

Tips for Leaving a Good Blog Comment - By Bill Ferriter (@plugusin)

The best blogs are truly interactive—with users listening and responding to one another. They are super interesting digital conversations! Highly accomplished commenters are constantly thinking while interacting with others who are leaving comments. They come to the conversation with an open mind, willing to reconsider their own positions—and willing to challenge the notions of others.

Blog commenting requires users to develop the skills that active thinkers bring to any learning experience. The following tips for blog commenters are adapted from the collective work of Kelly Gallagher, Matt Copeland and Project CRISS:

To be an active blog commenter, start by carefully reading the original post and then working your way through the comments that have been left by others. While viewing the comments that have been added by other users, you should:

Gather facts: Jot down things that are interesting and new to you.

Make Connections: Relate and compare things you are hearing to things you already know

Ask Questions: What about the comments that have already been made is confusing to you? What don't you understand? How will you find the answer? Remember that there will ALWAYS be questions in an active thinker's mind.

Give Opinions: Make judgments about what you are viewing and hearing. Do you agree? Do you disagree? Like? Dislike? Do you support or oppose anything that you have heard or seen? Why?

Use the following sentence starters to shape your thoughts and comments while viewing or participating in blog conversations. Comments based on these kinds of statements make blog conversations interactive and engaging.

- This reminds me of...
- This is similar to...
- I wonder...
- I realized...
- I noticed...
- You can relate this to...
- I'd like to know...
- I'm surprised that...
- If I were _____, I would _____
- If _____ then _____
- Although it seems...
- I'm not sure that...

While commenting, try to respond directly to other readers. Begin by quoting some part of the comment that you are responding to. That will help other readers know what it is that has caught your attention. Then, explain your own thinking in a few short sentences. Elaboration is important when you're trying to make a point. Finally, finish your comment with a question that other listeners can reply to.

Here's a sample of a great blog comment made on a post about the reasons that nations fight one another:

Boston Coffee posed a wonderful question: "Do adults hate more then children do?"

I think that we all hate the same but the hate starts with parents, teachers and others in authority. It's really hard not to adapt to what everyone else is thinking or doing. Hate is a strong feeling towards a certain person because they're different.

Which poses another question for me. Do you think that people who hate are afraid of difference or change?

When responding to another reader, don't be afraid to disagree with something that they have said. Challenging the thinking of another reader will help them to reconsider their own thinking—and will force you to explain yours! Just be sure to disagree agreeably—impolite people are rarely influential.

If your thinking gets challenged by another reader in a blog conversation, don't be offended. Listen to your peers, consider their positions and decide whether or not you agree with them. You might discover that they've got good ideas you hadn't thought about. Either way, be sure to respond—let your challengers know how their ideas have influenced you.

<u>Blog Reading/Commenting Dos:</u>	<u>Blog Reading/Commenting Don'ts:</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit our class feed collection at: http://www.netvibes.com/wferriter 2. Hover over interesting links to see a short description of each article. 3. Read a few bits that catch your eye! 4. Leave a well-written, thoughtful comment that challenges the author, shares your thinking, and/or asks a good question! (Write in Word first, and then paste your comment.) 5. Visit again at a later date to see if anyone has responded to your thoughts. 6. Be Polite! No one likes a rude visitor. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EVER USE YOUR REAL NAME OR THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL! Remaining anonymous is the safest way to add comments to blogs. 2. Ever respond to anyone who says something mean or inappropriate. Always find your teacher if this happens! 3. Forget to proofread your posts. Tons of errors will make people think that you don't know what you're talking about. 4. Be afraid to challenge the thinking of other people! Some of the best learning happens when people are forced to rethink their ideas.