

Picking a Template on Blogger

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The first aspect most new bloggers focus on when picking their initial template is the color theme. But, experienced bloggers focus more on a functional layout that is driven by the type of content they want to display. If you are new to blogging, you may not know what your overall content will include and that makes choosing a template a little like putting a jigsaw puzzle together without having the picture on the box to use as a guide. It's difficult to know what you'll need until you actually start filling up your blog. Well, good news. The great thing about having a Blogger account is that you can change your template at any time without losing your blog's content.

Generally speaking, the type of content you want to display helps determine the type of layout that will work best for you. But, if you are new to blogging, you might have ideas for only the first couple of posts and not much beyond that. So, it might be difficult to predict the type of layout that will work best for you in the coming months as you begin to develop a blogging style. Following are a few tips to help you pick a good starting template and a trick or two for you to stick in your back pocket for later.

How much content, including graphics, do you have right now that you want each of your viewers to see every time they visit your blog? This is the type of content that will be placed in a sidebar that runs the full length of the blog page. It will remain visible at all times. Sidebar content may include a picture of you, a brief profile, a picture of your product, contact information, and so on.

If you only have a wee bit of this permanent display type content right now, a template with a sidebar area that has headers to highlight the different sections might be useful. Headers will take up more space and make each section seem a little bolder and more impressive. If you have a lot of this display content, perhaps using text-only headers will let you squeeze more information in the limited space. If you go this route, alternating the placement of graphics and text will help define the different sections.

Something to consider when choosing your permanent display content is that the sidebar and the main content area are bound together. This means that the length of one affects the length of the other. At first, it may seem that you have a long sidebar with a lot of empty space in the main content area below your first few posts. After you start filling up your blog with posts and the main body content gets longer, it may seem that you have a lot of blank space in the sidebar below your permanently displayed items. If you find this is happening with your blog, good news. You can choose how many posts are displayed in the main body section. This will help you control the overall length of that area and better match it to your sidebar content. Of course, how many posts you choose to display will depend on the length of each post. As you create more entries, you'll begin to see your typical blogging style and you can play with the post display settings and your sidebar content to get the mix that works best for you.

If you decide to change your template at some point, here are a few tricks to help make the process go more smoothly. Before you pick a new template, save your current one. Blogger provides a way for you to backup your current template before you make any changes. That way, if the new template doesn't work well, you can simply restore your original template. Most folks spend a few hours tweaking the color scheme on their blog. Do yourself a favor and write down the hex code of the colors you like on your current blog. When you pick a new template, it will be a snap to customize the colors by using the ones from your list.

Backing up your template gives you a great safety net, so enjoy playing with your template and customizing it to suit your style and content.