts, and more.

Adding Gadgets to your blog is a nice way to personalize it. Popular gadgets include blogrolls, link lists, twitter feeds, RSS subscription buttons, email subscriptions, and more.

Another useful feature is blog “pages.” Creating pages allows you to add tabs across the top of your blog. These tabs, unlike the homepage of your blog that changes with each post, remain the same until you decide differently.

To create and organize pages, click “Pages” in the left sidebar of the Layout view:



[Return to contents](#)

Conclusion

Transforming into Principal 2.0 takes a huge commitment of time and energy. But when you take into account how much this transformation can improve your work as an educator, it's definitely worth it.

Once you're set up with twitter and Google Reader, using these tools just 10 minutes a day can bring scads of valuable resources and information directly to you.

Take a look at all the things I was able to do with twitter in just 10 minutes on a Monday morning before heading off to work:

- Read "Turn Your Staff into a Powerful Twitter Team"
- Found a new blog to follow: Fractus Learning
- Read "How to Excel in Your New Role"
- Explored a collection of online reading games
- Bookmarked this collection using Diigo for future exploration
- Tweeted thanks to "tweep" who shared reading games.
- Read this great quote on Seth Godin's blog: *"Knowing a tool is one thing. Having the guts to use it in a way that brings art to the world is another. People need to spend less time learning new tools and more time using them"*
- Shared above quote via tweet
- Explored a collection of student blogging resources
- Bookmarked these resources using Diigo for future exploration
- Read "How Twitter is Changing Professional Development"
- Read "Best and Worst Education News of 2011"
- Read Popplet Blog post featuring uses for the brainstorming and mind-mapping tool Popplet

Wow. We repeated this little experiment using Google Reader and the blogs we subscribe to (and which you can subscribe to, too, using this "bundle:" <http://bit.ly/EEblogbundle>). Here's the resources that 10 minutes using Google Reader yielded:

- How the World's Population Got to 7 Billion (for a reading workshop project)
- The Open Culture Science Video Collection
- Where in the World? A Google Earth Puzzle
- Khan Academy's Flipped Classroom is NOT the Progressive Model You Were Looking For
- "Making Lemonade" a new principal's reflections
- 12 Ideas for Using QR Codes
- "Christmas Baler—Any Questions" post about using video to get students thinking and wondering
- "The Flipped Classroom Explained"
- "Points Don't Work, Respecting Students Does"
- "Using Tech to Meet Parents Where They Are"

Not too shabby. Each list represents a 10 minute commitment. Add in a commitment to blog at least 2 times per week and you're looking at just 90 minutes a week. Yes, every minute counts when you're talking about education, but 90 minutes worth of connecting, learning, reflecting, and sharing will pay huge dividends.

So what are you waiting for? Get out there and get connected!

We hope this eBook helps you get started. If there's more we can do to help you, please don't hesitate to contact us:

Email: contact@engagingeducators.com

Web: www.engagingeducators.com

Blog: www.engagingeducators.com/blog

Twitter: www.twitter.com/engaginged

Facebook: www.facebook.com/engagingeducators

