

Leaving Good Blog Comments

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. The following tips will help you to craft great blog comments:

Gather Your Thoughts

To be an active blog commenter, start by carefully reading the original post and then take the following steps while working your way through the comments that have been left by others:

Task	Your Response
<p>Gather facts: Jot down things that are interesting and new to you. Facts often become the source for fascinating questions or new strands of conversation.</p>	
<p>Make Connections: Relate and compare things you are hearing to things you already know from your personal life or from your studies.</p>	
<p>Ask Questions: What about the comments that have already been made is confusing to you? What don't you understand? Remember that there will ALWAYS be questions in an active thinker's mind.</p>	
<p>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?</p>	

(Santa, Havens, & Valdes, 2004)

Crafting Your Comment

Good blog comments require many of the same skills as any piece of writing—careful proofreading, solid elaboration, accurate punctuation. Use the following steps to craft a good blog comment.

Task	Your Response
<p>Include an opening quote</p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Jack K. posed a wonderful question: “Do adults hate more than children do?”</p>	
<p>Elaborate—even if you don’t agree</p> <p>Next, explain your own thinking in a few short sentences. Elaboration is important when you’re trying to make a point. Consider pushing back against the thinking of the original author or another commenter.</p> <p>When responding to another reader, don’t be afraid to</p>	

<p>disagree with something that they have said. Challenging 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.</p> <p>Answer questions. Point out places where you are confused. Raise perspectives that haven't been considered. Make comparisons to topics that you've already studied. Share what surprises you—either about the topic or the thoughts of your peers.</p> <p><i>Example: 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—and we all know people who are different.</i></p>	
<p>Finish with a question</p> <p>Digital conversations are like any good conversation—they depend on interesting questions and new strands of thought to keep them alive. That means the best blog comments ALWAYS end with a question that is designed to keep people talking.</p> <p>Your question should be open-ended, which means participants shouldn't be able to respond with a yes/no answer. They should also be related to the body of your comment. Finally, they should be interesting enough to make others want to respond!</p> <p><i>Example: Which poses another question for me: Do you think that people who hate are afraid of difference or are they really just afraid of change? Isn't always more comfortable to stay the way we are than to try to become something new?</i></p>	
<p>Be ready to be challenged</p> <p>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.</p> <p>You might discover that they've got good ideas you hadn't thought about. Either way, respond—let your challengers know how their ideas have influenced you.</p>	
<p>General reminders:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DON'T EVER USE YOUR REAL NAME OR THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL WHEN COMMENTING! Remaining anonymous is the safest way to add comments to blogs. Don't respond to anyone who says something inappropriate to you in a blog comment. Find your teacher if this happens! Be sure to proofread your posts carefully. Tons of errors will make people think that you don't know what you're talking about. 	

Sources:

Santa, C.M., Havens, L.T., & Valdes, B.J. (2004). *Project CRISS: Creating independence through student owned strategies*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.