

WordPress FAQ for Teachers

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What Is WordPress?

Originally released in 2003 as a blogging system, WordPress has grown over the years to become a feature-rich website content management system (CMS) which can be used to manage large scale multi-user websites. It is completely free and open-source, meaning that web developers and programmers are invited to improve its functionality. As a result, WordPress is incredibly popular system, currently used by 17.5% of the top 1 million websites on the internet.



Unlike FirstClass, WordPress is not software that needs to be installed on your computer. With WordPress, you edit your website through your website, so all you need to make changes to your website is a web browser such as Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox and an active internet connection. Mobile devices may also be used to edit your website.

How do I get a teacher website?

As we transition our websites from FirstClass to WordPress, all teacher websites are being created on a WordPress network at <http://teachers.stjohns.k12.fl.us> with the site naming convention of full last name, hyphen, first initial. As an example, John Doe's teacher website would be created at <http://teachers.stjohns.k12.fl.us/does-j>

To have your own teacher website created, you may either submit a Web Help Desk ticket with a request type of **Websites: School & District > Teacher Classroom Website** or contact your school's webmaster. If you have an existing teacher website that you built in FirstClass, you may also ask to have you existing web pages and files transferred into WordPress for you when you submit your site request.

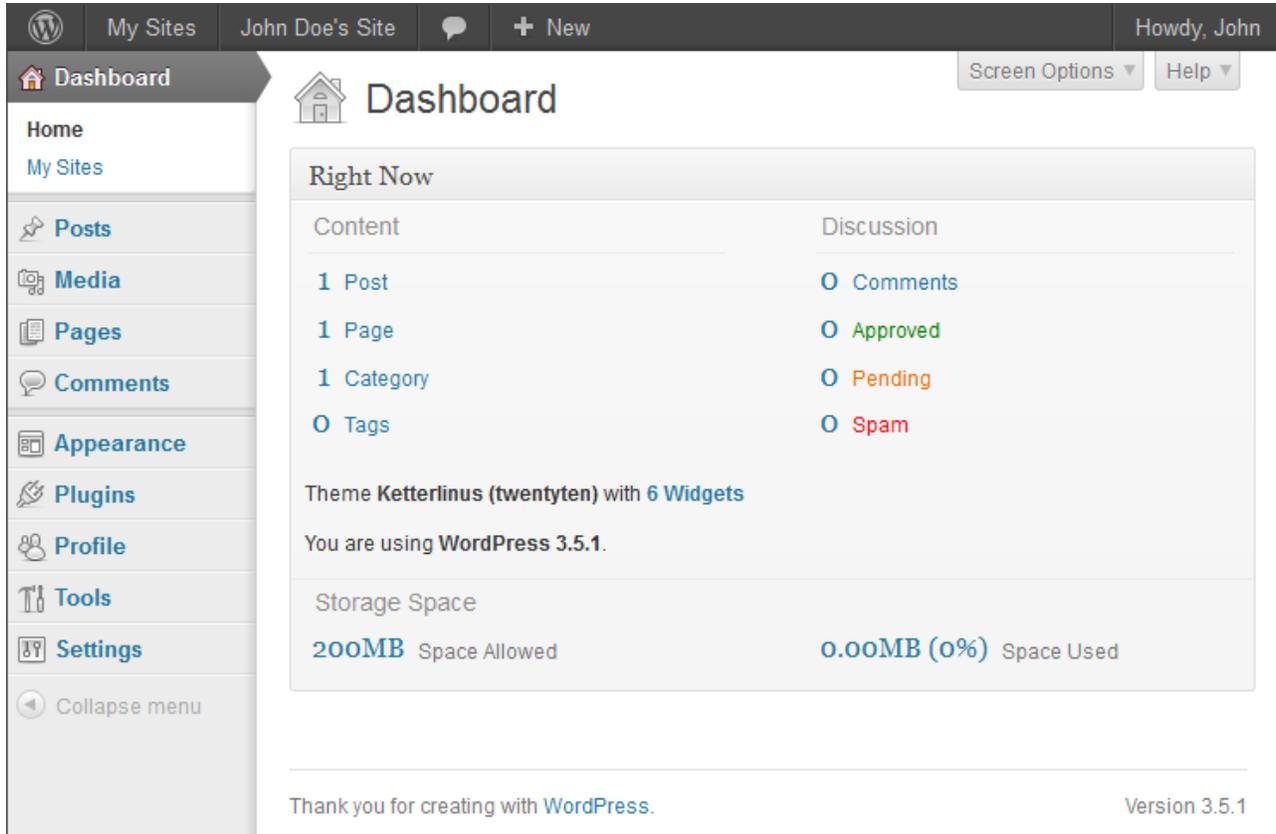
How do I login to my WordPress site?

Once your teacher website has been created, you may follow these steps to login:

- 1) Visit your teacher website's address in a web browser (Internet Explorer / Firefox / Chrome)
- 2) Scroll down to the very bottom of the web page
- 3) Click the "Login" link at the bottom of the web page
- 4) Login to WordPress using the same e00 username and password that you use to login to your computer, FirstClass and Sungard Business Plus.

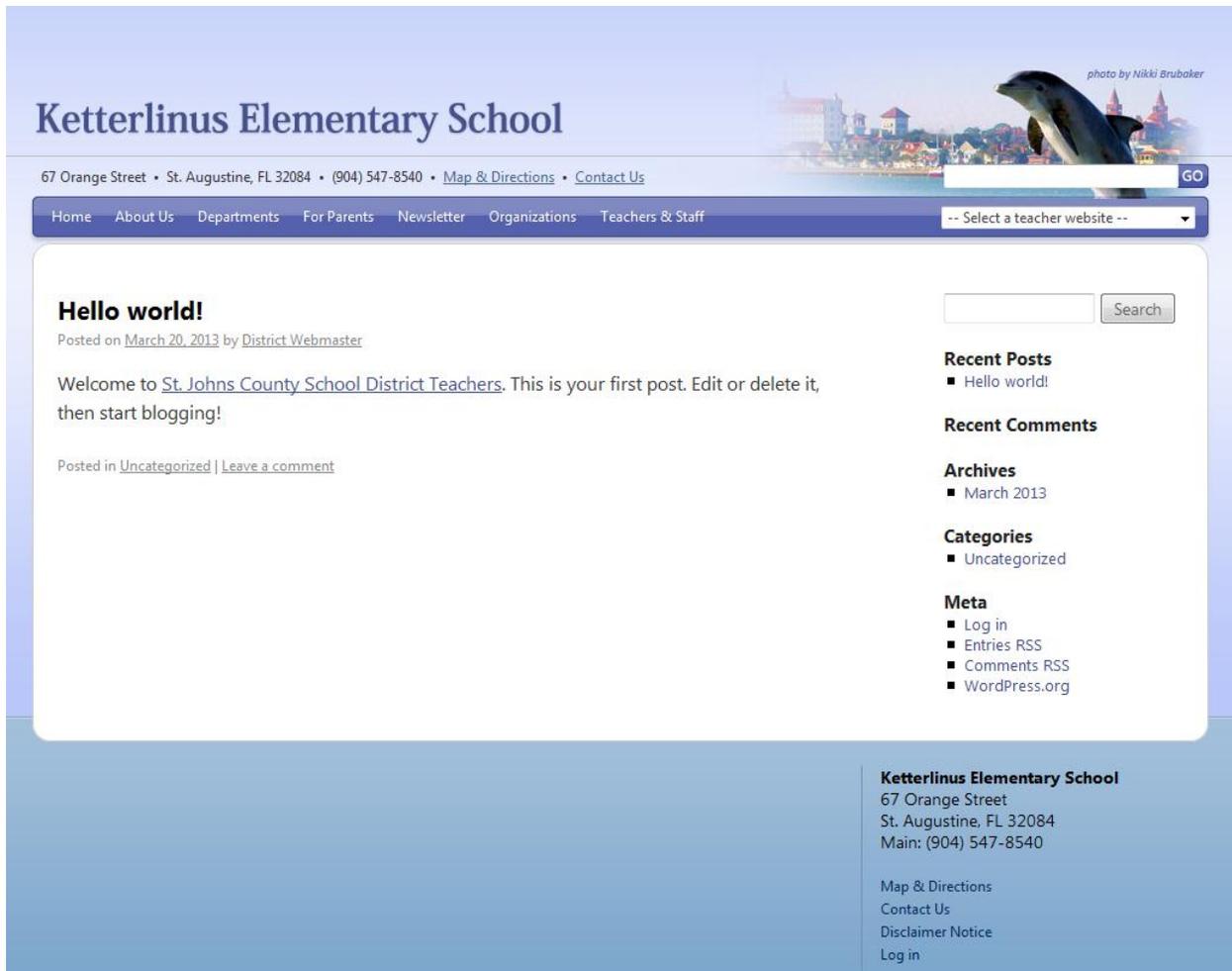


Once you've successfully logged in, you will be taken to the WordPress "Dashboard", the area of your site which you will use to edit it. Note that what you see on your own Dashboard may vary from others based upon your editing permissions, your viewing preferences and other factors.



How do I start creating my site with WordPress?

Since WordPress was first developed as a blogging system, a brand new unedited teacher website may look something like the screenshot on the next page. Note that a blog post titled "Hello world!" is first displayed on the home page and in the right hand column are blocks of content called "Widgets" which read **Recent Posts**, **Recent Comments**, **Archives**, **Categories**, and **Meta**.

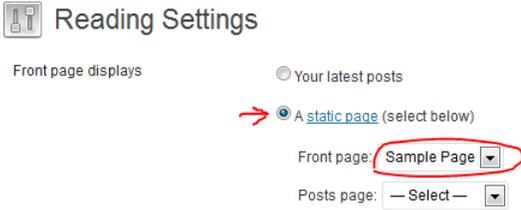


If you are not interesting in blogging with WordPress, and would prefer to create individual web pages as you may have done previously in FirstClass, the following steps are recommended to set up your website before you begin creating new web pages.

First, change your home page to display a single web page

WordPress will allow you to display either a group of blog posts on your home page or an individual web page. If you choose to display blog posts, you can choose how many will be shown. If you choose to display a single web page, you can decide which of your web pages will be used. For now, we'll tell WordPress to show visitors your Sample Page when they first visit your website.

- 1) On your Dashboard, select **Settings > Reading**
- 2) On the Reading Settings page change **Front page displays** to **"A static page"**
- 3) For the **Front page** choose **"Sample Page"** for now.



Next, activate a few helpful plugins

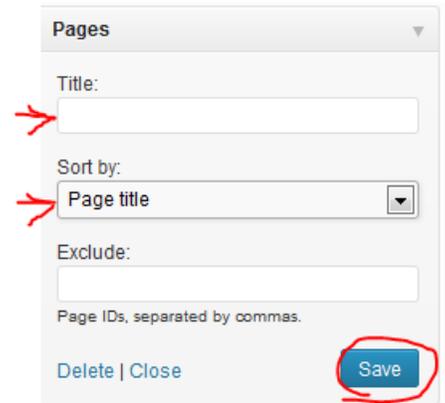
Plugins are optional tools which add features to WordPress. We have made available a handful of plugins to help teachers edit their websites. Two plugins that you may want to activate right away are the **Fonts** plugin and the **MCE Table Buttons** plugin. The Fonts plugin adds a drop down menu to the page editing toolbar which allows you to choose different font faces and font sizes. Likewise, the MCE Table Buttons plugin adds a set of buttons to the editing toolbar which allow you to add and edit tables and table cells as we did in FirstClass.

- 1) On your Dashboard, select **Plugins**
- 2) Find the **Fonts** plugin and click its Activate link.
- 3) Find the **MCE Table Buttons** plugin and click its Activate link.

Last, edit the information that is displayed on the sidebar

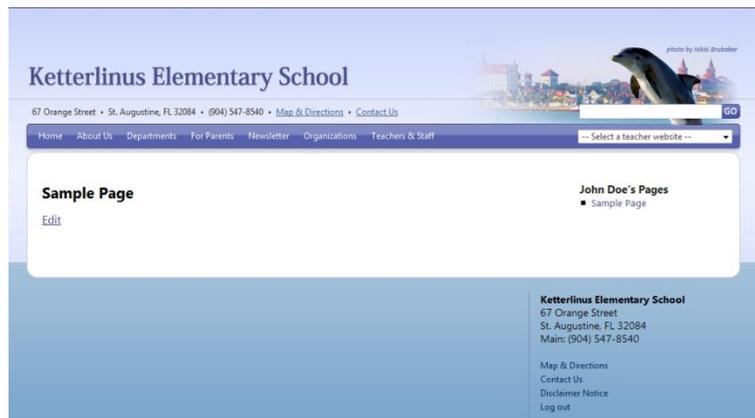
A new WordPress site will show several blocks of content called “widgets” related to blogging in its sidebar. You can add and remove these widgets through your dashboard. One very useful widget named **Pages** will automatically display links to all of the web pages you have published.

- 1) On your Dashboard, select **Appearance > Widgets**
- 2) Find the **Primary Widget Area** on the right and then drag each of these widgets, one at a time, out of the Primary Widget Area: Search, Recent Posts, Recent Comments, Archives, Categories, and Meta.
- 3) Find the **Pages** widget in the Available Widgets area and then drag it into the **Primary Widget Area**
- 4) Optionally, you may type your own title to be displayed above your list of pages such as “John Doe’s Pages” and also choose the order in which the links will be displayed. Note that if you sort by the page ID, the links will be displayed in the order they were created.



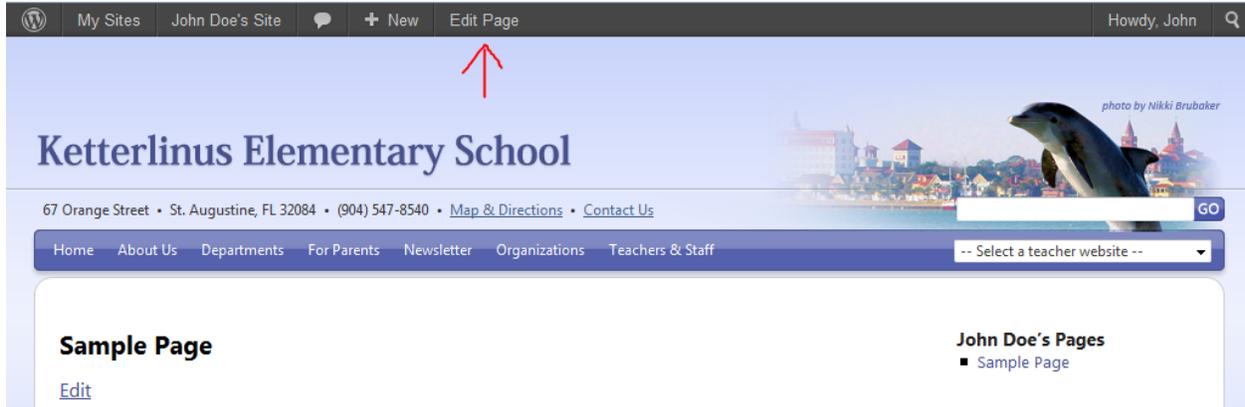
The screenshot shows the 'Pages' widget configuration interface. It includes a 'Title' text input field, a 'Sort by' dropdown menu currently set to 'Page title', and an 'Exclude' text input field. Below these fields is a note: 'Page IDs, separated by commas.' At the bottom right, there is a blue 'Save' button which is circled in red. Red arrows point to the 'Title' and 'Sort by' fields.

Once you’ve made those 3 changes, your site will look similar to the screenshot on the right and you will be ready to begin editing web pages.



How do I edit web pages with WordPress?

When you are logged in to WordPress, you may edit the web page you are viewing just by clicking the **Edit Page** link on the top gray bar. You may also click the **Pages** link on the Dashboard to view a complete list of all of the web pages you have created.



A comprehensive guide to WordPress' Visual Editor and all of its buttons is available at:
<http://en.support.wordpress.com/visual-editor/>

What is the difference between posts or pages?

With WordPress, you may create either **Posts** or **Pages**. Though there are some exceptions, Posts are intended to contain time-sensitive information, content that may only be pertinent for a week or a month, like you would normally see on a blog, whereas Pages are intended to have information that will always be useful to the reader. Pages are akin to the web pages we created and edited in FirstClass.

As an example, if you are planning to write about a homework assignment, an upcoming event, or put up a weekly newsletter, you may want to write a **post**. By contrast, if you are writing about your class rules, your teaching style or your course syllabus (information that would be useful to a website visitor at any point during the school year), then a page might be a better option.

You may choose to write strictly posts, strictly pages, or a little of both. To set whether you want visitors will see your latest posts or a certain page when they visit your website's front page, go to **Settings > Reading** on the Dashboard.

These are some of the additional differences between posts and pages which you may want to consider as you choose between writing posts or pages.

Posts	Pages
Several posts may be displayed at a time, listed chronologically with the newest post at the top	Only 1 page is displayed at a time
Can be organized by subject matter with categories and tags you create	Cannot be organized with categories or tags, but can be organized in a hierarchical or outline format
Are included in your website's RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed	Are not included in your website's RSS feed

Glossary

Below is a quick overview of some important terms as they relate to WordPress.

- **Dashboard** – This is the “back end” area which you use to make changes to your website. You are taken directly to the Dashboard when you login to WordPress. Listed down the left-hand side of the dashboard are links to all of the different areas of your website which you can control.
- **Media Library** – The Media Library stores all of the supporting files that you and other editors upload to your website, such as images and PDFs.
- **Theme** – The “theme” refers to the overall look of your website including the layout, the color scheme, fonts, and so on. Because WordPress keeps the content of your website separate from the design, you may completely change the look of your website by selecting a different theme. Currently, each school has a single theme reflecting their school colors and mascot. In the future, more themes will be made available to our WordPress users.
- **Plugin** – Plugins are optional tools or add-ons that add more features to WordPress. An example plugin would be “MCE Table Buttons” which adds buttons to WordPress that allow you to create and edit tables.
- **Widget** – Widgets are optional blocks of information which can be placed in the sidebar of your website. An example widget would be the “Pages” widget which automatically displays links to all of your published web pages.
- **Shortcodes** – Shortcodes are simple lines of text enclosed in brackets like [shortcode] which WordPress recognizes to display stylized content. An example shortcode would be the [gallery] shortcode which displays all of the photos attached to a web page in a photo gallery.