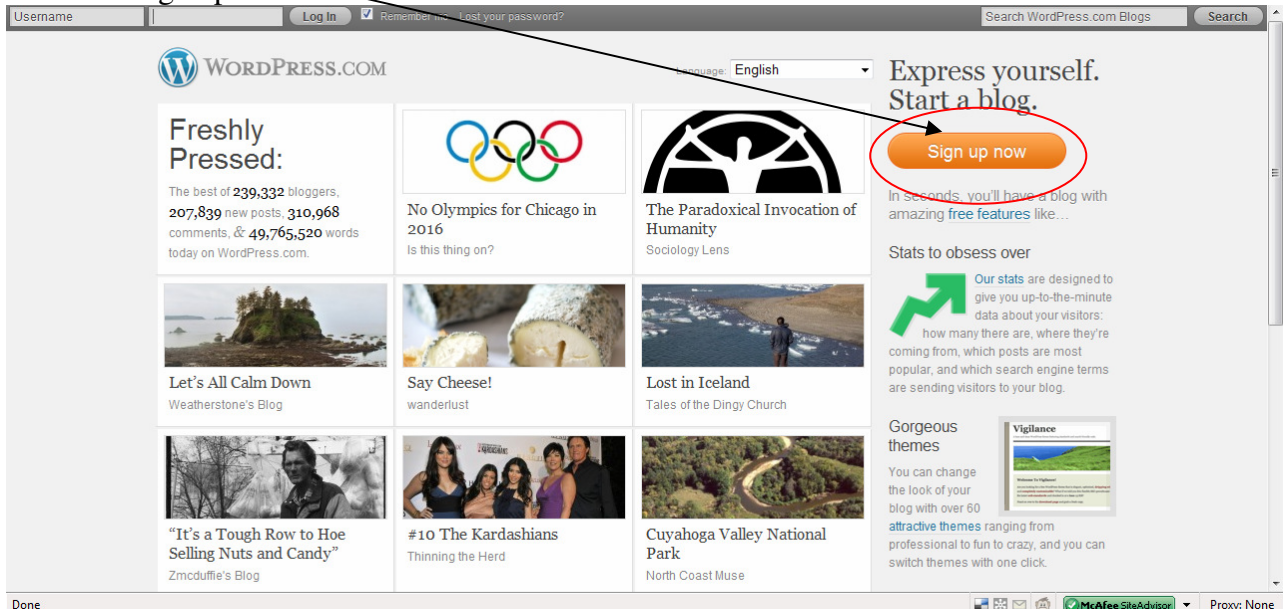


# How to use WordPress.com to Create a Simple Blog

## Getting Started

1. Go to <http://www.wordpress.com>
2. Click Sign up Now

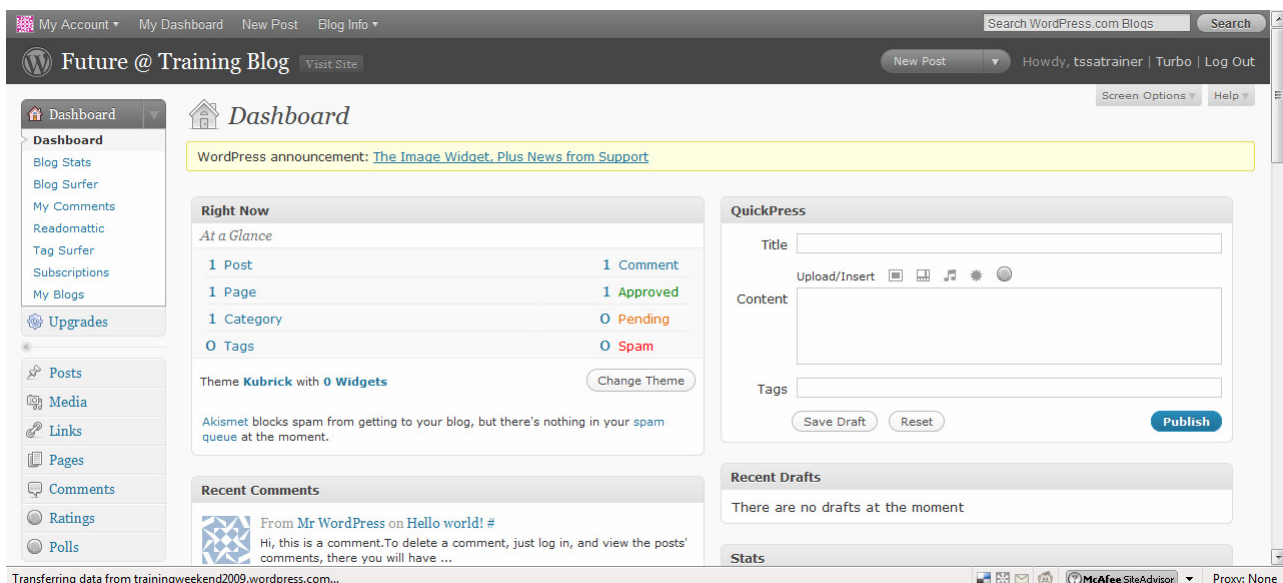


3. Fill in the required information on the setup screens. Please note:

- You **cannot change your username**, so choose carefully
- You **cannot change your domain name**, so have a think about these.
- You **can change the blog title**, so don't worry too much about that
- Remember to read the **terms and conditions!**

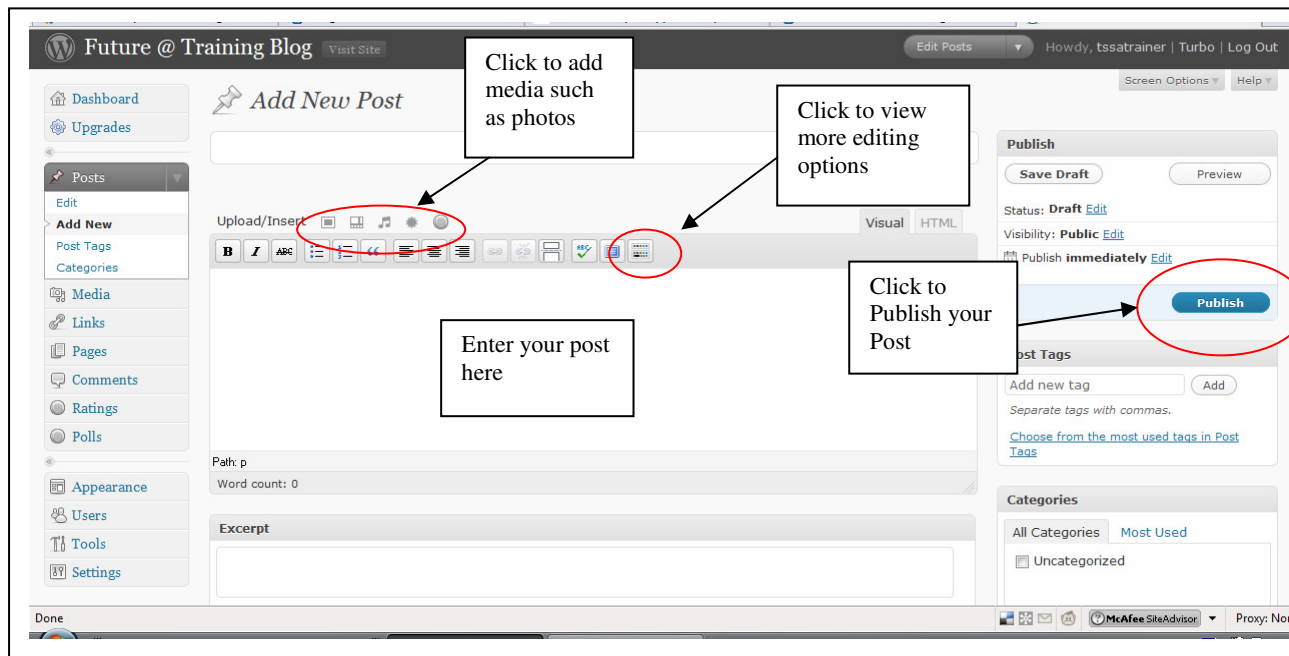
4. Your account is now active. You will receive a confirmation email, once you do, click the activation link, and sign in. You will be taken to your **Dashboard**.

Below is your **Dashboard**. This is where you will add content, and control how it looks.



## Creating a Post

1. To create or edit a post, select **posts** from the menu at the left
2. You will see that you already have a post called 'Hello World'. You can delete this by hovering over it and selecting **delete**.
3. Select **Add New**

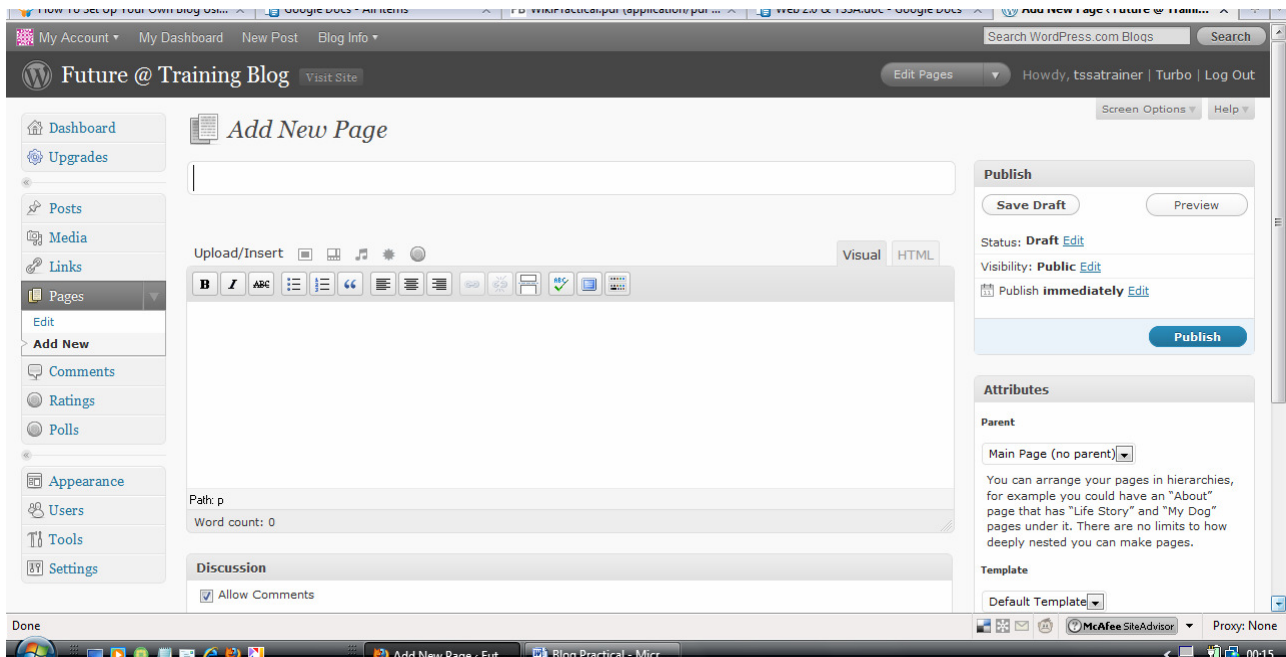


4. Add a title
5. Write your blog post in the main text box. The layout and options are similar to any word processing program.
6. You can add media such as a photo, or a video to your post by selecting one of the options from **Upload/Insert**. If you are adding a photo, make sure that you have permission to display it on your site.
7. You can add a link by highlighting the link text, and then selecting the **link** icon, that looks like a chain link. A box will pop up, into which you can paste your desired URL.
8. Publish your post by clicking **Publish** or preview it by selecting **Preview**.

## Creating a Page

The main page on your blog will be your homepage. This is where your posts will be displayed. However, it's a good idea to have a few static pages such as: About, Get Involved, Contact Us, etc.

1. To create or edit a page, select **Pages** from the left menu. You will see that it looks almost identical to the **Posts** page.
2. You will see that there is already a page create for you called '**About**'. Let's create another one by selecting **Add New**.

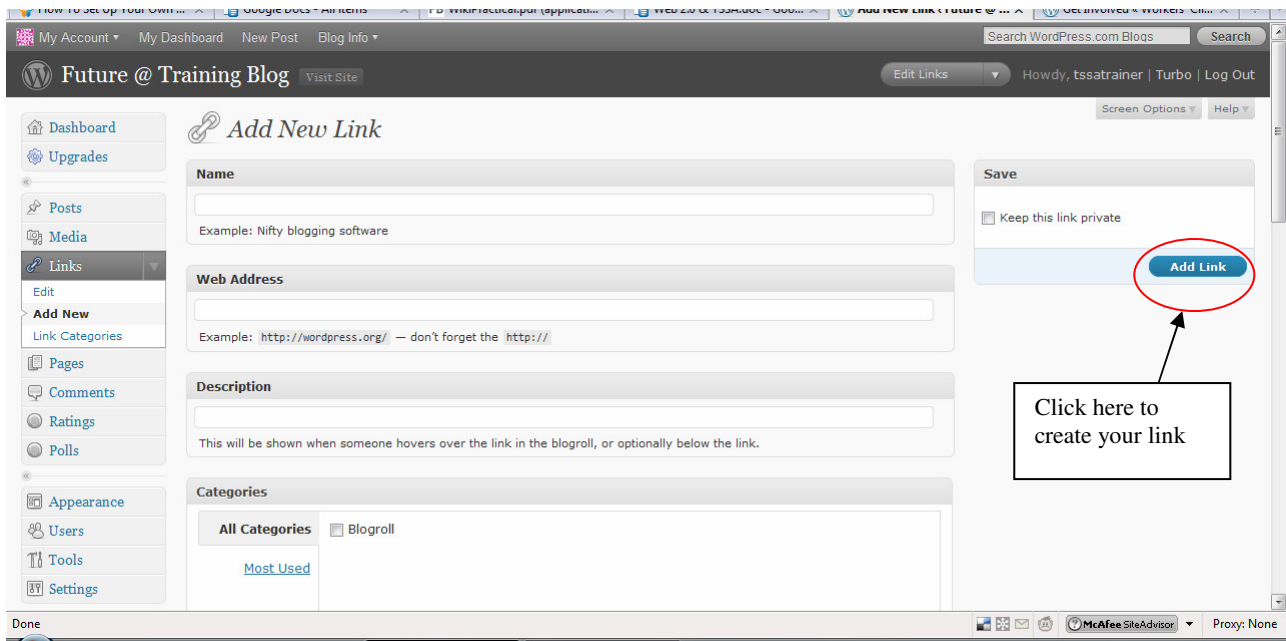


3. Give your page a title
4. Add your content in the main box. This is exactly the same as adding a blog post, so **see the instructions above**.
5. Publish your page by selecting the **Publish** button. You can preview your page by selecting **Preview**.

## Creating a link

We've seen how to include a link in a blog post and in a page. How about if we want a list of links that we think would be useful to all of our readers to be displayed on the homepage? Let's try it.

1. To create or edit a link, select **Links** from the left menu.
2. You will see that you already have two links to WordPress. You can delete these by hovering over them and selecting **delete**.
3. Select **Add New**.

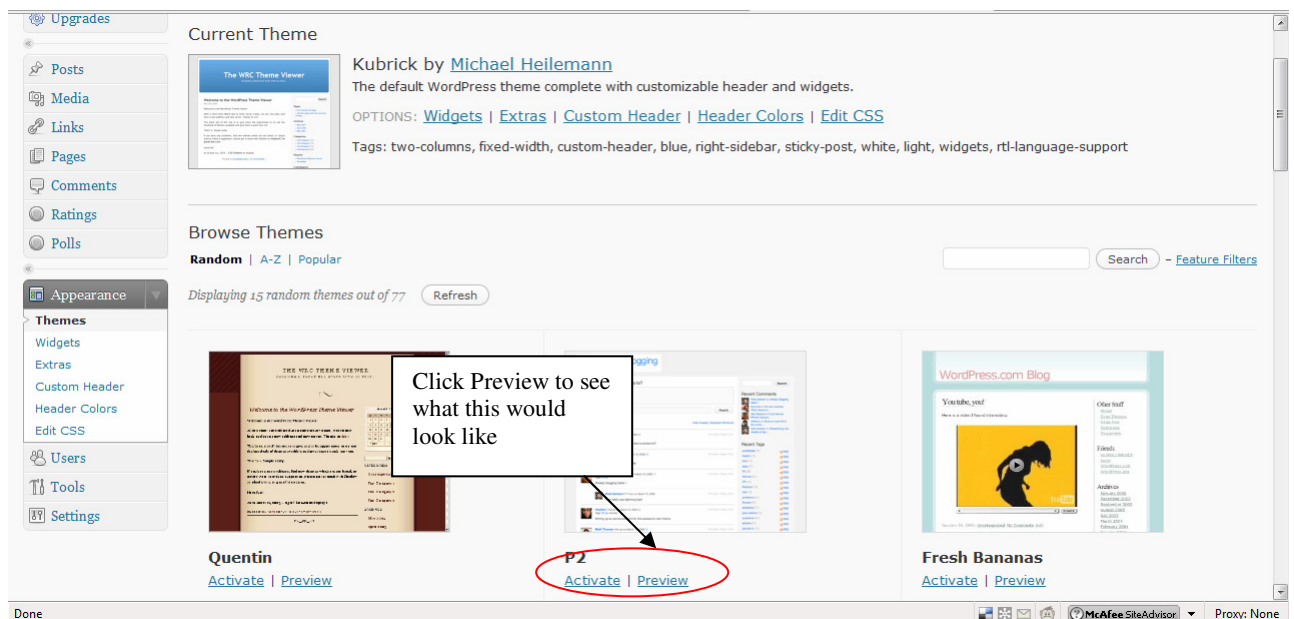


4. Give the link a name by typing it into the **Name** box. This will be displayed on your homepage.
5. Enter the URL by typing or pasting it into the Web Address box.
6. Add a description if you'd like by typing it into the **Description** box. This will be displayed when users hover over the link.
7. Click the **Add Link** button to create your link.

## Selecting a Template for your Blog Layout

If you view your blog now, you will see that it has some nice content, but looks quite boring. We can improve the look and feel by selecting a template that deals better with such things as page navigation and headers.

1. Select **Appearance** from the menu on the left.
2. You will see that there are lots of templates to choose from. Choose a template based on things such as: how many columns do you want? How does it deal with widgets (something we'll come to next, but basically a little box that does something like display a search box, or a Twitter feed), what is the colour scheme, etc. You can preview what your site would look like with certain templates before you decide on one.

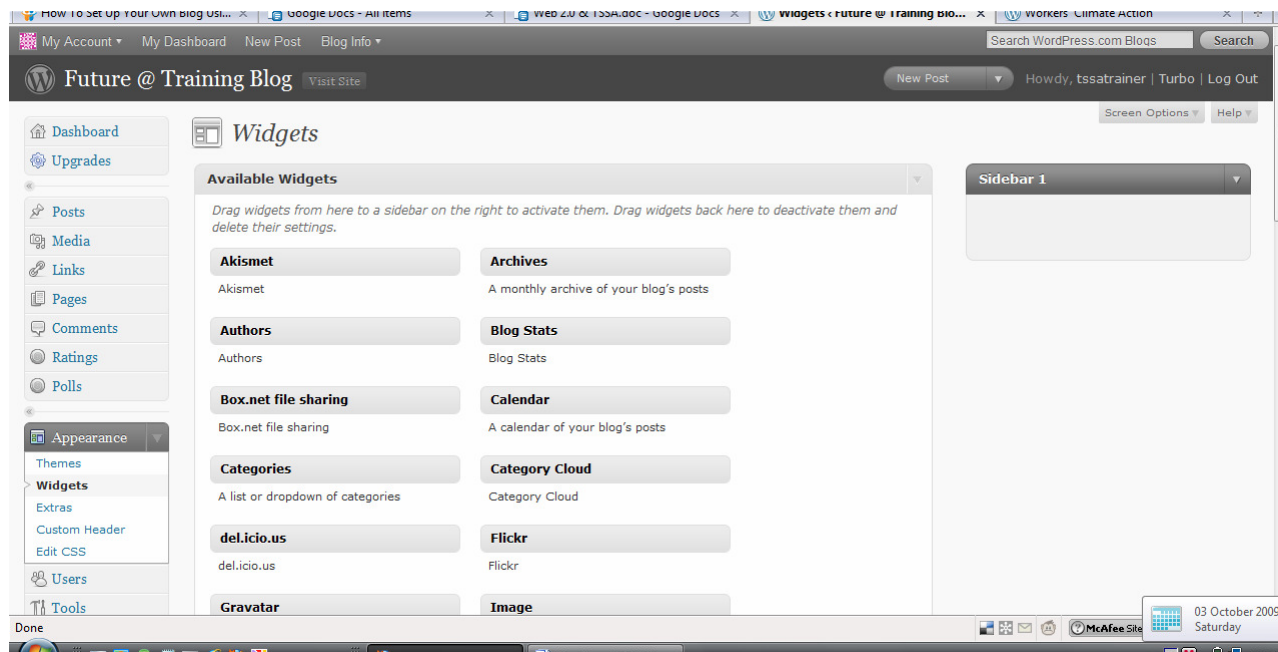


3. Browse the list and select a template that you like. There will be some that you are not allowed to use unless you upgrade to the paid version of WordPress, however there are plenty to choose from.
4. After you've tried a few, select **Activate**.
5. If you've selected a template with a custom header, you need to create it. This will usually be an image that you will crop to match the dimensions of the header. Do this by selecting **Appearance** from the left menu, the selecting **Custom Header**.
6. Upload an image from your computer, and crop it using the WordPress tool that will appear after uploading.

## Adding Widgets to Your Blog

One of the great things about blogs is that they work together with other social networking tools. Widgets help to integrate these tools with your blog.

1. Select **Appearance** from the left menu, and then select **Widgets**.
2. You will see a list of widgets in the middle, and something called **Sidebar 1** at the right hand side.



3. Have a look at each widget and drag the ones to the sidebar that you'd like displayed on your blog homepage.
4. When you drag a widget across, a drop-down menu appears for you to set the behaviour and appearance of the widget. For example, the **Twitter** widget will ask you to select which Twitter feed to display, and the **Links** widget will ask if you'd like the name and the description to be shown.
5. You might not know what most of the widgets do, so start small. I would recommend starting with the following: **Search, Links, Archives, RSS Links** (the feed from your blog), **Twitter** (Most likely your Twitter feed).

This has been a very basic introduction to setting up a blog. There are tons of additional features, customisations, and options such as making a blog post private, tagging and adding categories. Start with the basics, and then have a look and a play to see what else is possible.

The best things about blogs are that they don't require any expertise to set up and maintain, they give you a web presence, and they work with other social media such as **Twitter, RSS, and YouTube**.

I have set up a basic blog for this tutorial that shows the basics that we've learned here. There is a blog post for illustration purposes, but also some useful links, and an electronic version of this presentation.

<http://trainingweekend2009.wordpress.com/>