

Guidelines for a (global health) blog

STYLE

- **Develop your own blogging style** by capitalizing on your strengths: whether that means being analytical, humorous, provocative, etc. It can be a bit informal, even chatty.
- Don't be afraid to **express emotions**. Show a bit of your **personality**.
- Come up with a **catchy title**. It's for the blogosphere – so you want people to click on *your* title (out of many possible options).
- Use anecdotes, quotes from famous people, metaphors, personal experiences, rhetorical questions, be erudite, etc. to spice it up. Try to make your blog “interactive”.
- **Avoid** too much **jargon** and acronyms. And if you use them, explain them well.

CONTENT ORGANIZATION

- Choose **one topic** for one blog post.
- If you opt for a more complex blog post with a few key messages, use **subheadings** to structure your blog.
- Be **clear about the purpose** of your blog: do you want to convey a message, advertise a recent publication, comment on a recent article, cover a conference (session), etc.?
- **Start strong**: show immediately why the blog warrants reading. Grab your audience from the start and then start using strong arguments.
- You might want to use an **outline** (for e.g. a mind map) to organize your thoughts and text.
- Sometimes a first “summarizing paragraph” (i.e. lead) is expected, giving some info on the author & summarizing the key message in the blog post.
- **Strong ending**: you also want to wrap up in a catchy way.
- Try to **tell a story**. A good flow is essential.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Timeliness is key**, although you have a bit more time than for an op-ed. For science blogs, maximum 2-3 weeks after the event, but still, the earlier the better.
- If you feel you need some more support, ask for a *writing buddy* to assist you.
- **A blog is still a publication**; so consider your own & your institution's reputation.
- Refer to other people and publications via **hyperlinks** (not references). Don't pretend ideas are yours if they aren't.
- **Use multimedia**: a picture, table, an infographic, a video etc. in a blog is a must. Your post needs to be visually appealing as well.
- **Length** depends on the blog you're aiming for, but in principle, no more than 800 words.
- Sleep on it one night before sending/publishing – **never publish immediately**. Ideally, let it a colleague (or two) read it first and ask for feedback.
- After publication, advertise the blog via **social media**.

PARTICULARITIES RELATED TO TARGETED BLOG

- **Check the blog you're targeting**: read a few of their published posts - this will give you an idea on what is expected in terms of length, style, references as hyperlinks, etc.
- Keep your **target audience** in mind. This will (to a large extent) depend on the blog you're aiming for – but via social media, you can expand and reach out.
- By all means, keep the conversation with the blog editor **civilized**. If your blog is rejected, try not to get offended and just try another option to get it published.

