

# CREATING A WEBSITE

In this guide, we'll be looking at creating a website. This is something that many writers will do, or at least consider, at some stage.

Your website might be one (or more) of these:

- A place for you to showcase your books and to link to online stores (such as Amazon or Barnes & Noble) where people can buy them.
- An online CV or resume, with samples of your work.
- A blog or podcast site, where you regularly publish new updates.
- An online store, where you sell your books, ebooks, or other products directly to customers.
- A single page that lets your readers sign up for your email list.

... or almost anything you can imagine.

There are lots of different ways to create a website. When I very first started using the internet in the mid-1990s, many people created websites by writing the website code (HTML) themselves. These days, almost everyone – including experienced software programmers – uses some kind of tool to create websites without manually writing every line of code.

Some of the most popular tools out there are:

- **WordPress** – by far the most popular, and the one that I recommend and will cover in this guide
- **Wix** – a simple drag and drop tool to create basic websites
- **Weebly** – another simple website builder
- **Shopify** – a website builder specifically designed for creating online store (*note that WordPress, Wix, and Weebly all have the option to create an online store too*)

These all have different pros and cons. I've been using WordPress for many years, and I've seen it go from a (somewhat clunky) blogging platform to a much easier to use tool for building all sorts of types of websites. Currently, 39% of all websites in the world are powered by WordPress.

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WordPress is simple enough for non-techies to use, but offers a lot of power and flexibility.

In this guide, I'm going to help you set up your WordPress site. I'll keep the instructions as simple and straightforward as possible.

You can use these links to jump straight to different sections of this guide.

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## WordPress.com vs WordPress.org: Pros and Cons of Each

The one tricky thing about WordPress, when you're just getting started, is that there are two quite different versions of it.

These are:

- **WordPress.COM**, a commercial company that hosts your WordPress site for you. This means you don't need to worry about things like updates and backups, but it does mean you only get access to some of WordPress's features. On the plus side, it's easy to get started with, and you can even use it for free (though paying removes some limitations).
- **WordPress.ORG**, a non-profit organization that maintains the open source WordPress software. Anyone can use the full power of this software completely free. The snag is that you need to pay for a domain name (website address) and web hosting – and organize setting this up.

Many WordPress experts will tell you that you should always use WordPress.org. This is good advice for people looking to build a business website, but if you want a simple website where you can feature your books, write a blog, or share your thoughts with the world ... then WordPress.com might work just fine for you.

If you're planning to run your website as part of a full business, WordPress.org makes most sense. It does take a bit longer to get things set up, and it costs more upfront, but you'll get all you need for many years to come.

**Tip:** Not sure which type of WordPress is for you? Start off with a free site on WordPress.com. You can later switch from WordPress.com to WordPress.org, if you want to.

The easiest way to switch is to use WPBeginner's free WordPress blog setup service at [wpbeginner.com/free-wordpress-blog-setup](http://wpbeginner.com/free-wordpress-blog-setup). The team there will move your blog for you. You just need to make sure you buy web hosting through their link, from one of their approved hosting partners.

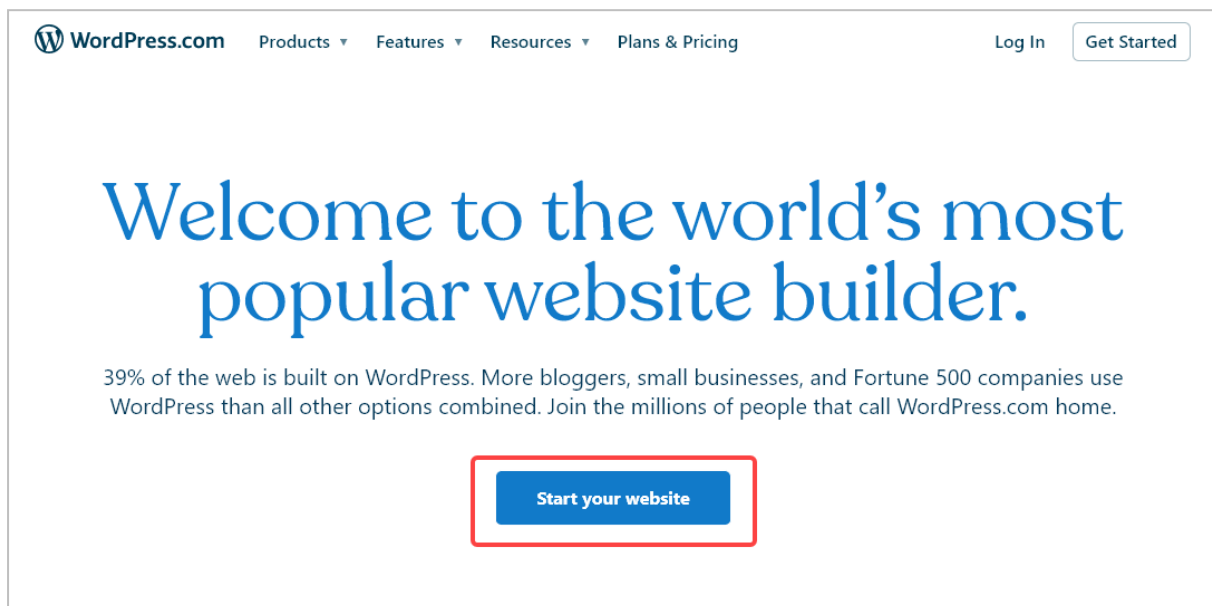
## Creating a Website Using WordPress.com

**Note:** These instructions were last updated in January 2021. If you want to check for an updated version of this bonus guide, head to:

[www.aliventures.com/get-writing-downloads](http://www.aliventures.com/get-writing-downloads)

Password: *writetoday*

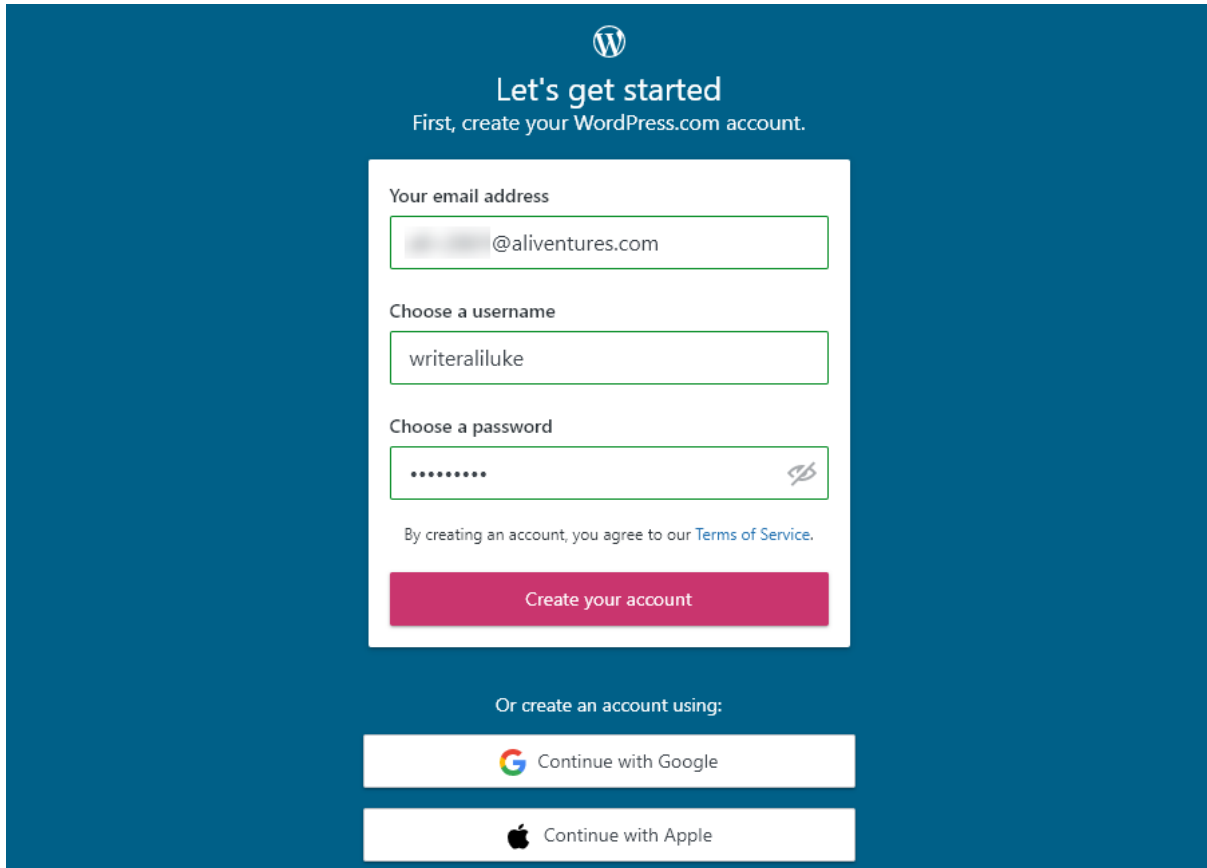
To create a website with WordPress.com, first go to [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) and click the 'Start your website' button:



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## Step #1: Create Your Account

You'll be prompted to create an account or sign in using your Google or Apple details. Just pick whichever option you prefer. For this tutorial, I'm going to create a new account.



The image shows the WordPress.com account creation interface. At the top, there is a WordPress logo and the heading "Let's get started" with the subtext "First, create your WordPress.com account." Below this is a form with three input fields: "Your email address" containing "aliventures.com", "Choose a username" containing "writeraliluke", and "Choose a password" with a masked password and a strength indicator. A "Create your account" button is positioned below the form. Underneath the form, there is a section titled "Or create an account using:" with two buttons: "Continue with Google" and "Continue with Apple".

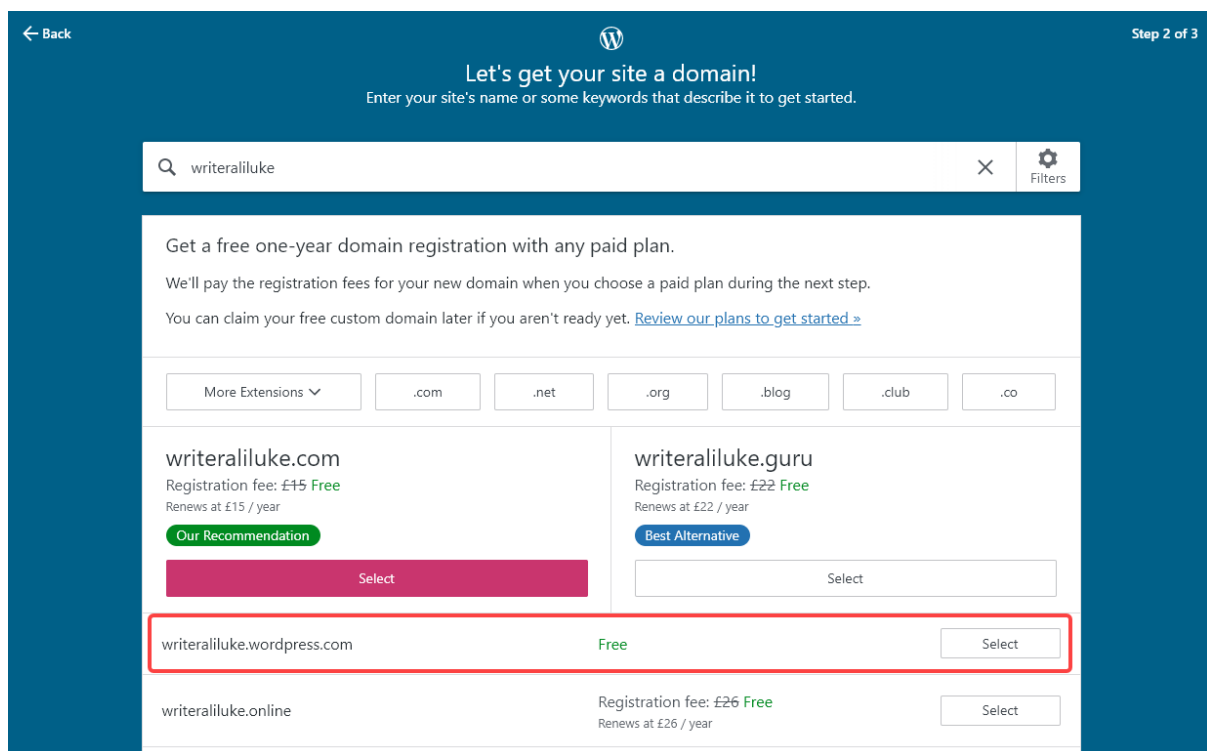
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## Step #2: Choose Your Domain Name

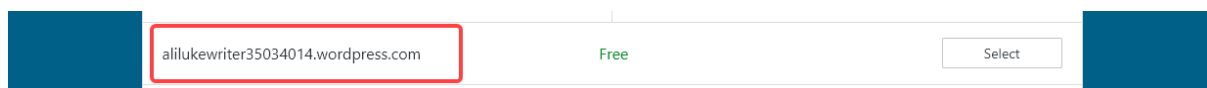
On the next screen, you'll be prompted to choose a domain name (also called a website address, or URL). Type in what the name you want to use for your site, and WordPress should offer you a range of options.

If you want to create a free website, **ignore the recommended option and best alternative.** These are only free with a paid plan.

Instead, look below these for a truly free domain, like the one I've outlined in red below. Click the 'Select' button to the right of this domain.



**Tip:** Sometimes, the free WordPress.com domain suggested includes a long number, like this:



If that happens, it's because the more sensible-looking domain name is already taken. Just try something different in the search, until you come up with a free domain that doesn't include a weird number.

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## Step #3: Choose Your Plan

On the next screen, you'll be prompted to choose a plan. WordPress.com is sneaky here, as their free plan isn't listed in the table of options.

You can still access the free plan, though. Just click the 'start with a free site' link that's hiding out near the top of the screen:

← Back Step 3 of 3

Pick a plan that's right for you.  
Choose a plan or [start with a free site.](#) Get the free plan!

Pay monthly  Pay annually

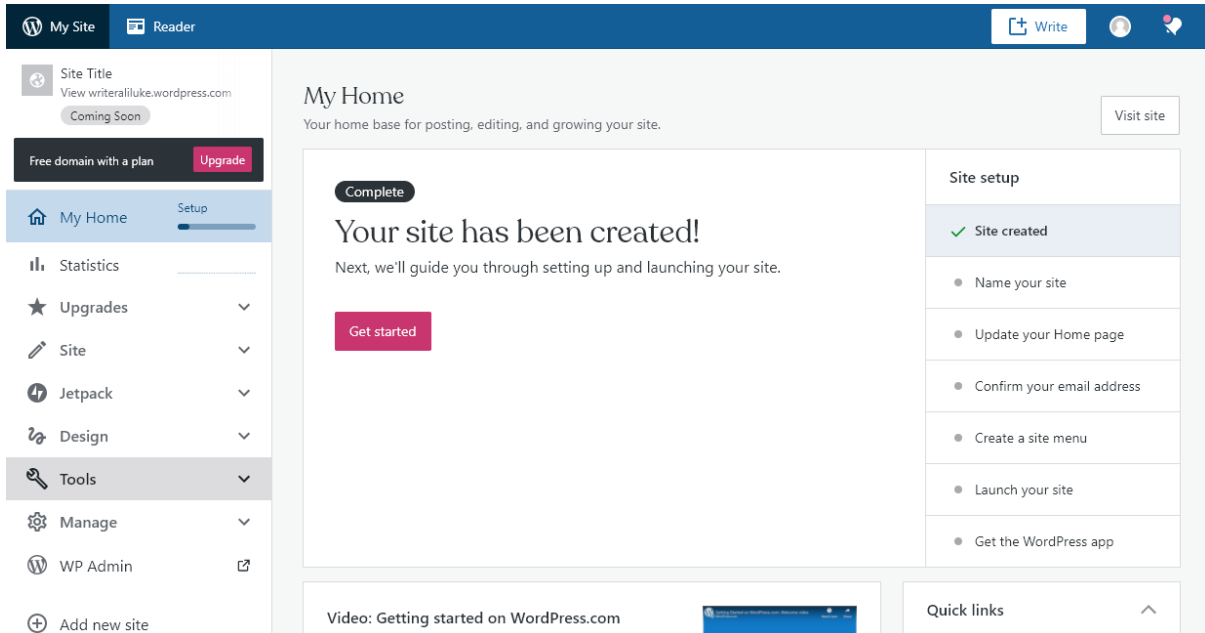
Personal	Premium <span>Popular</span>	Business	eCommerce
Best for personal use	Best for freelancers	Best for small businesses	Best for online stores
<b>£3</b> per month billed annually	<b>£7</b> per month billed annually	<b>£20</b> per month billed annually	<b>£36</b> per month billed annually
<a href="#">Start with Personal</a>	<a href="#">Start with Premium</a>	<a href="#">Start with Business</a>	<a href="#">Start with eCommerce</a>
Boost your website with a custom domain name, and remove all WordPress.com advertising. Unlock unlimited, expert email support.	Build a unique website with advanced design tools, CSS editing, lots of space for audio and video, Google Analytics support, and the ability to monetize your site with ads.	Power your business website with custom plugins and themes, unlimited premium and business theme templates, 200 GB storage, and the ability to remove WordPress.com branding.	Sell products or services with this powerful, all-in-one online store experience. This plan includes premium integrations and is extendable, so it'll grow with you as your business grows.
<small>INCLUDED WITH ANNUAL PLANS</small> Free domain for one year ⓘ	<small>INCLUDED WITH ANNUAL PLANS</small> Live chat support ⓘ	Upload themes and plugins ⓘ	Accept payments in 60+ countries ⓘ
Unlimited email support ⓘ	Advanced customization ⓘ	Advanced SEO tools ⓘ	Integrations with top shipping carriers ⓘ
Dozens of Free Themes ⓘ	All Personal features ⓘ	All Premium features ⓘ	All Business features ⓘ

Once you've clicked that link, WordPress will start building your site. You'll see a loading screen for a few seconds:



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You'll then be taken straight to your website's admin area, also called its 'dashboard' or 'back end'. This is where you can change things about your website.



WordPress will walk you through the process of setting up your site. Simply click the 'Get started' button and follow the on-screen prompts: WordPress.com makes it really easy for you.

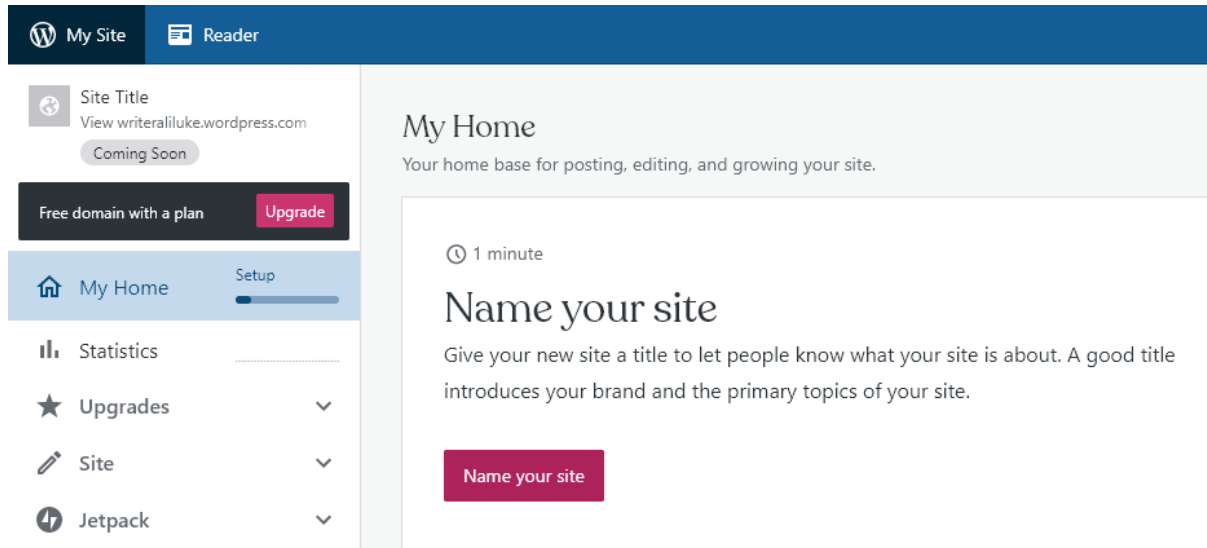
We'll walk through the first one to get you started.



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## Naming Your Site

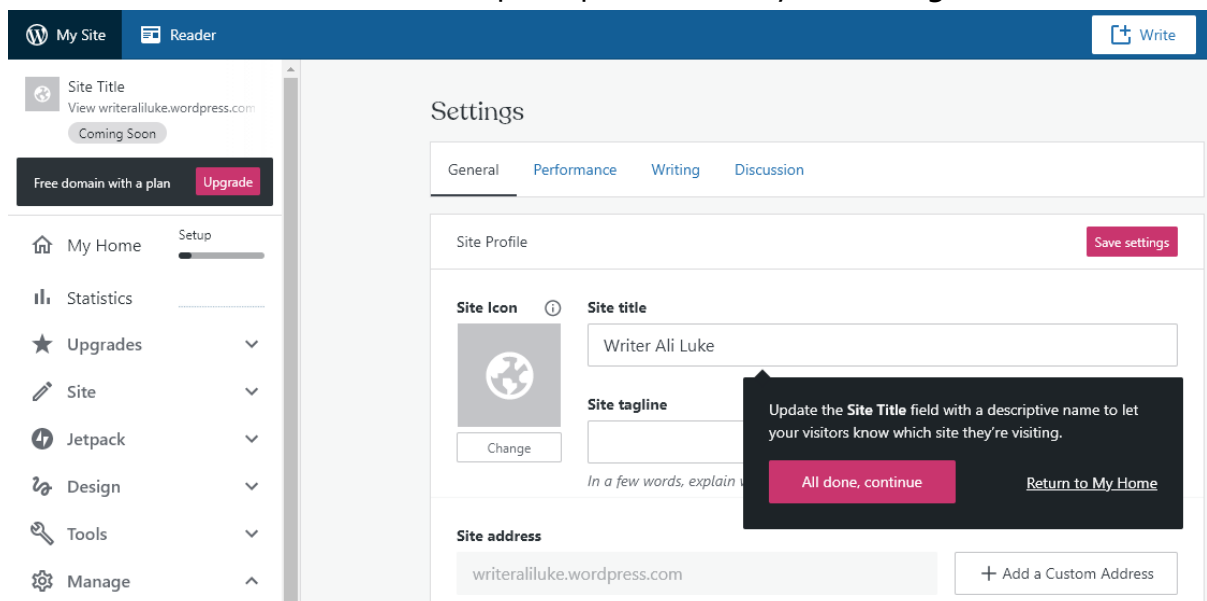
Click on the 'Name your site' link on the right hand side, then click the 'Name your site' button.



You'll be taken straight to the Manage → Settings page of your admin area, where you can enter the 'Site title' for your site.

**Tip:** You can use any name you want for your site, though it normally makes sense for your website's name to match the domain (website address). E.g. my site is called *Aliventures* and my domain name is *aliventures.com*.

Once you've entered the name in the 'Site title' box, simply click the 'All done, continue' button. You'll then be prompted to save your changes.



## Creating a Website Using WordPress.org

To create a website using the full WordPress software from WordPress.org, you have to spend some money up front. While the WordPress software itself is free, you're going to need:

- A domain name (website address)
- A web hosting account (this is where all your website files are stored)

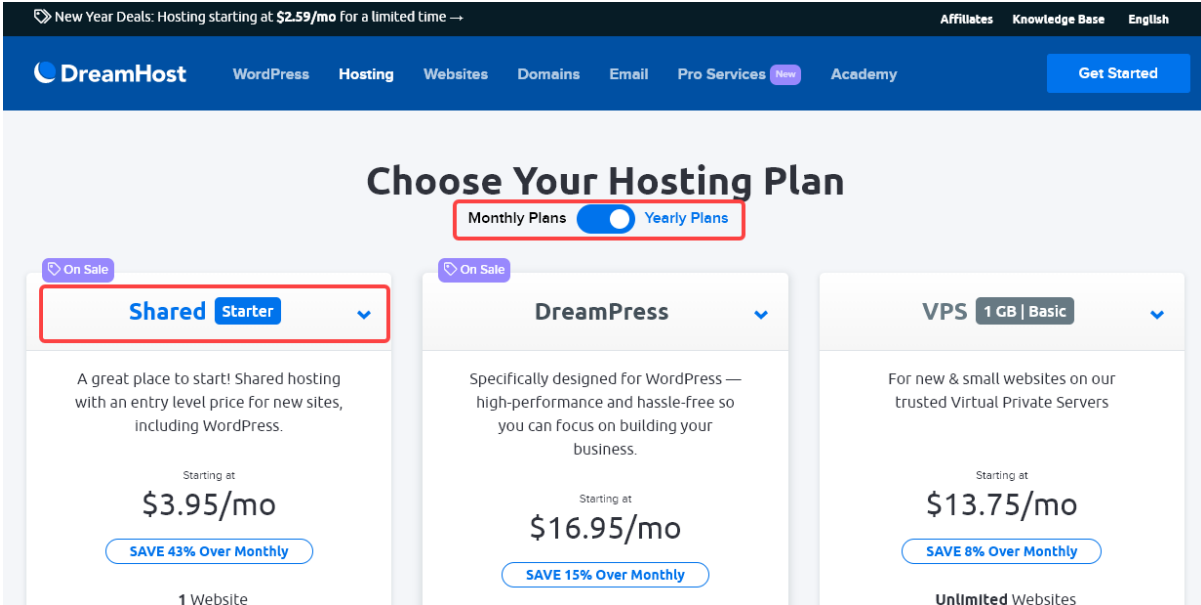
Most web hosts will give you a free domain name when you sign up. There are lots of different web hosting companies to choose from: just make sure you pick one that supports WordPress's software (most do).

I use Dreamhost, one of WordPress's recommended hosts. I've been with them since the end of 2007, and they've served me really well over the years. Find my full review here: [aliventures.com/reviews/dreamhost-web-hosting/](https://aliventures.com/reviews/dreamhost-web-hosting/)

To set up your site with Dreamhost, first head to the [Dreamhost home page](#) (affiliate link) and click the 'Get Started' button.

### Step #1: Choose Your Hosting Plan

Dreamhost will show you a range of hosting plans. I recommend choosing the Shared Starter or Shared Unlimited plan.



The screenshot shows the DreamHost website's 'Choose Your Hosting Plan' page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'DreamHost' logo and links for 'WordPress', 'Hosting', 'Websites', 'Domains', 'Email', 'Pro Services', and 'Academy'. A 'Get Started' button is on the right. Below the navigation, there's a header for 'Choose Your Hosting Plan' with a toggle for 'Monthly Plans' (selected) and 'Yearly Plans'. Three hosting plans are displayed in cards:

- Shared Starter:** 'On Sale' badge, 'Starting at \$3.95/mo', 'SAVE 43% Over Monthly', '1 Website'.
- DreamPress:** 'On Sale' badge, 'Starting at \$16.95/mo', 'SAVE 15% Over Monthly', 'Unlimited Websites'.
- VPS 1 GB | Basic:** 'Starting at \$13.75/mo', 'SAVE 8% Over Monthly', 'Unlimited Websites'.

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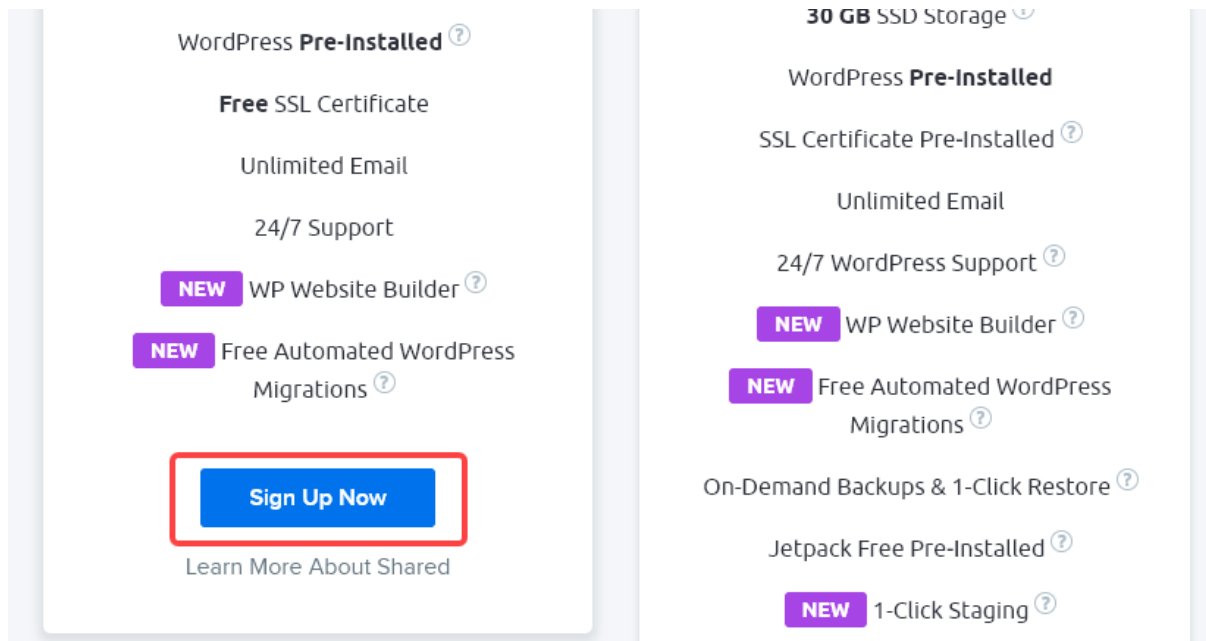
Shared Starter is fine if you just want one website and you don't need email.

Shared Unlimited is best value, though, as you can host unlimited websites on the same account, and you get unlimited email addresses too.

You can toggle between these plans by clicking on the 'Shared Starter' header.

It's best value to pay for a yearly plan, as you get a free domain and it works out cheaper per month. However, if you don't want to pay the whole year upfront, you can switch the toggle to 'Monthly Plans' and choose to pay month by month.

Once you've chosen your plan, click the 'Sign Up Now' button at the bottom:



## Step #2: Choose Your Domain Name

If you opted for an annual plan, you get a free domain name (website address) included. You can register it at this step, or you can choose it later if you prefer.

If you chose the monthly plan, you can register your domain at this step, too, but it won't be free. (Most domains aren't expensive: Dreamhost is offering a .com domain for \$6.99/year.)

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**DreamHost** Language - English (USA) Chat now

## SIGN UP FOR SHARED HOSTING

✓ Pick a plan   Choose a domain   Secure Checkout

**FREE domain with all annual terms!**

Choose a domain later

**Register a new domain**

I already have a domain

**Shared Unlimited** Change plan Renews automatically

Monthly \$8.95/mo	<b>Yearly \$3.95/mo</b>	3 Year \$3.95/mo
----------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------

Your savings: \$60.00  
Due today: \$47.40

To register a domain, click the 'Register a new domain' button.

You can then type your chosen domain into the search box – make sure you include the .com, or .net, etc.

Then, you just need to click the 'Add for \$0.00' button and the domain will be added to your order.

**FREE domain with all annual terms!**

[< Go back](#)   **Register a new domain**

alilukewriter.com

.club   .io   .online   .org   .xyz   .com   [See all domains](#)

Congrats, **alilukewriter.com** domain is available!

**ADD FOR \$0.00**

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## Step #3: Enter Your Payment Details and Check Out

Finally, you need to check out. Dreamhost will automatically install WordPress for free (though you can uncheck this if you want).

I recommend unchecking the “WP Website Builder” box, as it adds extra features to WordPress that you probably don’t need. The built-in WordPress editor should work just fine for most writers, and you can easily add different page builders in future.

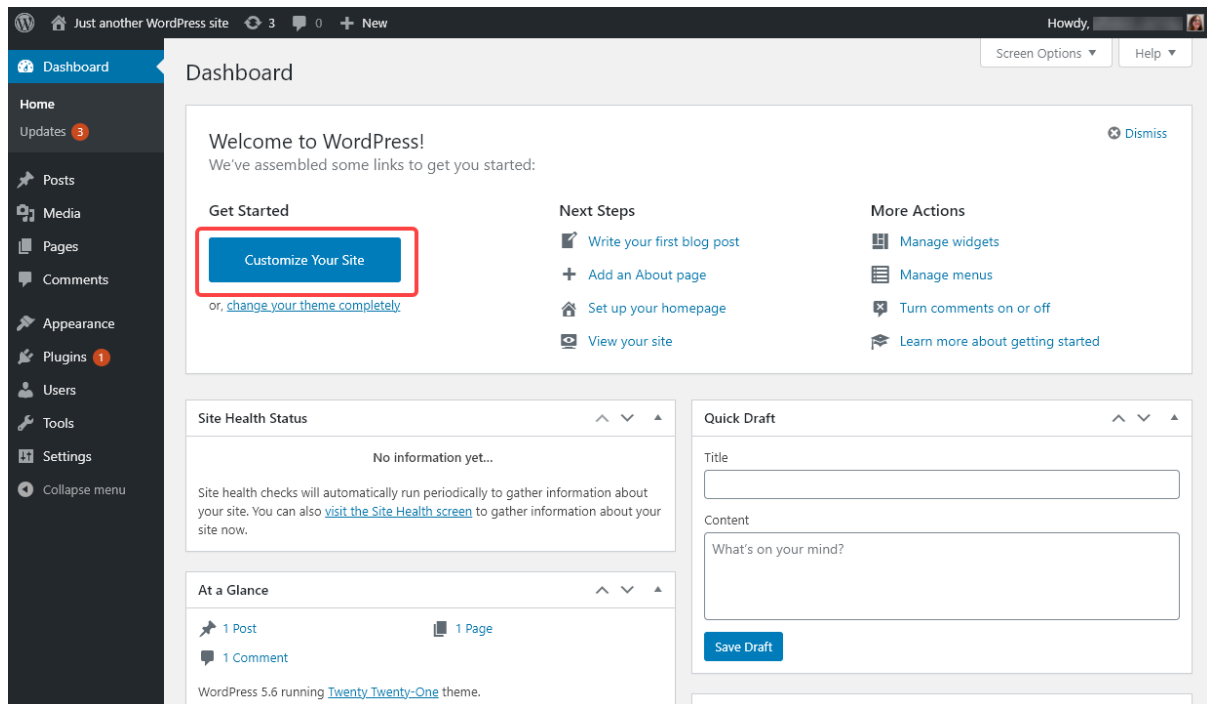
You may well want to uncheck the DreamShield protection box, as it adds quite a bit to your monthly costs. WordPress itself will alert you to issues like outdated plugins (add-ons). However, as your site grows, you may want to invest in a security service to protect you against malware – I use Sucuri.

Once you’re ready, go ahead and enter your payment details and the details for your account (email, name, and phone number), then check out.

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You should then see your Dreamhost dashboard. You'll get an email from Dreamhost letting you know how to set your password to login to your WordPress site.

Once you login to your site, you'll see a 'Welcome to WordPress' section where you can take your first steps. A good place to begin is by clicking the 'Customize Your Site' button.



You'll be taken into the special WordPress customizer. This lets you make changes (using the tabs on the left) and see how they'll look live on your site (the big area on the right).



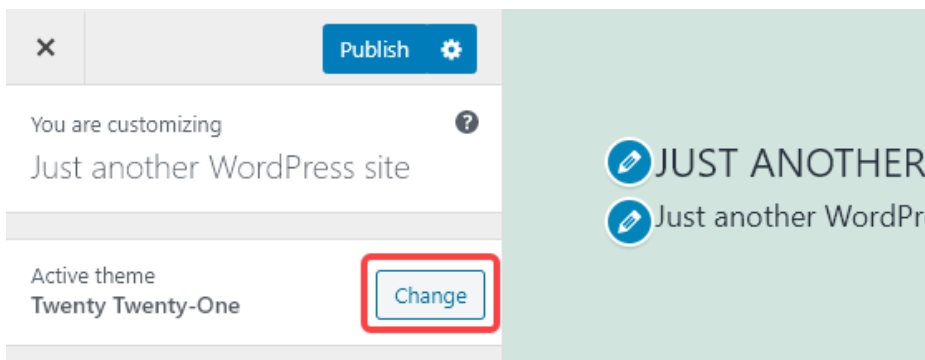
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Go ahead and click on anything you want to change. I suggest starting with the Site Identity tab.

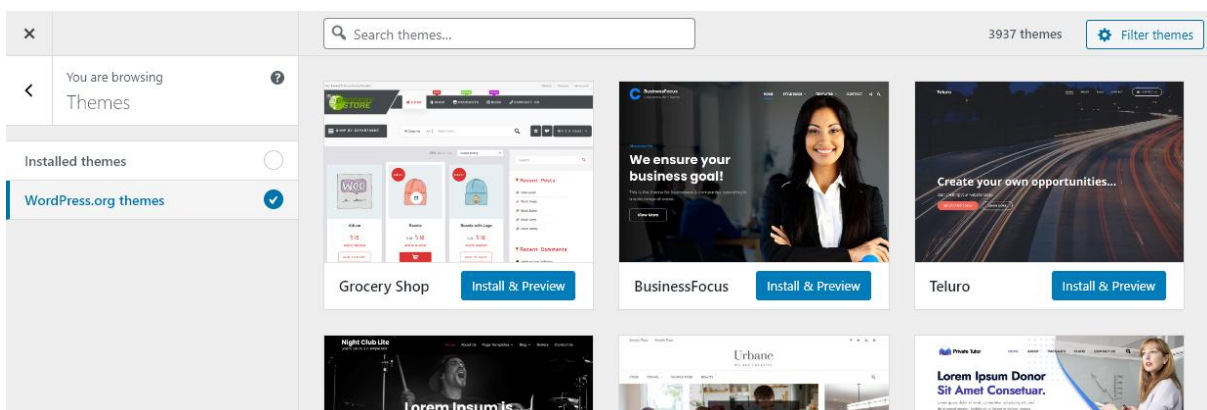
Here, you can enter a title (name) and tagline for your site. You can also upload an icon, if you have one you want to use.



If you want your site to look completely different, you might want to choose a new theme. Just click the 'Change' button next to your active theme.

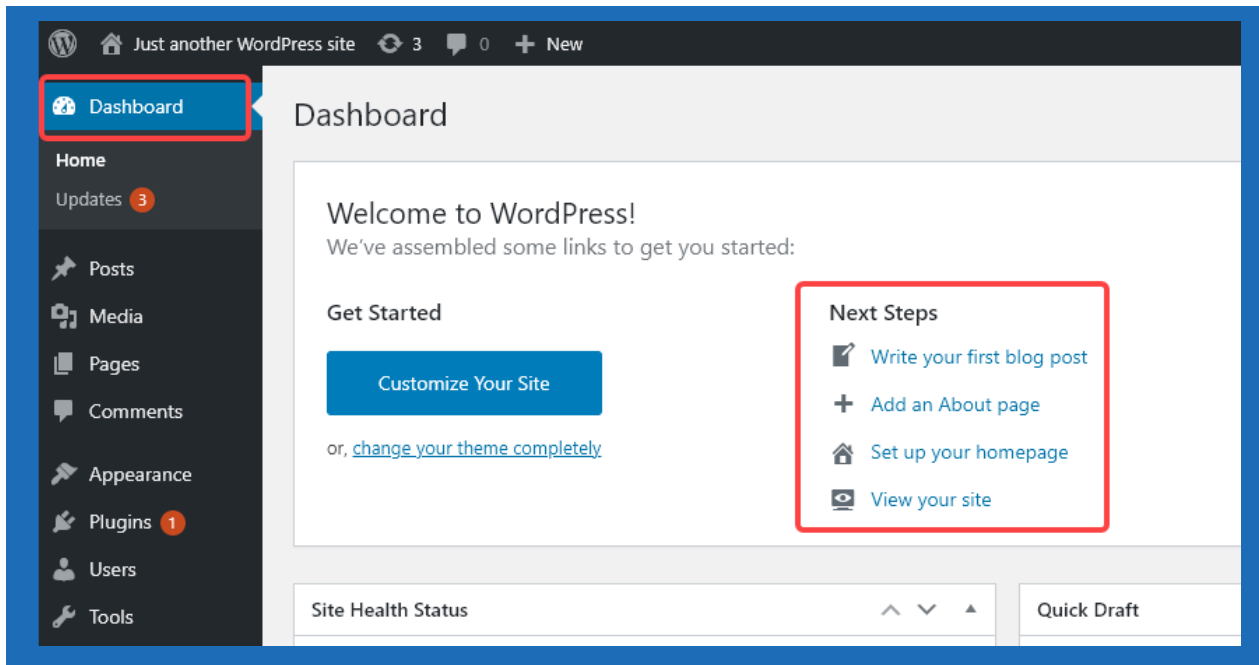


Then, click the 'WordPress.org' themes button on the right hand side and you'll see a huge number of themes:



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Once you're happy with your changes, click the X in the top left to close the live customizer. You can then click on the 'Dashboard' tab to go back to the list of suggested actions.





## Going Further With Your Website

If you're planning to blog, check out my site [Brighter Blogging](#) for regular articles on all aspects of blogging, plus round-ups of great content elsewhere on the web.

If you're using WordPress.org (self-hosted WordPress, with your own web hosting), you can get tons of help from the [WPBeginner website](#) and the [WPBeginner Engage Facebook group](#).

I wrote for WPBeginner full time during the whole of 2020, so a bunch of the tutorials and articles on their site are ones I wrote ... and I can definitely vouch for the others, too, as my colleagues were amazing! (A small team of us wrote as "Editorial Staff".)

Most of all ... have fun with your website. If you want to learn how to do something new, search on Google or YouTube, and you'll find plenty of helpful instructions.