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Lesson 5: WordPress Widgets

INTRODUCTION

This lesson covers the process of installing Widgets in your blog in WordPress.com. You will also continue to study training and informational videos related to WordPress.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Describe Widget.
- Install Widgets.
- Describe web writing techniques for blogging.

LEARNING SEQUENCE

Required Reading	Read the following: Lesson 5: WordPress Widgets <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Widgets• Get Configured – Customize your site• What Is RSS?• RSS
Video Resources	Watch the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WordPress Tutorial For Beginners Part 5 – Appearance Settings, Menus and Widgets (34:19)• Using the Display Widgets Plugin (2:56) Transcript• WordPress.com – Widgets Overview (2:10) Transcript



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Assignments	<p>Complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment 5a: WordPress Widgets Reading Reports• Assignment 5b: WordPress Widgets Video Notes• Assignment 5c: WordPress Widgets Tutorial• Assignment 5d: WordPress Widgets Project• Assignment 5e: Blog writing tutorial• Assignment 5f: Daily Post
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INSTRUCTION

How would you like to be able to add some tools to your blog to make it more functional? Widgets allow you to do just this. A widget is a tool you add to your blog.

Perhaps the best analogy today are the mobile applications (commonly known as “apps”) you can add to a smartphone or tablet, to add some kind of new function to your smartphone or tablet. You might want an app that allows you to check the weather, play a game, or find the nearest coffee shop.

But as you may know, apps are not as large, full featured, or powerful as a major software suite you might install on your desktop computer. Nor would you want this, the purpose of an app is to be small, easy to use, inexpensive, and not take up half the storage capacity of your smartphone. Widgets give you a similar feature.

In the last lesson you worked with Themes in both of your WordPress.com accounts to change the format and appearance of your blog. In this lesson you will accomplish two things.

- First, you will update your WordPress.com accounts by installing Widgets
- Second, you begin the process of using your blog for posting

In the last Lesson you watched a video that included training on how to set up your Widgets. Since you have already taken notes on this video you will only watch this video once to refresh you knowledge. You might even consider skipping ahead to the section that deals solely with Widgets.

Watch, [WordPress Tutorial For Beginners Part 5 – Appearance Settings, Menus and Widgets](#) (34:20). *Note: (You will not turn in notes for this video as a part of this lesson.)*





Assignment 5a: WordPress Widgets Reading Reports

Read the following articles from WordPress.com:

[Widgets](#)

[Get Configured – Customize your site](#)



Turn in: Write a one page summary paper of each article. You will submit these two summary papers as part of this Lesson.

Assignment 5b: WordPress Widgets Video Notes

Here is another look at how to set up your Widgets in WordPress. For this assignment you will watch two videos from WordCamp conferences (hosted on WordPress.tv) that explain Widgets in WordPress.

You will watch each video twice.

First viewing:

Watch each video and focus on getting a general overview of the material presented. At this point do not be too concerned about what buttons are being pushed, concentrate on the objectives.



[Using the Display Widgets Plugin \(2:56\)](#)

Transcript



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[WordPress.com – Widgets Overview](#) (2:10)

Transcript

Second viewing:

Watch each video a second time. During this second viewing you will focus on specific details. You now want to carefully examine the process that is followed to achieve the objectives

presented in that video.

Take your time, pause the video often to take notes on what you are learning. For this video you will need to take 1-2 pages of notes.



Turn in: For this assignment submit a copy of your notes for the video.

Assignment 5c: WordPress Widgets Tutorial

It is time to go hands-on into WordPress and begin to apply some of what you have learned. A resource guide has been created to step you the process of selecting and inserting widgets. Review the following guide to work through the steps needed to complete Assignment 5c: WordPress Widgets Tutorial.



WordPress Widgets Tutorial



Turn in: Email your instructor the name of this assignment and the complete blog address for this blog: Assignment 5c - blog address.

Assignment 5d: WordPress Widgets Project

It's your turn now!

- Sign into your second WordPress.com account
- Open your project blog
- Add an RSS Widget to your Sidebar and set it to a different NASA RSS Feed, use the same settings as in the tutorial
- Add a second RSS Widget to your Sidebar, this time use an RSS Feed from a source of your own, use the same settings as in the tutorial
- Add a third Widget of your own choosing
- Add a new post to your project blog explaining what you learned in this Lesson



Turn in: Email your instructor the name of this assignment and the complete blog address for this blog: Assignment 5d - blog address.

Assignment 5e: Blog Writing Tutorial



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For this assignment you will first read some articles and then watch videos about blog writing. Then you will write a summary of the articles you read and submit a copy of your notes after watching the videos.

Read the following:

[How to Write Successfully for the Web](#)
[How to Write a Blog Post: A Simple Formula to Follow](#)
[How to Write an Introduction](#)

Watch the following:

First viewing:

Watch the videos provided. Focus on getting a general overview of the material presented. At this point do not be too concerned about what buttons are being pushed, concentrate on the objectives.



[The 2-Minute Guide Writing Better Blog Posts|Two Minute Tuesdays](#)
(2:13)



[How To Write Great Blog Content - The Pillar Article](#) (5:29)

Second viewing:

Watch the videos a second time. During this second viewing you will focus on specific details. You now want to carefully examine the process that is followed to achieve the objectives presented in that video.

Take your time, pause the videos often to take notes on what you are learning. You will need to write one page of notes.

Note: Information on this video will be included on the Lesson Quiz.



Turn in: For this assignment submit a copy of your summary of the articles and the notes taken for the assigned videos.

Assignment 5f: Daily Post

What are you interested in? Why do you want to have a blog? What is the concept/theme for your blog? You need to narrow this down so that you have something to write about. How many blogs have started with a great idea (or even just a good idea) only to be abandoned for lack of something to say? Remember that a blog is a micro-website; even



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full commercial websites lay dormant because the creator (blogger, company, etc.), ran out of fresh things to say to their audience. That's ok if you just want a web presence that announces "you are here", but if you want repeat visits you need fresh material.

You will be posting about your progress in this class. But you also need to come up with a topic that is of interest to you that the world would benefit from hearing (and must be legal, moral, and ethical in nature). Take a look at the list below of general topics - they may give you an idea if you do not already have one in mind:

- Current events (state, national, world)
- The economy or business
- Politics
- Sports
- Fashion, clothing, styles
- Entertainment
- Hobby (photography, pets, music, gardening, etc.)

Submit your idea to your teacher for approval.

Once you receive your blog concept approval you are ready to begin!

- Sign into your second WordPress.com account
- Open your project blog
- Applying the concepts you learned in Assignment 5e Blog Writing Tutorial, you are to post to your blog 5 days per week for the next two weeks. You are welcome to post every day. This will be included as an ongoing assignment for the rest of the Lessons.



Turn in: Email your instructor the name of this assignment and the complete blog address for this blog: Assignment 5f - blog address.

PRACTICE

1. Describe five (5) Widgets you might include on your blog to one of your classmates and explain why you would include them.
2. Explain your blog concept to two of your classmates. Ask each of them for three ideas you might incorporate into your blog posts.

SUMMARY

So what should you take away from this lesson?

- You should be able to describe what a Widget is and what it is used for
- You should be able to locate Widgets in your account



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- You should be able to install a Widget
- You should be able to customize a Widget
- You should be able to discuss blog writing techniques

ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Assignment details are located within the lesson.

1. Assignment 5a: WordPress Widgets Reading Reports
2. Assignment 5b: WordPress Widgets Video Notes
3. Assignment 5c: WordPress Widgets Tutorial
4. Assignment 5d: WordPress Widgets Project
5. Assignment 5e: Blog Writing Tutorial
6. Assignment 5f: Daily Post



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