

# Module #5: Your About Page: You, Your Blog ... and Your Readers

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In this week's module, we're taking a look at your About page – probably the most important page on your blog. We'll discuss what you might want to put on your About page and how to structure it, and we'll take a look at some examples of About pages from several very different blogs.

Your About page is probably the most important page on your blog. New readers will often go straight there (perhaps after reading a post or two) to figure out what your blog is about and who you are.

So, it's crucial that:

- You actually have an About page – a “coming soon” page doesn't count!
- You use that page to engage readers and draw them into your blog.

Writing your About page is *hard*: you need to think through what your blog is about, what you are about, and how best to convey these to readers who may never have heard of you before.

There's no one right way to write your About page, but in this module, we'll be going through a few straightforward steps that should help you put yours together.

## The Purpose of Your About Page

What are you hoping to achieve when readers visit your About page?

Many bloggers never ask themselves this question – but it's a really important one. If your main goal for blogging is to promote your book, for instance, an About page that barely mentions your book won't be a lot of help to you.

Take a look back at what you wrote down for the first module's assignment, where we looked at your reasons for blogging. What's your main goal?

Your About page should be geared towards this goal. For instance:

- If you're blogging in order to get freelancing clients, your About page will probably be fairly professional, with details about your qualifications or past experience.
- If you're blogging purely as a writing outlet, your About page might be much more informal: you might talk about your hobbies, for instance, or take a fairly lighthearted approach.
- If you're not yet sure where you want to go with your blogging, you could use your About page to encourage readers to stick around with your blog – perhaps by inviting them to join your newsletter.

## Structuring Your About Page

There's no "right" way to structure your About page, but in this module, I'm going to suggest that you start off by breaking it into two distinct parts:

- One section about your blog
- One section about you

It's up to you which section you put first: I'd suggest that whichever one is more important should go at the top. So if your goal is to get clients, it's probably best to tell them about you first, and about your blog second.

## Opening Your About Page

We're going to take a look at three different ways to start your About page:

### Option #1: Writing a Mission Statement for Your Blog

One great way to open your About page is with your blog's "mission statement". This doesn't need to be grandiose or full of corporate-speak: it just needs to state clearly what your blog does or who it's for.

Here are a couple of examples:

Welcome to ProBlogger.com – a Blog that helps bloggers to add income streams to their blogs.

[\(ProBlogger's About page\)](#)

“Writers change the world one reader at a time.  
But you can’t change the world with a book that’s still on your hard drive  
or in a box under your bed.”

([The Book Designer’s About page](#) – note that this comes a couple of paragraphs in)

Your mission statement is a bit like your reasons for blogging that we looked at in Module 1 – but from a different perspective. Instead of being about you, your mission statement is about your reader: what will *they* get from your blog?

You might want to use part of your mission statement (or all of it, if it’s short) as a tagline for your blog. For instance, on Aliventures, my tagline is “Master the art, craft and business of writing” – it appears just below the site title in the header, which is on every single page and post.

## **Option #2: Writing a Summary of Who You Are**

Another great way to open your About page is by giving readers a quick summary of who *you* are and what you’re all about. This is a great approach if your main aim with your blog is to get clients, and it can also make sense if you want to sell books, or if you simply want to use your blog as a way to connect with other people.

Here are a couple of examples:

I’m a novelist, a copyeditor, a writing coach, a mom, a backpacker, and a whole bunch of other things.

I love keeping busy, but I especially love writing, teaching, and helping writers.

(From C.S. Lakin’s [About page](#) on Live Write Thrive)

Hi. I'm Jeff, the best-selling author of five books including the [The Art of Work](#) and Real Artists Don't Starve. On this blog, I share my thoughts on writing, life, and creative work.

(From Jeff Goin's About page on Goins, Writer)

If you take this approach, the key is to focus on the details about you that will be of interest to your readers.

For instance, C.S. Lakin runs an excellent blog for writers, and that's her focus. She mentions that she's a "mom" and a "backpacker" – but these come after "a novelist, a copyeditor, a writing coach". If she was instead running a parenting blog or a backpacking blog, her opening lines would probably be very different.

### **Option #3: Focusing on Who Your Reader Is and What They Need**

A final way to open your About page is by focusing not on your blog or you, but on your readers: who they are and what they're looking for.

Here are a couple of examples:

If you're like most of my readers, you're already a high-achieving leader. You're committed to making big contributions at work—and seeing big results. But you're not just looking for one-dimensional success.

(From [Michael Hyatt's About page](#))

Hey you, welcome!

Do you like writing?

Maybe you do, but I bet there are also times when you feel frustrated because you want to write better.

Am I right?

(From [Write to Done's About page](#))

This approach can work well to draw readers into your About page and to show that you've got what they need, but I think there's also a danger here of sounding a little patronising or mis-targeting your audience.

Quite a few visitors to Michael Hyatt's blog, for instance, might not be "leaders" in a corporate sense but might still enjoy his posts (and potentially buy his products). Write to Done's About page implies that the blog is aimed at beginners – which to some extent it is, but again, a broader audience might enjoy the posts there.

If you are going to go with this approach, I'd ask someone very honest (and within your target audience) to take a look at your draft About page and let you know if it was engaging or off-putting. (Feel free to ask within the Blog On Facebook group for help with that.)

## **What You Might Want to Include On Your About Page**

Once you've begun your About page, probably using one of the options above, it's up to you where you go next! At some point on your About page, though, you'll probably want to include at least some of these:

### **#1: Your Name**

**This might sound a bit obvious ... but readers want to know what you're called!** If you're not comfortable sharing your full name, you can give your first name or use a pseudonym.

## #2: A Photograph of Yourself

**It makes sense to put a photo of you at the top of your About page, or perhaps at the start of an “About Me” section.** Don’t underestimate the power of a photo to draw readers in – try to make it a good one, though don’t feel that you need to run out and pay for a photoshoot! Use a recent photo, too: one from ten years ago will seem a bit odd if readers later see you on video or meet you in real life.

If you’re not comfortable with using your photo on the page, that’s absolutely fine. You might want to instead use a photo that represents you and your blog in some way – e.g. if your blog is about writing, you might put a photo of your desk or your notebooks. Alternatively, you could use a cartoon or drawing (e.g. if you have a parenting blog, you might use a drawing that one of your kids has done of you).

## #3: Links to Your Best Blog Posts

**Readers who come to your About page are likely to be new to your blog.** Whatever your ultimate goals are, it makes sense to point them towards posts they’re likely to enjoy. This can be a great chance to get new readers up to speed on the topics you cover, or even on the style of your blogging.

Some bloggers have a separate “Start Here” page where they list good posts to begin with – and I’ve noticed in recent years that a few bloggers are doing away with their About pages altogether, in favour of a “Start Here” page that briefly introduces them and the blog before moving on to give links to their best posts.

When you link to your posts, whether it’s from an About page or a Start Here page, you can simply give the title (which you should set up as a hyperlink to the post), or you can give a brief summary or quote as well.

## #4: Links to Your Books, Products or Services

**New readers may have no idea that you’ve written a book (or several!), or they might not know that they can hire you, or buy something from you.** On your About page, explain clearly what you offer. Don’t see this as being pushy or “salesy” – instead, think of your ideal customer and how disappointed they

might be to realize, months later, that you were selling something they really wanted all along!

If you have quite a few different things to sell, you might want to just mention the most recent / important ones on your About page, then link to a page that lists them all (perhaps your Shop or Services page, which we'll be covering in Module #7).

## How to Actually Write Your About Page

I wish I could give you a template for the perfect About page ... but the truth is that there are lots of different formats that work well, and lots of different styles in which people write About pages.

What I do recommend is that you:

- **Write in the first person (“I”) rather than the third person (“he/she/they”).** So, instead of saying “Ali Luke lives in Leeds with her husband and two children”, I’d write “I live in Leeds with my husband and two children.”
- **Write in the present tense, not the future tense.** When your blog is very new, it’s tempting to write things like, “I will be posting every week” or “Through the newsletter, I plan to share my tips on...” This draws attention to your blog being very new, and it also means your About page will date very quickly. Instead, write as if your blog *is already* fully up and running – “I post here every week” or “Through the newsletter, I share my tips on...”
- **Don’t worry too much about getting everything right.** The great thing with About pages is that you can update them over time – in fact, I highly recommend that you do! It definitely doesn’t have to be perfect from day one.
- **Write *something*, even if you can’t complete the whole page.** It’s so easy to put off writing an About page – if you’re really short of time this week, find just ten minutes to make a start. Even a sentence counts!

In the rest of this module, we're going to be looking at some examples of different About pages and examining some things that they do particularly well. The pages I've chosen for this are:

- [Ask A Manager's About page](#), Allison Green
- [Live Write Thrive's About page](#), C.S. Lakin
- [Live Write Thrive's About page](#), Gem

I suggest you take a quick look at each of these now and think about whether they'd appeal to you as a reader. Is there anything you'd change, or anything that particularly grabs your interest?

## Example #1: Allison Green

[Ask A Manager's About page](#), Allison Green

This page starts off with an "about me" opening, introducing us to Allison and (crucially) her experience of being a manager. Her blog is all about giving advice to readers on workplace dilemmas, so it's essential that she explains why she's well positioned to do this.

There are a few things I wanted to pull out from this page:

- **There's a lovely photo of Allison right at the start of the About page.** While this isn't essential, it's a nice way to help readers connect with you. I felt the photo was in keeping with the blog itself, too: it's fairly professional but not stuffy. (Imagine, for instance, how different the tone would be if this was a photo of Allison in a suit at a desk, or Allison with a drink in hand at a bar.)
- **Allison has a link, "ask away", to where readers can submit their questions.** Since her blog runs on reader questions, this is an important thing to include on the About page (though there's also an "Ask a Question" link in the top menu and in the sidebar).
- **The section "Some of my biases" is a great way to give readers a heads-up about what they'll be likely to encounter on the blog.** All of these "biases" are also really quite reasonable positions that most readers would struggle to disagree with – so I think this section also serves well to show that Allison is a sensible, honest person.



- **The whole page is relatively short.** There's no need for About pages to go on for ages, and if your page is similarly concise, that's fine!

The one thing I think Allison has missed here is the opportunity to link to her book "Ask a Manager". (I wonder whether, like many bloggers, she wrote the About page a few years ago – before she published the book.) If I were her, I'd probably update the page to add a sentence or two at the end of about the book.

## Example #2: C.S. Lakin

### Live Write Thrive's About page, C.S. Lakin

Like Allison Green, C.S. Lakin starts off her About page by talking about herself (as we saw earlier on in the examples). Her page is quite long and introduces new readers to various things they might be interested in – particularly her services.

Here are a few things I wanted to mention:

- **There really is quite a lot going on in the first paragraph**, with links to C.S.'s writer group teaching, her online school, and her one-to-one Skype appointments. I'd be tempted to focus on just *one* thing here and perhaps list these in bullet point form later on the page.
- **While I quite like the personal touch of "I am also quite the expert on pygmy goats," it's slightly at odds with the more distant, professional tone of the rest of the About page.** I'd probably be tempted to cut the whole paragraph about guest posting as C.S. is a great writer who's been blogging for ages and I'm sure she can have her pick of any guest posting opportunities she wants!
- **The section "I really love my day job" is positive, enthusiastic, and clear about what C.S. offers in terms of critique services.** I think this is well-positioned, but as I've said, I'd be tempted to cut down what precedes it a bit – as I'm sure being hired to critique is more important to C.S. than being invited to guest post for free.
- **At the end of the About page, C.S. links to her various books**, giving the cover images too. I think this is a great move: it not only encourages

readers to check out (and hopefully buy!) her books, it shows that she's a professional working author who knows what she's talking about.

As I mentioned, the one change this page might need is to move some of the earlier links and mentions of things like guest posting and writing talks – all of this could come after the sections about C.S.'s critique / editing services.

## Example #3: The Organised Mum

[The Organised Mum's About page](#), Gemma Bray

I came across this blog from a link on a parenting forum – not from a guest post, or from any former knowledge of the blogger. I mention this because it's the way in which many readers will stumble across new blogs ... and it illustrates why your About page needs to introduce you and who you are very clearly!

There are a few things to think about here:

- **This About page is the most informal and chatty of the three we've looked at.** That's a good fit for Gemma's style and also for her purposes in blogging (she's not selling a book / product / service, though it looks like she does work with companies for sponsorship). The number of exclamation marks, for instance, suggests a certain degree of informality.
- **Like C.S. and Allison, Gemma explains her credentials for blogging about her topic (in this case, cleaning).** She does this in a fairly casual and informal way – but it's still clear to readers that she has thoroughly used the cleaning routines she talks about. (Or as she puts it, "I live and breathe the method.")
- **There's a generally reassuring tone throughout the page,** with phrases like "if you're in a bit of a muddle with the housework and don't know where to start".

If I were Gemma, I'd probably add a bit to this page that encourages sponsors to get in touch. If Gemma goes on to write a non-fiction book (which would be a good fit for this type of blog) or to sell anything, I'd obviously expect that to get added to the About page too.

You might well have been struck by some different things on these three About pages – do feel free to come and share your own impressions and insights in the Facebook group:

[www.facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018](http://www.facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018)

## Titling, Publishing and Positioning Your About Page

Once you've written your About page, you'll need to think about how best to publish it on your blog.

Here's what you need to know:

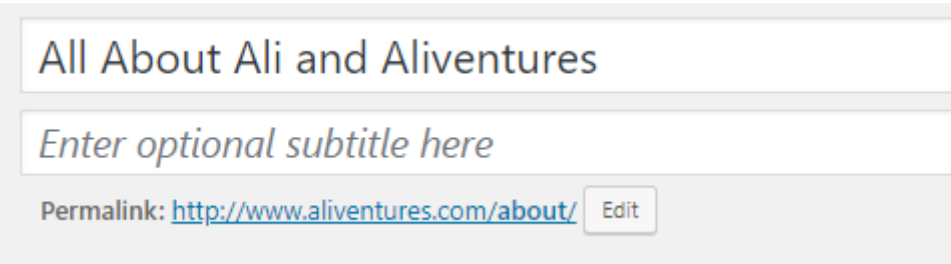
**#1: Your About page should be published as a *page*, not as a blog post.**

(Creating it as a post is an easy mistake to make.) Pages are slightly different from posts because they don't go out to subscribers by email/RSS, and they don't have a category and a date stamp like posts do.

You can create a page in WordPress (both the .com and the .org) versions by logging into your dashboard and going to Pages → Add New. Note that there's a good chance you already have an About page that WordPress has set up for you: you can find that under Pages → All Pages. Click on the title to edit it.

**#2: Your About page should have a clear and obvious title.** The two options I'd especially recommend are "About" or "Start Here" (the latter is best for a page that's focused on the blog and on links to useful posts). You could also use "About Me" or "New Here?"

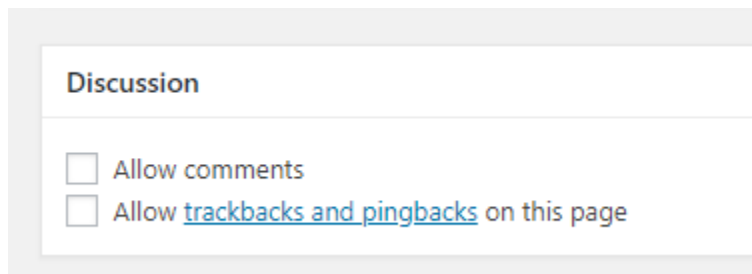
The permalink (URL) for your About page should be something like /about or /start-here (e.g. [aliventures.com/about](http://aliventures.com/about) is my About page). If WordPress has set the permalink to something different, click "Edit" to change it:



The screenshot shows the WordPress page editor interface. At the top, there is a text input field containing the title "All About Ali and Aliventures". Below this is another text input field with the placeholder text "Enter optional subtitle here". At the bottom, there is a "Permalink" section showing the URL "http://www.aliventures.com/about/" and an "Edit" button next to it.

**#3: You shouldn't allow comments on your About page.** This might seem like a weird rule, but readers tend to leave weird or not-very-valuable comments on your About page (e.g. "Hello, nice to meet you!" or detailed questions about some aspect of your topic. Also, your About page will be visited by readers for years to come – so it can quickly end up with lots of low-value comments that just distract from your page.

If comments aren't already turned off on your About page, you can switch them off while you're creating or editing it: scroll down beneath the box where you write the page and you should see this section. (You may need to click the little arrow on the right to expand it.)



Untick the box "Allow comments".

If you're using WordPress.com, you can find the Discussion section in the right-hand sidebar under "More Options".

## Updating Your About Page Regularly

Surprisingly frequently, I come across blogs (often very well established blogs) that have woefully out-dated About pages.

It's very easy to create your About page and then forget about it – but of course lots of the details there will need to be changed as time goes by. For instance, if you mention that you have "two preschool-aged children", that's not going to still be the case in five years' time!

**Even if you don't have specific personal details on your About page, the details about your blog might change.** You'll definitely write new posts (some of which you may want to link to from the About page), but you might also change your blogging focus a little ... or a lot.

It can be tricky to remember to update your About page when you've got a lot going on, so I'd suggest having a regular reminder in your diary/calendar to check it and update it if necessary. I'd suggest once every 3 months to begin with: if you find that you rarely need to change anything, go for once every 6 months.


## Creating an About Widget

Not all readers will bother clicking on your About link in your menu (they might miss it, or they might not want to look at a whole page about your blog).

This means it's a great idea to also include an About widget – a very short summary of you and your blog that goes in your sidebar, and appears on every page/post on your blog.

Here's my About widget on Aliventures:

### About



I'm Ali Luke, and I live in Leeds in the UK with my husband and two children. Aliventures is where I help you master the art, craft and business of writing.

[Find out more about Aliventures.](#)

Follow me on Twitter at [@aliventures](#).

Join my Facebook page at [facebook.com/aliventures](#).

Email me at [ali@aliventures.com](mailto:ali@aliventures.com).

On your WordPress blog, you can create your About widget by:

- Logging into the dashboard and going to Appearance → Widgets. *(If you're using WordPress.com, you'll need to click "WP Admin" at the bottom of your sidebar first.)*
- Adding a "Text" widget *(unless your theme has a specific About Me or similar widget, in which case, use that!)* You drag-and-drop the widget from the left hand side to add it.
- Typing in the text you want to use. You can add images, and some formatting (like bold and italic text, links and lists).
- Clicking the blue "save" button directly beneath the widget.

It's up to you what you include in your About widget. **At a minimum, I'd suggest giving your name, a quick summary of what your blog is about, and a link to your full About page.**

In my About widget, I also include my social media and contact details to make it very easy for readers to get in touch.

## Module #5: Recap

Here's a summary of what we've covered in this week's module:

- **Your About page is really important.** It's where new readers will often go first to figure out whether they want to stick around.
- **Normally, it makes sense to start your About page by telling readers a bit about you or a bit about your blog** (though some bloggers start their About page by focusing on the reader instead).
- **There's no one "right" way to structure an About page**, and different bloggers take very different approaches. It's often best to start off with a fairly concise page and add to it over time.
- **Key elements to include on your About page are:** your name, a photo of you, links to your best posts, and links to your books/products/services.
- **You should ideally also have an About widget.** This goes in your sidebar and acts like a mini About page, very quickly introducing new readers to who you are and what your blog's about.

About pages can be tough, and if you feel stuck at any point or would like some feedback on yours, head here: [facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018](https://www.facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018)

## **Module #5 Assignment and Check In**

**This week, your assignment is to create (or update) your About page.**

It doesn't matter if your page is short and sweet – what matters is that you get *something* up there on your blog. Don't feel that you need to spend ages on this: you can set aside a little bit of time each week to refine it, if that suits you better.

Once you've written your About page, or got as far as you can (e.g. made a plan or a list of what you're going to include), check in here to get your reward card stamped:

[facebook.com/groups/blogon.spring2018/permalink/237637780348408](https://www.facebook.com/groups/blogon.spring2018/permalink/237637780348408)

If possible, please share the link to your About page with us so we can check it out. If you don't want to publish it yet, or don't yet have your blog online, you can upload a draft to the Facebook group.

If you prefer not to use Facebook, email me with "Check in" in the subject line.

Don't forget, you need to check in by the end of **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July**. (It's fine to check in even if you haven't quite finished your About page.)

## **Module #5: Recommended Further Reading**

All of the further reading is optional, but if you want to find out more about something we've covered in the module, it's highly recommended! If you find other useful resources, you're welcome to share them in our Facebook group.

**How to Write a Killer About Me Page for Your Blog**, Melyssa Griffin,  
MelyssaGriffin.com

This post covers similar ground to the module, but offers a slightly different perspective in some areas – e.g. Melyssa emphasises the importance of having a call to action on your About page (something I'd agree is a good idea but not necessarily essential for every type of blog).

**5 Ways to Eliminate About Page Anxiety**, Natalie Gowen, ProBlogger

There are lots of good tips here on things you can include on your About page: again, this covers similar ground to the module. One small thing: I wouldn't recommend putting a contact form on your About page, as Natalie suggests – much better to have this on a separate contact page (see Module #2).

### **What's Coming Up Next Week:**

#### **Module #6: Advanced Formatting: Quotes, Links and Subheadings**

Next week, from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July, we'll be digging into ways to make your blog posts look great ... and seeing how these can help you reach your goals, too.

We'll cover quotes, links, subheadings, and more ... and I'll give you step by step instructions on how exactly to *do* all this formatting within WordPress, as well as guidance on when best to use the different types of formatting. There'll be plenty of screenshots and examples along the way.