



Beginning Blogging

By Molly Blaisdell

I'm a blogger and find it a satisfying activity. Here's some guidance on how to start a blog.

To get the defining out of the way, a blog is a periodical online journal about any subject under the sun. My weekly blog *Seize the Day* (mollyblaisdell.blogspot.com) has been out in the blogosphere for children's writers since 2004. In terms of slant, I try to bring some jazzy voice into my blog like my favorite columnists Dave Berry, Erma Bombeck, and Leon Hale.

My goals are simple:

1. Make deadlines and keep them.
2. Catch an audience and keep them.
3. Encourage creative folk on their journey

My blogging showcases my writing. It's free and has helped establish me within the publishing industry. My first year of blogging led to 89 visitors. In 2010, I had about 10000 visitors. My blog has led to school visits, connections with award-winning authors, talented agents, and a few editors. I've also snagged several writing gigs including one with MSN as a guest blogger for pay. Squeal! I had a sponsor, a handler, and an editor, and not one pesky query letter to write.

Blogging isn't for everyone, but it is certainly the easiest way to be published on the planet. It will also help you hone your craft. You might like it. You might be surprised where it leads. Consider giving it a try.

One of my goals is to be paid for what I would do for free. So yay, another thing to mark off the to-do list. There is even an entire organization dedicated to blogging about children's books <http://www.kidlitosphere.org/> and they have annual conferences held around the country.

I have not actively publicized my blog except by word of mouth. I've really made a salient decision to not hard sell of my blog with lots of publicity hype like blog tours, give aways, blog games, book reviews, marketing news, and the rest of it. My blog is supposed to be a refreshing spot out there in the vast number voices camoring for attention.

I had lots to learn along the way. Ideally a blog post needs to be short with a 500 word maximum. Blog posts need visual content to complement the text. They also need links to outside content. Always offer an actionable step. And last the chunks of text need to be kept down to five lines or less.