

WRITING A BLOG POST



CLOSEUP[®]
WASHINGTON DC

INTRODUCTION TO BLOGGING



A blog is a website that is run and regularly updated by an individual or group. A blog typically has a specific area of focus, such as politics, travel, food, health, sports, fashion, or lifestyle. Every blog consists of articles or “posts,” typically written in a casual, conversational style.

Close Up publishes two different blogs.

- The [Current Issues Blog](#) focuses on policy issues currently in the news. The blog is mainly read by teachers who want to help their students discuss current issues in class. Each post provides an overview of an issue in the headlines, background information and context, links to other useful resources, and suggested prompts for classroom discussion.
- [Close Up News](#) focuses on the students, teachers, partners, and programs of the Close Up Foundation itself and how they make an impact. The blog is mainly read by people in education, civics, politics, and policy who are interested in Close Up’s work. Each post highlights an aspect of Close Up’s work, be it a program, a partnership, an initiative, or an event.

WRITING A BLOG POST



In this activity, you are invited to write a guest blog post which we will consider for publication in either the Current Issues Blog or Close Up News. Respond to one of the following prompts.

Current Issues Blog:

- What is an issue you care about that you feel is underrepresented in the news? Where have you seen this issue playing out? Why should Americans pay attention to the issue?
- Consider a national policy issue as well as a specific solution to that issue proposed by an individual citizen, a group, or an elected official. Outline the issue, the proposed solution, and why people support and oppose the proposed solution.

Close Up News:

- Prior to becoming a Civic Ambassador, did you participate in a Close Up program? Reflect on the Close Up experience, what you took away from it, and what made the program most meaningful to you.
- How are you using the Civic Ambassador platform to make a difference in your school or community?

TIPS FOR WRITING A CURRENT ISSUES BLOG POST



- **Introduce the issue and why it is relevant.** This should be a short (2-3 sentence) statement that frames the issue. If there is a bill, court case, or pending law change, mention it here.
- **Provide background on the issue.** This could be a short historical sketch of the issue that provides some needed context.
- **Explain the current issue by outlining major details** of a proposed policy, a bill, an executive order, a court case, etc.
- **Provide arguments about the issue.** This is the place to bring in links to op-eds and columns, panel discussions on cable news, statements by political leaders, etc. The goal is to show the ways in which the issue is framed and debated in the public sphere.
- **List discussion questions** to help teachers investigate the issue with students.
- **Reference other resources.** If there were articles/blogs/videos that you think might be useful for a teacher, or that a teacher might assign to students, include them with a short description of each. Include no more than four resources per blog post.
- For examples, check out our Current Issues Blog posts [here](#).

TIPS FOR WRITING A CLOSE UP NEWS BLOG POST



- **Include details about your background.** Where is your home/school community? What is it like there? Feel free to include concrete facts and figures about the politics, economics, demographics, and/or geography of your community.
- **Explain what inspired you** to come on Close Up or join the Civic Ambassador program.
- **Outline your first impressions of the experience.** What surprised you, excited you, helped you, or made you nervous? Did those first impressions change as time went on?
- **Use quotes from peers, teachers, and/or other community members** if you think they help get your message across.
- **Provide specific examples** of what you accomplished through the experience and what made it most meaningful to you.
- For examples, check out our Close Up News posts [here](#).

BLOG POST REQUIREMENTS



- Keep your blog post between 500 and 1,000 words.
- Use direct, concise language.
- Be sure to include the following:
 - Title
 - A link to one featured image that will go at the top of the blog post (ideally a photograph published by a major news outlet)
 - A link to up to one other image, chart, infographic, etc., if it helps to make a point or educate the reader
 - Endnotes for all references (they need only be the title of the website and a link)