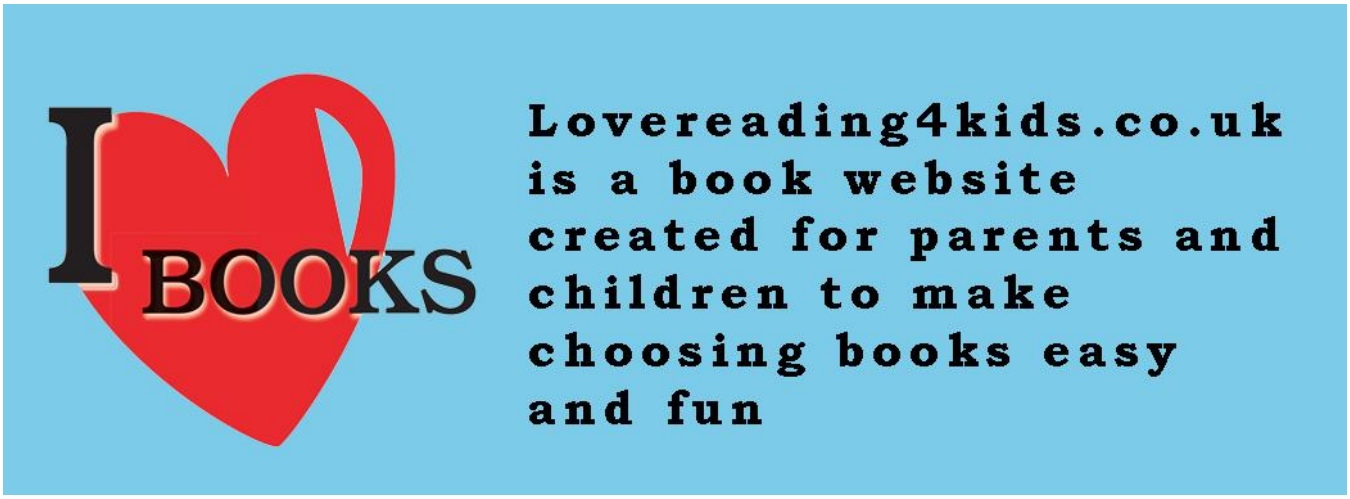


Opening extract from

Super Skills: How to be a Blogger & Vlogger in 10 Easy Lessons

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WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF BLOGGING

You may not have noticed, but blogging is everywhere. People from all walks of life use blogging to promote, share and express their ideas. Newspapers, television programmes, celebrities and people like you and me are blogging all the time. Using audio, video and text, blogs have become one of the most popular ways to share information online. Why not join in? Sharing your story has never been easier and all you need to do is let your creativity out! In this book, we will experiment and discover the blogging method that suits you the best.

Are you ready?

Of course you are! You are already having experiences that are worth telling other people about. Maybe you read a great book that excited you? What about that class you took when you learned a new skill? Remember that amazing holiday where you visited another country? Perhaps you even discovered something unknown in your own hometown? You may be surprised, but people love reading and hearing about other people's adventures. It is what makes blogging a great resource for sharing stories or learning new things. You can inspire and enlighten other bloggers or be inspired by them.

HANDY TIP!
Starting your own blog can feel like a big project: take it one step at a time.



IT'S EASY WHEN YOU BREAK IT DOWN

This book will introduce you to the 10 core skills for blogging. You'll get the most out of it if you read the chapters in order and try out the practical activities that are suggested. As you become more confident in your blogging, look back through the skills to practise the techniques discussed and try out new things.

WORDS, VIDEO, AUDIO... THE CHOICE IS YOURS!

In this book, we are going to talk about writing posts, recording audio, taking photographs and shooting video to enhance your storytelling. Mixing these elements will make your stories interesting and exciting, giving your followers a reason to visit your blog again and again. Together, we will review all the types of technology that you can use to help tell your story.

IMPORTANT: YOU MUST BE 13 YEARS OLD OR OLDER TO JOIN MOST BLOGGING AND SOCIAL MEDIA SITES. ALWAYS ASK PERMISSION FROM YOUR PARENTS.

YOUR VOICE IS UNIQUE

Being inspired about what you want to tell your audience will make creating your blog that much easier. Be confident in your blog and embrace your own view of the world. If you are excited about what you are sharing with your blog visitors, they will be excited too. No matter what type of blog you decide to do, it all begins with sorting out your ideas. Plan what you want to say and how you want to say it. We will help you to find your own voice and keep readers coming back for more.



ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF BLOGGING IS TO HAVE FUN. SMILE. THINK OF POSITIVE THINGS AND **GET PLANNING!**



FIND YOUR STORY

Bloggers love to tell stories. We like to tell people how we are feeling, what we are thinking, which books we read and about how fun it is to watch your favourite sports team. But telling a story can be one of the hardest things to do. Where do you start? How should you tell it? What will make your story interesting? Many bloggers start out unsure of what they should talk about. They often worry that the story they want to tell is too boring and wonder why anyone would want to hear about their life. The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth! Readers love to read about other people's experiences. They like to take part in other people's adventures and interests, and they want to learn from you too. Your experiences are unique!

GETTING STARTED

Let's do some brainstorming. Grab a piece of paper and a pencil. You are going to jot a few things down in a list. Don't be shy! Let's write down ten things that you like to do or love to talk about. Some people like to talk about films or describe their favourite places to go horseriding. Let your mind wander! If you get stuck, you can always ask a friend or family member to help you out. The things on this list could be anything. Don't hold back!

WHATEVER COMES OUT, JUST WRITE IT DOWN!



MAKE A MIND MAP

Thinking about your interests for the first time can be difficult. After all, talking about yourself and describing the things you like to complete strangers can be mind-boggling. After you've made your list of ideas, another trick you can use is a mind map, where you draw your ideas in a collection of circles. Drawing circles can help you visualize connections you may not see from a list of your interests.

First, write down a word that you think will be your blog topic. Draw a circle around it. Then write another word outside of the circle you just made and draw a circle around that word. Here is the hard part. Are the words similar? Are they the same subject? If they are related, draw a line between the two circles to connect them. Try another word and see which words get the most connections. The topic with the greatest number of connections will probably be the one that you know a lot about.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

A lot of people say that practice makes perfect – and they are right! If you want to become good at anything, you need to practise and experiment to become an expert. Putting your pen to paper is always a good start, but coming up with ideas to practise on may require a little inspiration. Open up a newspaper or look at some news online (the happier the better!) and write down your thoughts about what you read.

Call up a friend to ask for their opinion and write down their ideas. If the news isn't your thing, try writing about the book you are reading or the music you are listening to. How do books or music make you feel? What if you met a famous person? What would you say to them? Write out an imaginary conversation you would want to have. Keeping your mind actively thinking is the key. When you fill it up with information, your thoughts can spill out through your pen.



TIME TO EXPERIMENT

When you sit down to plan out your blog for the first time, it may seem like an impossible task. But all you really need to do is play with your ideas, write and record without any plan at all. Practising with different technologies can be a little bit overwhelming, so take some time to research and experiment. Try new creative things, even if they are a little bit scary!

USE YOUR VOICE

The better a writer you become, the more people will enjoy reading your text, but blogging is not always about words on a screen. You can also create a podcast (audio) or a vlog (video). Firstly, let's record some audio! If you have a recorder, why not record yourself saying your name and telling potential listeners about your day. Do this a few times and see what things pop up. Talking out loud is very different from writing things on paper, and you may feel more comfortable talking than writing. You can pretend to be a personality on the radio. See what fits with your personal style.

HANDY TIP!

If you have already discovered what it is you want to say and how you want to say it, you are ahead of the blogging game. For some others, it may take a while to figure it out. Don't worry: there's no need to rush!



VIDEO YOUR DAY

Once you have recorded some audio, why not try recording yourself in front of a camera? It can be exciting and scary, but it can also be incredibly fun. We will go into more detail in Skill 4, but if you have a phone or a webcam, these are great tools to start playing with. Why not record video of you introducing your pet to your viewers? Shoot some footage of you telling a story about what you did last Saturday. You can start with anything. Remember, this is just practice and it doesn't matter what you record. Its purpose is to help you become used to standing or sitting in front of a camera.

DON'T FORGET YOUR AUDIENCE

Before you get too far into your blog, ask yourself who you are writing your blog for. First and foremost, you should be writing your blog for yourself. If you are writing for others, you will soon lose interest and get bored. Yet, don't forget you will have an audience and they are important too. They will be invaluable as your blog grows. They might suggest ideas to write about or comment on your blog posts. Some might become ambassadors to your site and will recommend it to their friends as well as other people online. Your audience will also help you stay on track. If you have a bad day and you write about it, they will want to help you and keep you writing and blogging. If you have fun with your readers and make them feel welcome, they will want to help you succeed.



HANDY TIP!

It's OK to use other blogs as inspiration, but take elements and give them a different twist to make them your own!

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO BE YOU!

Let your character shine on your blog. If you want to write your own fiction and share it through your blog, blog that! If you think skiing is the best sport in the world, vlog that! No matter what you choose to blog, vlog or podcast about, do it because you are interested in it and it makes you smile. Once you start showing off how happy you are blogging about the topics you've chosen, your blog will be stronger and will attract followers.

STAY SAFE ONLINE



Everyone would like the Internet to be a safe environment in which to play and work, and most bloggers find it a rewarding and exciting place to be. However, keeping the Internet safe has proven to be difficult. When we communicate with strangers, it is impossible to know exactly who they are, even if they sound fun and friendly. With this in mind, it is very important that you protect yourself, especially when you are sharing information through your blog or vlog.

GOOD AND BAD COMMENTS



As much as we want everyone to love our blogs, your visitors may not always agree with what you share. They may wish to correct or disagree with you. Many of these conversations can make you feel that you've learned something new, while others may make you feel unwelcome. You can find out more about how to deal with this in Skill 8.

YOUR NAME OR PSEUDONYM

If you intend to share information about yourself with others, consider blogging under a pseudonym or pen name. This means that you would never reveal your real name on your blog. Instead, you use a fake name that matches your personality. This works for a lot of bloggers who want to share their knowledge online but don't necessarily want to share their personal life. It can also be great fun giving yourself a new name entirely of your own making!



YOUR LOCATION

Don't give out your location. If you rarely make blog posts about where you live or which city you live in, it can make it hard to guess where exactly you are. If you do want to talk about your hometown then make sure you don't give any information that would pinpoint where your neighbourhood or home is.

ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

It may seem obvious, but always keep information such as your address and phone number out of your blog posts, podcasts or vlogs. If you want people to get in touch with you, create a free email account that you keep apart from your personal account.



DON'T FORGET YOUR PARENTS

Most parents will want you to be free to do your own thing and enjoy yourself, but they will also be concerned for your safety. They can be really helpful if you ever feel unsure or uncomfortable about anything you encounter online. Talk with them about posting photos of yourself or your friends, and always check with them if someone you 'meet' online asks to get together in person. Your parents are also the only people you should share your passwords with, and you should always check with them before downloading or installing software. Above all, show them how much fun the Internet can be. Who knows, you might even teach them a thing or two!

IMPORTANT: ALWAYS CHECK WITH YOUR PARENTS BEFORE POSTING INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF ON THE INTERNET.

SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Because you will be using social media channels to promote your blogs, you should become familiar with how these sites treat your privacy. Most provide you with tools to maintain a certain level of privacy by restricting who is able to view your postings. You need to be 13 years of age or older to join most blogging and social media sites.

FACEBOOK

Facebook allows users to protect their account and posts by restricting who can see them. You can set your posts to be visible only to your close friends, wider friends or certain groups you create. To promote your podcast, blog or vlog, you can always use a new Facebook Page to share those posts. This means that you can promote your Facebook Page publically and maintain a level of privacy on your personal account.

TWITTER

If you are using Twitter to talk to your friends or followers, did you know that you can make all of your Tweets private? You can set your tweets to be visible to only those who follow you. If someone wants to follow you, they will have to request that you allow them to do so.

HANDY TIP!

If someone sends you a message that you think is mean or makes you feel uncomfortable, don't feel bad; it is not your fault! Tell your parents straight away.

GOOGLE PLUS

Google provides accounts for people using some of their products like their free email platform, Gmail. You don't have to use their social platform either, but if you decide to promote your blog on Google Plus, you can restrict who can see your posts. Just like Facebook, you can promote your blog by using a Google Plus Page. It is easy to set up and can be kept apart from your personal account.

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

There are so many different social media sites out there to choose from, such as Tumblr, Snapchat, Instagram, Periscope and more. They are great tools to promote your blog, but you should always be aware of what information you are sharing and consider the privacy settings of each. If you find out that your blog's audience uses some platforms and not others, research which tools those platforms have that you can use to protect yourself.

PRIVACY SETTINGS HELP KEEP YOU IN CONTROL!



KEEPING FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN THE LOOP

Something that is often overlooked is what your friends and even your parents share about you. Sometimes your friends can share your information without your permission, even if you've set restricted sharing on your Facebook or Google accounts. They usually don't do this on purpose but because they want to share your blog with others! It is a good idea to make sure that your close friends and family understand what you are doing online and how they can help protect you as a blogger. Make them aware of the things that you don't want shared in public and what is OK for them to publicize.

