**Plant Blog**

**Horticulture - Clinkscales**

**Objectives:**

* Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
* Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
* Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks and purposes
* Use blogging as a way to express ideas, analyze texts, and develop your writing skills

**Basic Info:**

* Blog 3 + times per six weeks
* See types of posts listed below for ideas.
* Be sure to fill out the form on my webpage so I can visit your blog
* Cite sources, including images.
  + To cite sources on a blog, embed a hyperlink to the original (no MLA or APA required)
* Your blog = your work

**Set Up Instructions:**

* You will create a blog space for yourself using weebly.
* [https://education.weebly.com/?session-expired=1&redirect=userHome.php#login](https://education.weebly.com/?session-expired=1&redirect=userHome.php%23login)
* Once your blog is created, complete [this survey](http://clinkscshs.weebly.com/horticulture.html) to add your blog’s URL to the list.
* You will then write an introductory post here in class. Finish and submit your post in class today. Your introductory post should include:
  + Basics information about you, why you selected Horticulture, and what is your experience with plants(both good and bad), also you should add at least three images with this post
* Moving forward, you will write three blog posts per six weeks about a variety of topics, some specific, some very general and broad

**Due Dates:**

* Posts and comments are due on each due date by 11:59pm. You may post at any time, but that’s the cutoff.
* Due dates:
* September 4th
* September 11th
* September 25th
* October 9th
* October 23rd
* November 4th
* December 2nd
* December 14th

**Assessment:**

*Your Posts:*

* Counts as an academic achievement grade, three posts will be added to be one grade
* Late posts will lose 10% per calendar day
* See rubrics for specific grading

**Side Notes:**

* Your first couple of posts will probably take longer, especially when you are trying a new type of post. It’ll get easier as you go.
* Remember, once something is on the Internet, it’s always there. Think before you post!

**Logistics:**

* Length:
  + Approximately 400-600 words long. This is a general guideline; some posts may be longer or shorter.
  + Posts should be two paragraphs minimum. You may deviate from paragraph structure to take a compositional risk (lists, poems, etc.).
  + Remember that typical blogs have short paragraphs because reading on the screen causes more eye fatigue than does reading on the page.
* Format:
  + single space paragraphs
  + double space between paragraphs (to indicate a break in paragraphs and to give your reader’s eye a rest)
  + do not indent paragraphs
* Links/images:
  + Every post should have at least one link or image (preferably both).
  + You may have more than one; there is no maximum.
  + Do not copy/paste long URLs into the text of your post. Instead, highlight the relevant words in your post and embed the link so as not to interrupt the flow of the post.
* Tone/voice
  + You should write your posts in your own style. This might mean being witty and clever, or it could mean being serious and straightforward. There is no one way to do this, as long as you remember to be school appropriate. This above all: to thine own self be true (you’ll get that reference in a few months).
  + Yes, you may use first person pronouns if you’d like. (SHHHHH! Don’t tell your English teacher)
  + Your voice may change from post to post as you figure out what works best for you, and that is absolutely fine (even encouraged!).
  + You may express your opinions in your posts, but remember that any time you take a side for anything, you need support for your argument. If you just sound off about something you don’t like, it’s not arguing; it’s whining. :)

**Types of Posts (use an appropriate variety):**

* passion blog
  + Write about something you are passionate about. Find something that you love or hate and share your passion with your readers.
  + Instead of simply gushing about (or bashing) your topic, your goal is to share your knowledge about the subject and perhaps persuade us to feel the same way.
* class-related response
  + Respond to something that we are reading/discussing in class.
  + By “respond,” I mean that you should present your understanding of, opinion about, or confusion about the topic.
  + You can discuss a literary text that we’re reading (*Slaughterhouse-Five*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Hamlet*), a language issue, or other topics we address throughout the year (typeface/design, euphemism, stereotypes, etc.). Try to stay current, or if you want to discuss something from earlier in the year, find a way to connect it to what’s going on now.
* outside text response
  + Respond to a text of your choice. Texts can be books, TV shows, films, blog posts, news articles, news broadcasts, videos, tweets, hashtags, or more.
  + By “respond to a text,” I mean that you should discuss something you’ve seen or read outside of class and share your response to it. The text could be something that made you think, confused you, made you happy, made you mad, interested you, or more.
  + Remember to provide a well-embedded link to your source text ( near the beginning of your post so your reader will have context early on).
  + Want a sample? Why, [here ya go](http://thebiggestplace.blogspot.com/2012/11/make-good-art-ssr.html)! Here’s [another](http://thebiggestplace.blogspot.com/2013/01/i-dont-want-to-grade-anymore.html)!
* Interdisciplinary post
  + Write a post about something you’re learning in any of your other classes. You can discuss concepts, articles, media, labs, etc. Writing is a thinking process, so blogging about a concept from another class can help solidify your thinking about it. You can see an example of what I mean [here](http://alecsilverstein.blogspot.com/2012/12/can-we-really-touch-scr.html) or [here](http://theperksofbeinggustine.blogspot.com/2013/03/id-lets-study.html).
* Current events post
  + Write a post about a current events topic. Explain the event and/or share your thoughts about it.
* Wordless blog
  + “Write” your post using only multimedia content (photographs, gifs, vines, memes, etc.)
  + If you do a wordless blog, the multimedia content must communicate a message or tell a story. It can’t just a be a random collection of pictures for no reason. You may want to add short captions to help convey your meaning.
  + Images and videos must be embedded so the reader can see them all upon scrolling. The reader shouldn’t need to click on a bunch of URLs to find your content.
* How-to
  + Write a blog that instructs your reader to do something.
* Free choice
* Write whatever you’d like, as long as it’s school appropriate.

**11 Techniques for Opening Lines on Blogs**

Do you want to discover how to make opening lines effective? How does one craft an opening line to a post that effectively engages readers and stimulates enough interest to get them to read your blog post?

**1. Identify a Need**

Identifying a reader’s need and solving it is a key to writing successful blog posts. You don’t have to solve the need or problem in the opening line, but an effective way to get readers to read deep into your post where you do solve it is to tell them that you will in the opening line.

**2. Ask a Question With Only One Answer**

This is a technique that copywriters have been using for a long time and it works. To do it, ask a question in the opening of your post which leaves your reader little room to answer anything but ‘yes’. I did it in line three of this post (‘Do you want to discover how to make opening lines effective’) but it could also effectively be used as the very opening to this post.

Asking this type of question does a couple of things. For starters you’re communicating what the post is about and the need that it will fulfill in the reader – but secondly (and more importantly) you’re drawing out a response in your reader and one which puts the need that your post will solve squarely in their mind. Anyone reading and answering ‘yes’ to my question above enters into this post having just said that they want to discover how to write engaging opening lines – this ‘buy in’ helps in the communication process that follows.

Asking ‘yes’ questions can actually be something you use more than once in a post. Ask a series of them scattered through your post and you can actually take your reader on a journey that leads them to your call to action.

**3. Ask an Intriguing Question**

Another type of question that is effective at getting readers interested in reading further into a post is one that leaves them hanging and wanting to know the answer.

‘What does Bill Gates and Martha Stewart have in common?’ – ‘Is the Nikon D700 the best Digital SLR Camera Ever Invented?’

All of these questions will appeal differently to different audiences – but all leave readers wondering what the answer will be and give them a reason to read on further into a post.

**4. Say Something Unexpected**

Attempt to do something a little different or surprising to grab readers’ attention by sharing something personal and at a first glance off topic.

Of course – the unexpected opening line should relate to your post’s topic on some level.

**5. Tell a Story or Share an Analogy**

Building on my last point – I find that telling stories to open posts can be one way of snapping people out of their ho-hum, eyes glazed over state that many of us have while surfing the web.

This is particularly true on a blog that is more serious or formal in nature – to share a story means you’re switching genres for a moment or two, which can be enough to grab your reader’s attention.

Stories can be short (a one-liner like I did above) or longer (although you probably won’t want to go too long). They can be your own personal stories or stories of someone else. They can be true or even fiction.

**6. Make a Claim or Promise**

Sometimes a simple but bold claim is the most effective way to get people to read deeper into a post.

**‘Today I will teach you how to give up smoking.’ – ‘In this post you’ll discover the secrets to taking the perfect portrait.’**

These sorts of openings simply tell your reader what they’ll get if they read on. They are short, sharp, to the point and effective.

You’d better be able to back up the claim or promise in the post itself or you could have some angry readers on your hands.

**7. Make a Controversial Statement**

There’s nothing like the hint of controversy to grab people’s attention and cause them to stop in their tracks and take note of what’s going on.

Strongly state your opinion on a company, product or even another person and you’ll find people will want to read on to see why you’ve said it and to let you know if they agree.

**8. Paint a Picture**

This is a technique used a few times in public speaking that can translate across into writing effective blog posts. The basics of it are to get your reader using their imagination to picture some kind of scenario.

This can be used in both positive and negative ways:

* *Positive* – get them to imagine a scenario when they achieve some success or overcome some problem.
* *Negative* – alternatively get them to picture the consequences of a problem left unsolved or a failure that they might fear.

Engaging the imagination of your reader is a powerful thing which can evoke emotion, help them to get in touch with fear and feel needs but also give them real motivation to make change.

**9. Use Statistics**

Using a statistic that packs a punch can effectively communicate a need and grab attention.

**Example** –Opening Line – “Only 1 out of every 100 Readers Comment on your Blog”

**10. Start with a Quotation**

This is one that can be quite effective – if you use the right quotation of course.