WordPress for LPS Web Pages & Blogs—Basics

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WordPress for LPS Web Pages and Blogs

WordPress is a powerful, yet easy to use tool that Lincoln Public Schools uses for creating and managing websites across the district, including teacher and school websites.   This handout will cover the basics of WordPress so that you can create and/or manage a website/blog with text, links, images and more.

What is a Blog?

WordPress is often referred to as a blogging tool, even though it works equally well as a website creation/management tool. The term *blog* is a shortening of the term *weblog*. Most blogs have a few characteristics in common:

- o Information is 'posted' to the site regularly
- o Posts are in reverse chronological order (recent at top)
- o Categories or Tags (topics) are assigned to help organize the information
- o Links to other resources are available
- o Content is formatted with heading, indented quotes, images and anything else that makes it easier to read.
- Most WordPress sites in LPS are a combination of blog posts and static pages. Posts in LPS are often times used for homework assignments, daily reviews and/or news and announcements.

Logging in to your WordPress account

- Login at: http://wp.lps.org/wp-login.php or LPS keyword *wplogin*
  - o Only check *Remember me* if you are using a unique and secure login to the computer.
- The first time you login, you will need to click *Agree* to the Terms of Use Agreement.
- Logout when you are finished—the button is at the top right.

Understanding the Dashboard Interface

- Changes to the WordPress site happen from the Dashboard.
- Buttons under Dashboard sidebar represent the areas where you will add or manage content (Posts, Media, Pages & Comments). The most used tools appear across the top of the window in the gray WordPress toolbar.
- Hover over any button to expand the options. Click the triangle to collapse the options.

Revised May 2013

View the Site

In the top banner, hover over the site name and select the *Visit Site* link to go to the site.

Note: An easy way to work in the Firefox browser is to do a right-click (Control-click on Mac) on the *Visit site* link and choose **Open Link in New Tab**.

Opening the site in a second Firefox tab allows you to easily navigate back and forth from the Dashboard to the site. You just have to remember that after publishing something from the Dashboard, you navigate to the site tab and click the *Refresh* button at the top of the browser window. Otherwise you won't see the updated content that you just published.

The front page of your site appears with the site name and tagline in the banner. When you are first starting, the front page is automatically set up as a blog page and the content area is blank. After you learn more about adding pages, you may decide to have a different (static) page for your front page for a more traditional web site. You can, however, have a blog page set up in the site that you can link to from your front page. More instructions on that will come later.

The Sample Page

Every new site has one page besides the front blog page called *Sample Page*. A link to the page is in the blue banner at the top.

As you add pages to your site they will automatically be added to the top menu.

Instructions for editing pages (including deleting the *Sample Page* and creating your own pages) will come later.


Go Back to the Dashboard

To go back to the Dashboard to edit or add content to the site, hover over the site name and choose *Dashboard, OR* if you opened a new tab, click the Firefox tab containing the Dashboard.
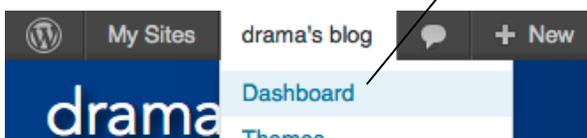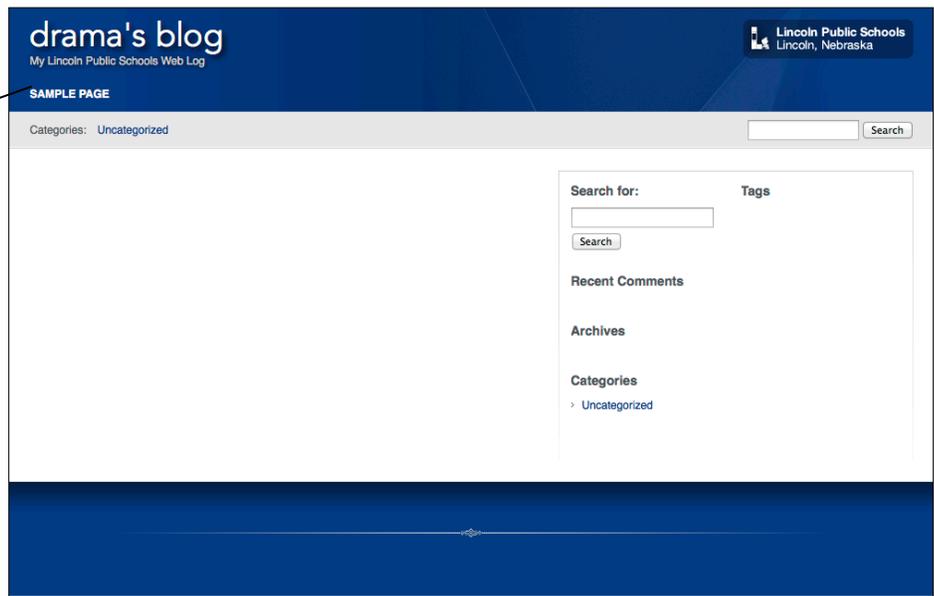

The *Right Now* Panel

The *Right Now* panel on the Dashboard shows how many posts, pages, categories and tags exist in the site. Click on the number (in blue) to go to the *Edit* screen for that topic.
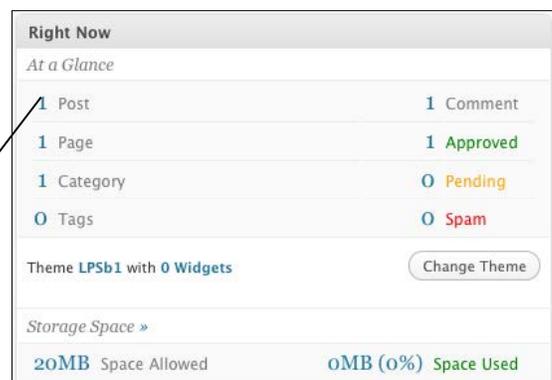
General Settings

Click (or hover your mouse over) the *Settings* button at the left sidebar and select *General*, the first settings category. The two things you may want to change here are:

- **Site title**—Give your site an appropriate title, like your name and/or teaching assignment.

- **Tagline** (the text that appears right under the title)—Create your own or delete the default phrase and leave it blank. This is a good place to put the name of your school, if it is not in the title.
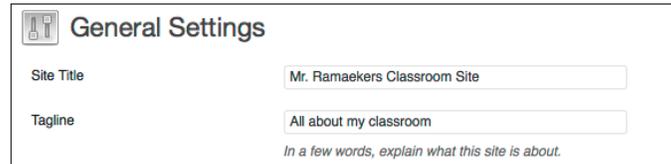

What is a Post?

A post is a timely piece of information (it may not be important a couple of weeks from now) that appears in reverse chronological order (newest to oldest) on a blog page. Each piece of information is date/time stamped and has its own title. A post can include text, images, links or other media. The text can be formatted and be as long or short as you like.

Posts in LPS are often used for homework assignments, daily reviews and/or news and announcements.

Add a Post with QuickPress

From the *Dashboard*, you can quickly add posts using the *QuickPress* Panel.

The QuickPress panel allows you to add a post including text with media (images, audio or video). This panel doesn't allow text formatting or many of the other options available under the *Posts>Add new* link, but is a quick way to add content to the site.
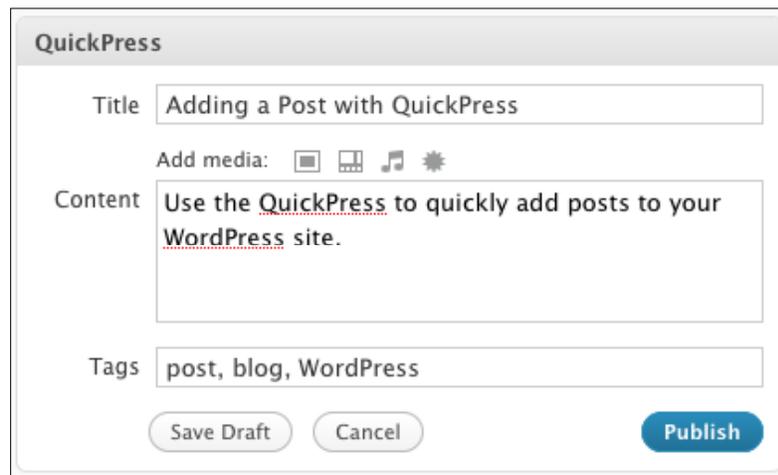

Use the *Save Draft* button if you want to save the work you have done but not publish the post to the site yet. If you are sure the post is ready, click *Publish*.

Quickpress is only for adding posts to your blog page. To add content to a static page, go to *Pages>All Pages* from the Dashboard sidebar (covered later).

Add a Post with *Post>Add New* from the Sidebar

Using the *Post>Add New* option allows you to add a post with many more formatting options than using the QuickPress panel.

- In the Dashboard sidebar, click on (or hover your mouse over) *Post* to expand the related topics.

- Click *Add New*, and the *Add New Post* screen appears.

- Type the title of the post at the top and enter the post information in the large text box below.
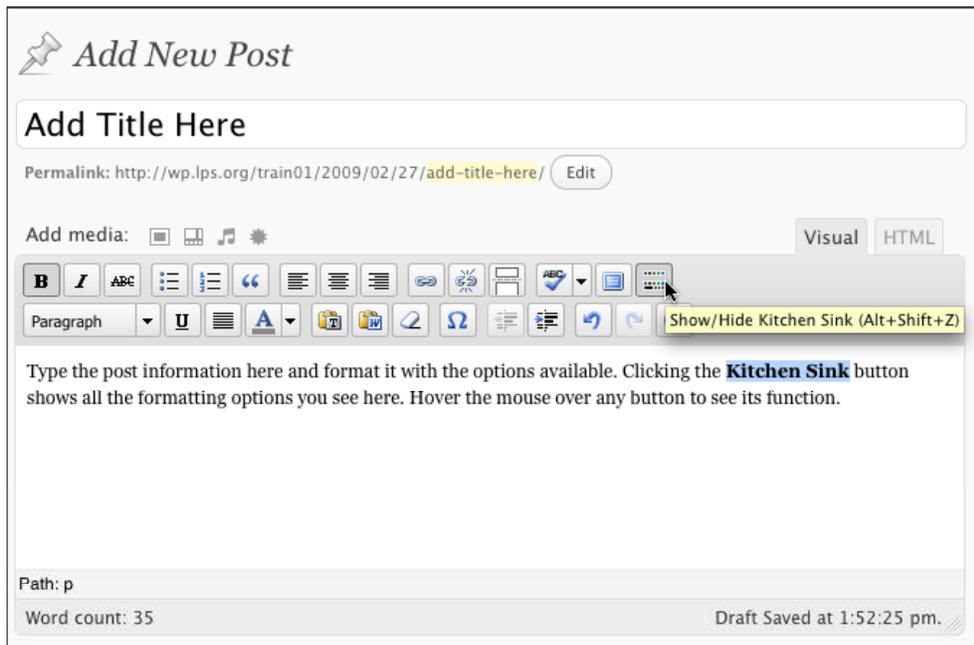
Formatting Posts or Page Content

Text in a post or on a page can be formatted much like you would format text in a word processor.

- Click the *Kitchen Sink* icon at the right end of the top row in the formatting toolbar to reveal even more formatting options.

- Hover the mouse over each icon to reveal what that option does or the name of the option. Most of the formatting options are exactly like word processing. Here are a few that are specific to WordPress posts or pages:

  Blockquote—Indents the paragraph on both the right and left sides to indicate a quote.

  Fullscreen mode (toggle)—allows editing the post the full size of the screen. Click it again to go back to the regular editing screen.

  Try using *Paste as Plain Text* or *Paste from Word* if you are copying and pasting content from another application or Word. These paste options strip out hidden formatting characters to give you plain text.

  The *Remove Formatting* option allows you to remove formating from selected text (text color, underline, italics, etc.) with one easy click.

Use the *Insert Custom Character* option to open a panel of many custom characters, like cent signs, registered trademark, copyright symbol and more! The character chosen will be inserted at the cursor.
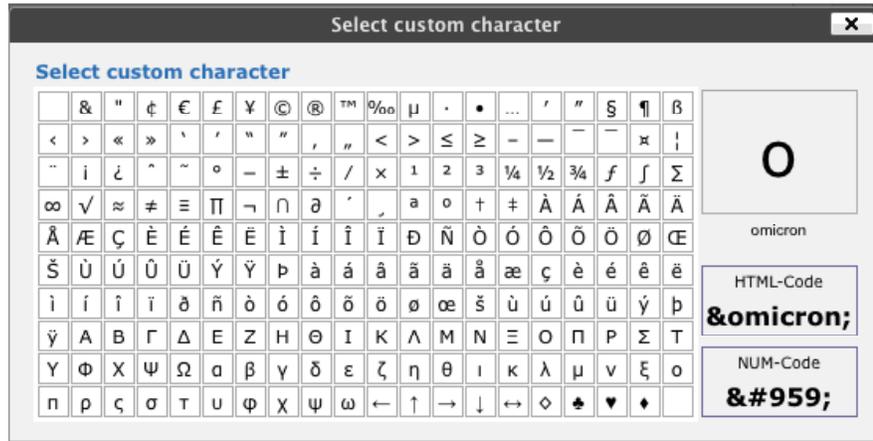
Outdent and *Indent* change the left margin of the selected section of text.

Undo and *Redo* are easily available to undo the last steps taken in case of mistakes. You can click Undo or Redo multiple times.

Using the More tag

The *More* icon allows you to split a long post. Insert the cursor where the split should happen, then click the *More* icon and continue writing the post under the split. When the post is published, the top part of the post will appear on the page with a *Continued* link, taking the reader to a separate page to see the rest of the post. Using the *More* tag keeps the front page more condensed and allows the reader to quickly decide which posts to read in full.
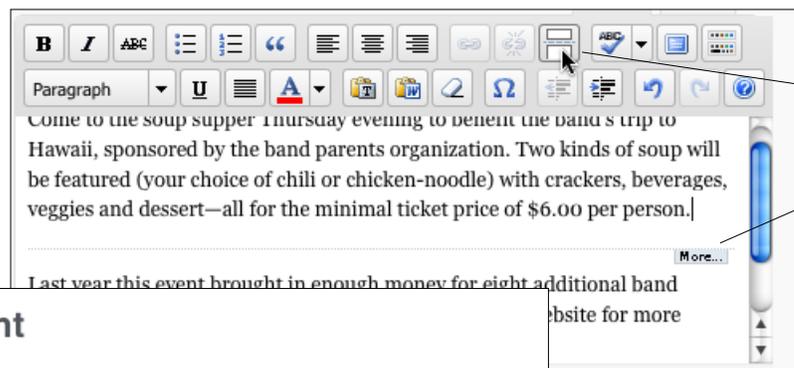

The *More* tag split creates this marker in the post.

The published *More* tag looks like this.

Insert an Image

An image can be inserted from a file on your computer, from a URL to a website such as DocuShare, or from an image already uploaded to the Media Library and used on another page. Supported image formats are: gif, jpg and png.

NOTE: Do not use a picture directly off your digital camera without reducing it in size first using a program like iPhoto. Without reducing the size you can cause unnecessary wait times while visitors try to access your page. You also need to make sure you have proper permissions to use a photo on your website. creativecommons.org is a great place to find resources that can be used on your site so long as you give credit.

- Click the cursor where the image should be inserted.

- Click the *Add Media* button located just above your formatting palette.

- Tell WordPress where the image you want to use is located:
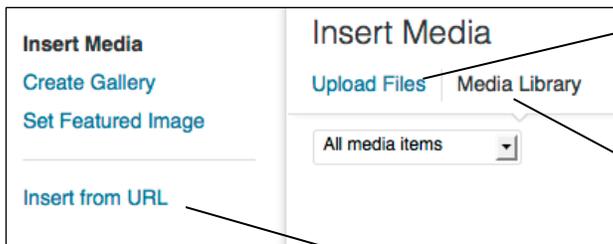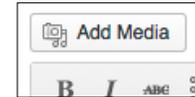
From your Computer (Desktop, Documents folder, etc): Click *Insert Media > Upload Files*, then click *Select Files* and pick one or more images from your computer. Click Insert into post.

Image from another WordPress Page: All images used on your site are stored in the Media Library. Click *Insert Media > Media Library* to see all of the images in your Media Library. Click on the image you would like to add which will put a checkmark on the image. Click Insert into post.

 From DocuShare: Click *Insert from URL* . Go to DocuShare and right-click (Control-click [Mac]) the link of the image you've uploaded and select *Copy Link Location* which will copy the URL needed. Now paste the URL into the *Insert from URL* field. Give the image a title and select Insert into post.

NOTE: Your DocuShare collection must have permissions set so *All Users and Guest* have read permissions. Please refer to DocuShare help for instructions on this process.

- Image Details – before you insert an image into your post or page, you have the option of changing some image details:

  o *Title* – Defaults to the name of the file.

  o Caption—Appears under the image and puts a grey border around the image. This can be a convenient place to add a copyright notice if using an image that is nor your original work.

  o Alt Text— Makes the web page accessible to those who are visually impaired using screen readers.

  o Description—optional.

  o Alignment—*None* puts the image on a line all by itself. Choosing *Left, Center or Right* positions the image on the screen accordingly and lets the text flow beside the image.

  o Link To—*None* means that nothing will happen if a visitor clicks on the image. *Media File* means that clicking on the image will display the full-size image on a page by itself. *Attachment Page* will open a slideshow view of the image when clicked. *Custom URL* would send a visitor to the desired page or website when they click on the image.
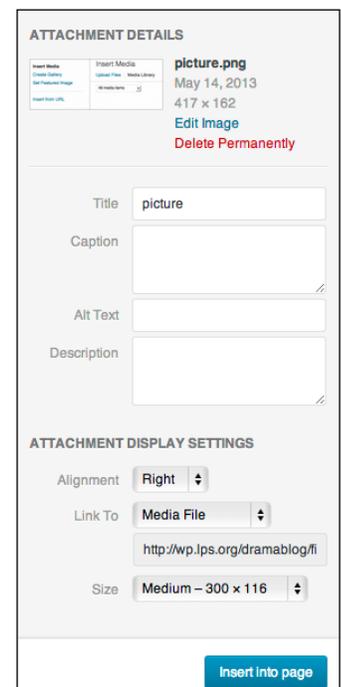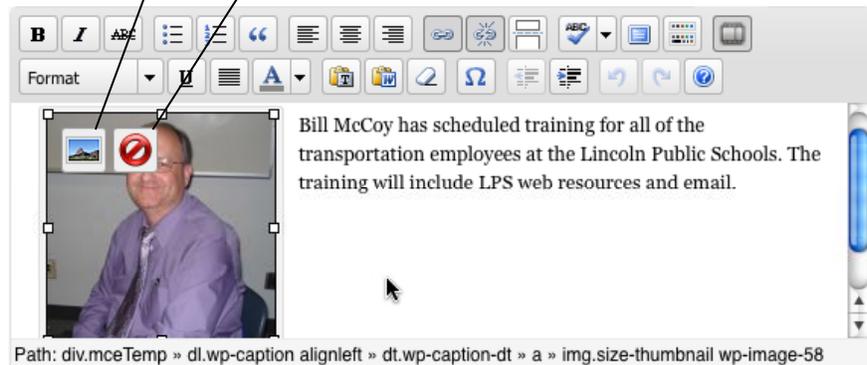
Deleting or Editing Images

- To delete or edit the image information, click on the image.

- When it is selected, two icons appear to *Edit* or *Delete*.

- Click the *Delete* icon (red circle with slash) to remove the image from the post.

- Click the *Edit Image* button to bring up the editing window.

- The image can be resized by using the percentages on the left sidebar, but this should only be used for minor adjustments in size. Any major adjustments to images should be done in a photo application like iPhoto or Photoshop.

- Use the other fields to change the title, caption, alignment and more.

- Click *Update* to save the revisions.

Adding Links to Pages or Posts

- First type the text that you would like to make into a link.

- Highlight the text you want made into a link and click the *Insert/edit Link* button. 🔗

- Enter the *URL* of the external website you would like to link to. You can type the web address of the link, but it is highly recommended that you visit the page first and then copy and paste the address of the site into the URL box. A small typo can take your visitors to very inappropriate sites.

    o Alternatively you can select an internal page or post in your site to link to by clicking on *Or link to existing content* and selecting from the list of pages and posts already in your site.

- Title—Text that appears when you point to the link.

- Click Add Link.
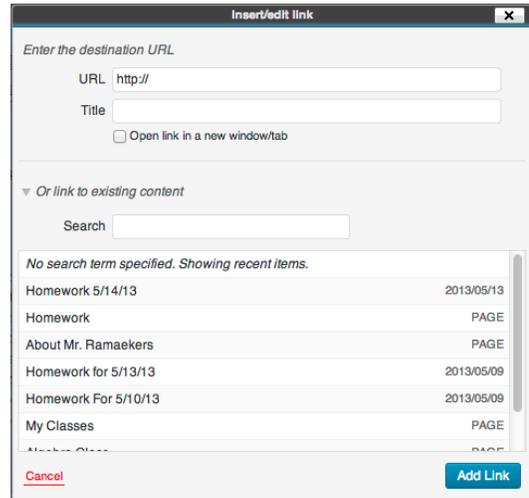
Changing Links

- To change a link, click anywhere in link and click *Insert/edit Link* to change anything in the window.

Removing Links

- To remove a link, click anywhere in the link and click *Unlink* button.

Insert other Media (files)

To insert PDFs, Word, PowerPoint or other types of documents:

- Insert the cursor and click the *Add Media* button.

    o If the document is on the computer, select *Insert > Media > Upload Files* and click *Select Files*.

    o If the document is in Docushare, click the *Insert From URL* tab at the top and paste the URL from the Docushare object.

    o Add or edit the title. The title is what appears on the post as a link

   o Click *Insert into post/page*.

Using Categories

Categories allow the post archives to appear sorted by topic and help your readers find information faster.

- Add/Edit a category by selecting *Posts > Categories* from the sidebar.

- Every site starts with one category called Uncategorized. This category cannot be deleted, but the name can be changed.

- To edit a category click on its title and change its properties in the new screen that appears.

- To add a new category, give it a name in the upper left corner of the Categories screen, and click *Add New Category*

- To assign a post to a category, check the desired categories in the Categories right-hand sidebar when editing or creating a post.
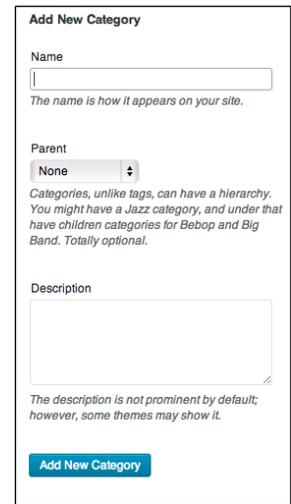
Using Tags

Tags offer another way to assign a topic to a post. Assigning Tags is similar to assigning keywords for search engines. Tags allow others to find your posts by topic.

- Assign tags when adding or editing a *Post* page.

- Enter multiple tags with commas between, then click *Add.*

- Click *Choose from the most used tags* to see a list of the previously used tags.

- To delete a tag, click the little X by the tag.
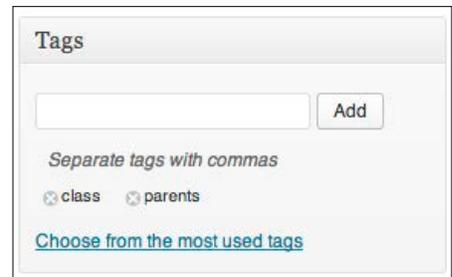
Try to apply categories and tags consistently so users can find your topics more easily

Modifying Your Site's Sidebar

By default the right-hand portion of your website will be used for displaying different pieces of information called Widgets.

- From the Dashboard, select *Appearance*, and then click *Widgets*.

- There are many Widgets that can be added. Choose whether you want the widget on the left-half of the sidebar (Primary) or the right-half of the sidebar (Secondar). Drag and drop your desired widget to the appropriate area.

- To remove a widget, drag and drop the widget from the sidebar to the Available Widgets area.

- There is no save button in the – all changes are automatically saved.

  NOTE: If nothing is added to the Secondary Sidebar, Tags will automatically appear there (that space can't be empty). If you add something, the Tags disappear, but can be added back in by adding the *Tag Cloud* widget.
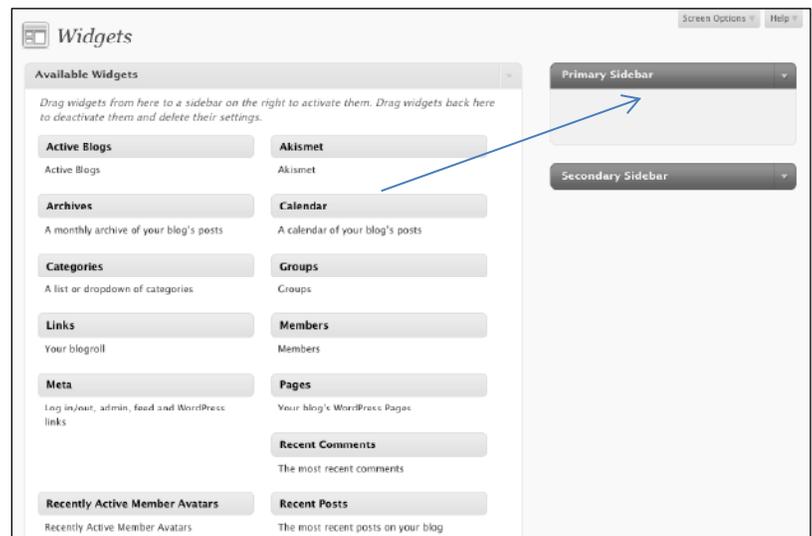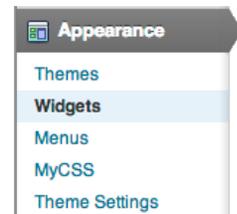
Removing the Sidebar from Pages

If you would prefer that no widgets display on a particular page you can turn them off, or hide the Secondary Sidebar and only display the Primary Sidebar. This feature is only available on pages and is set on a page-by-page basis.

- Go to *Pages > All Pages*

- Click on the title of the page from which you would like to remove the sidebar.

- In the Page Attributes section change the Template dropdown.
    - Default – Display both the Primary and Secondary sidebars.
    - One Sidebar – Display only the Primary sidebar.
    - No Sidebar – The page content will fill the full width of the page.

Edit or Delete Exisiting Pages

- From the Dashboard sidebar, select *Pages > All Pages*.

- Hover your mouse over the title of the Page you would like to edit. Several options will appear.

- To delete a page click *Trash*. If you are just starting on your site it is recommend to trash the "Sample Page" and add new pages for your content.

- To edit a page click *Edit,* simply click on the title of the page.

- From this Edit Page you can change all aspects of your page. Creating and formatting page content works the same as on a post.

- When done, click *Update* to make your changes live.

Add New Pages

New pages added to the site are static in nature and don't have blogging or posting characteristics.

To add a new page:

- From the Dashboard sidebar, click *Pages*.

- Click *Add New*.

- Title the page (keep it brief!) and add page content. Creating and formatting page content works the same as on a post.

- When you are done editing your page decide whether you want to *Publish* or *Save Draft.*
    - When you click *Publish,* a link to this new page will be added to the top menu of your website.
    - If you *Save Draft,* the page will still be available to edit from your Dashboard, but it will not be available to visitors of your site. You can see what the page will look like by clicking the *Preview*.
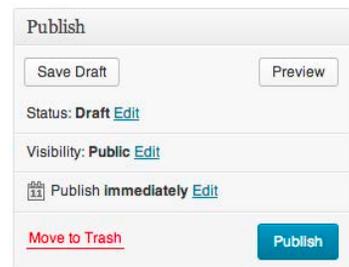
Add Pages with Parent/Child Relationship

The size and scope of the WordPress site is very flexible. Pages can be created with sub-pages, in a parent/child relationship. New pages appear as links at the top of the site in the banner, and any *child* pages appear in drop-down menus from the parent.

- When creating or editing a page, look in the *Page Attributes* section along the right-hand side to change the *Parent* dropdown.

  o For instance, to list all courses taught, a parent page called *Courses* could be created. Its parent would be *(no parent)*. The link for this new *Courses* page will appear in the top menu of your site.

  o When the first course page is created, under Attributes the designated parent would be *Courses*.

  o After continuing the creation of new pages for every course (selecting *Courses* as the parent for each one), the child pages appear as a drop-down menu from the *Courses* page link.
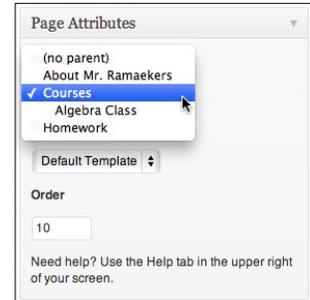
Ordering Pages

The pages will appear in alphabetical order unless an *order* number is assigned (under *Page Attributes*). It is recommended to make the numbers in increments of 10 so you can add pages in between (if needed) later without having to renumber all the pages.
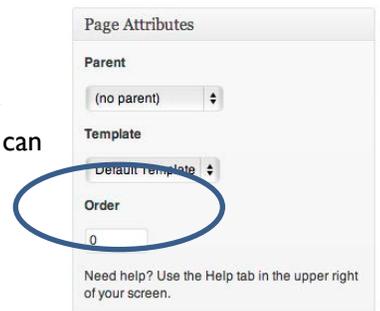
Setting Reading Options

What if you don't want a blog (post) page, or you don't want your front page to be your latest posts?

Reading options control how posts will appear on your site

From the Dashboard sidebar select *Settings > Reading*

- Front page displays

  o Your latest posts (default)
  OR

  o Select *a static page* to have for the front page. When the site is new, the only other page available in the drop-down list is *Sample Page.* After other pages have been added, any other page can be selected to act as a static front page.

  o Select where your posts should go. If you do not want to use posts, leave the drop-down as the default – *Select* –

    ▪ NOTE: If you have already added posts to the front page and choose another page to be the front static page, but don't define a *Posts page* the posts will not display anywhere on your site, setting another page as the posts page makes the posts reappear.

  o You can only have one *Posts* page in the site.
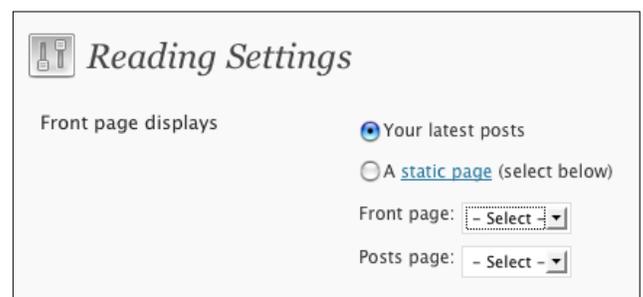
Managing Comments

Each page or post can have commenting turned on or off. Commenting can be moderated, meaning it won't show on the page until the site administrator (you) have approved the comment. By default, the commenting feature is turned off when you first begin your site. If you decide to allow commenting, the recommended settings are shown below.

- From the Dashboard sidebar, choose *Settings>Discussion*.

- To set up moderated commenting for students, the following options should be considered:

- o Under *Default article settings*, keeping the check on *Allow people to post comments on new articles* means that commenting is turned on as a default for every new post and page created. To turn commenting off as a default, take the check away.

- o Important! Make sure to scroll all the way to the bottom of the page to *Save Changes*.

- Reading and Approving Comments

  - o If *Email me whenever – Anyone posts a comment* and *a comment is held for moderation* are turned on, a notification will be sent to you about the posted comments.

  - o The Dashboard has other signals that comments have been added.

    - An alert in the Dashboard sidebar on *Comments* shows how many comments need approval.

    - The listing under *Right Now* on the dashboard shows the total comments and how many are *Approved, Pending* or *Spam*.

- Click *Comments* in the Dashboard sidebar to go to the *Edit Comments* screen.
- View *All* or just the *Pending, Approved* or *Spam* by clicking the links at the top.
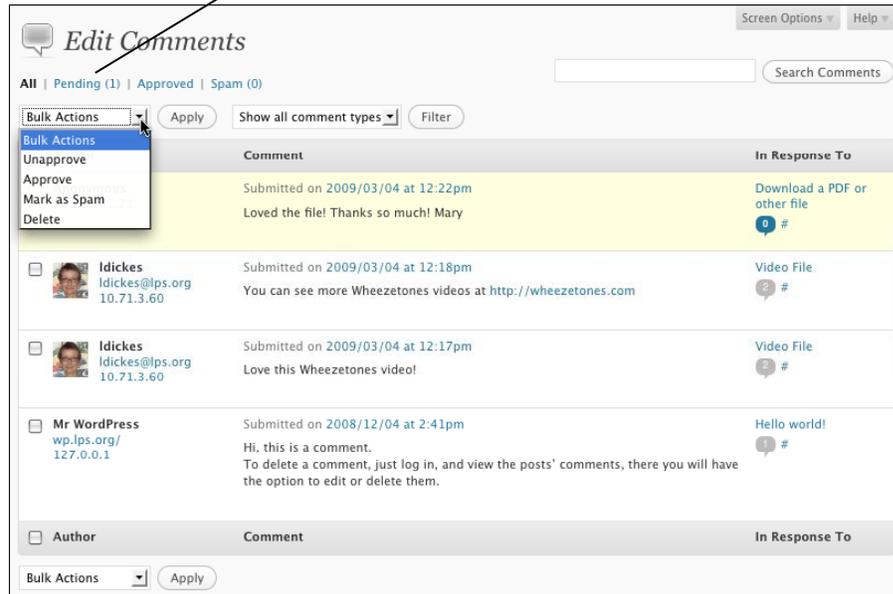
- Click the checkboxes by the comment and then use the *Bulk Actions* menu to take the appropriate action on the selected comments. Click *Apply* to apply the action.

Setting an Avatar—What's Gravatar?

An Avatar is an icon that represents you, and can be displayed in the right sidebar of the site. As a default, using avatars is turned off for the site. To turn on avatars, scroll to the bottom of the *Discussion Settings*. WordPress for LPS is set up to use a site called *Gravatar* to set up a globally recognized avatar that could be used on many web sites or services. The Gravatar site is the only way to set up an avatar for your LPS WordPress site.

Gravatars are based on email addresses. When you set up your LPS WordPress account, it is automatically associated with your email address, so that part is done. All you need to do is go to *http://gravatar.com* and set up an account using your LPS email address. Once you do this, the image you pick will automatically start appearing on your LPS WordPress Site.

Setting up an Avatar is completely optional.

Where do I find out what's new or get tips for LPS WordPress users?

Whenever there is a great tip or a new feature added for LPS users, your Dashboard will display a yellow banner under the Dashboard title.
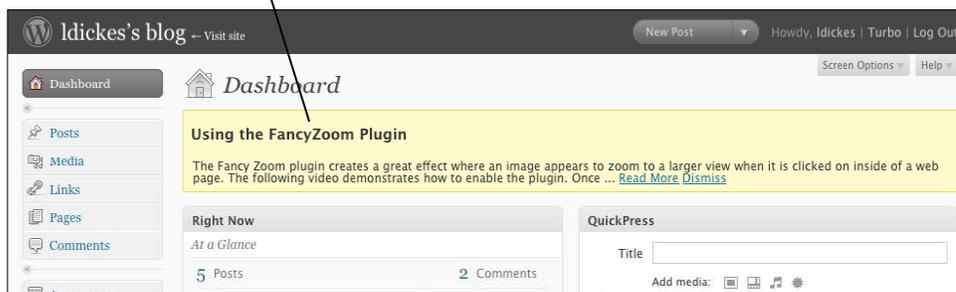
Great tips, new features and information about using WordPress for a LPS site can also be found at the LPS WordPress homepage: **http://wp.lps.org**. Go there to find out how to customize the site banner & colors.