

Building a WordPress Website

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For additional resources and tutorials, visit www.usmcdh.org

WordPress: An Overview

WordPress is an open-source platform for publishing websites. It is one of the most popular platforms for web building, supporting roughly 43% of all websites on the internet. Whether you're starting a personal blog, creating a professional portfolio, managing a business, or launching a digital project, WordPress offers many creative opportunities to develop your web presence.

Although WordPress is an open source platform (WordPress.org), there are free and subscription-based options for hosting your site (such as WordPress.com or Reclaim Hosting). WordPress.com offers a managed version of WordPress that simplifies the setup process but can be more limited in customization unless you choose a paid plan. Alternatively, independent hosting providers, such as Reclaim Hosting, give you greater flexibility, control, and ownership over your files and data.

Examples of Personal-Professional Websites:

Autumn Painter, zooarchaeologist and DH scholar (portfolio style example), autumnpainter.com

Jennifer Andrella: jenniferandrella.com

Helana Darwin: helanadarwin.com

Arkady Martine, historian + sci-fi writer: www.arkadymartine.net

Jessica Hirsche, letter artist + design: www.jessicahirsche.is

Aaron Lagrone, musician: www.aaronlagrone.com

Aileen's Music Room, music educator (blog + e-commerce): mrsmiraclesmusicroom.com
Music Izz Groovy, Music Services: www.musicizzgroovy.com

Logging in to a Class Wordpress website

All students have been added as users to the class website. When registering for the first time, follow the prompts in your email to complete your account registration.

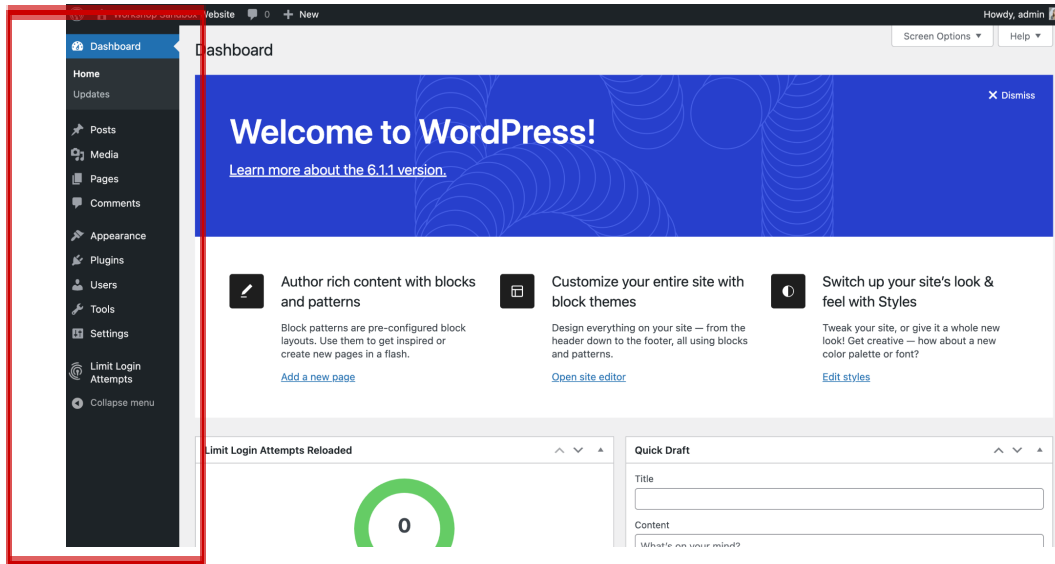
1. After completing your registration, type the website URL with **/admin** at the end to prompt the login page.
2. Enter your USM email as your username.
3. Enter your password. If you've forgotten your password, click **lost your password?** to reset your password by email.

How to Create a New WordPress Website

1. **WordPress:** Go to WordPress.com and create a free website that is hosted through their service. Please note that the free option will include "WordPress.com" in your domain name (the URL). WordPress also offers subscription packages to buy your own domain name, at \$48 per year.
2. **Reclaim Hosting:** Purchase a domain + subscription package through reclaimhosting.com for \$50 per year. Reclaim hosting is an ideal option if you want access to apps other than WordPress, if you plan to create subdomains (spinoff websites), and if you want more control over customization. Most importantly, Reclaim Hosting enables you to own your files and databases directly.

Navigating the WordPress Dashboard

1. To log in to your WordPress website, add **/admin** to the end of your website URL. This will bring you to the login page.
2. Once you are logged in to WordPress, your page will refresh to the **Dashboard**. This is the editing interface of the website where you can access a menu on the left side to add pages and content to the website.

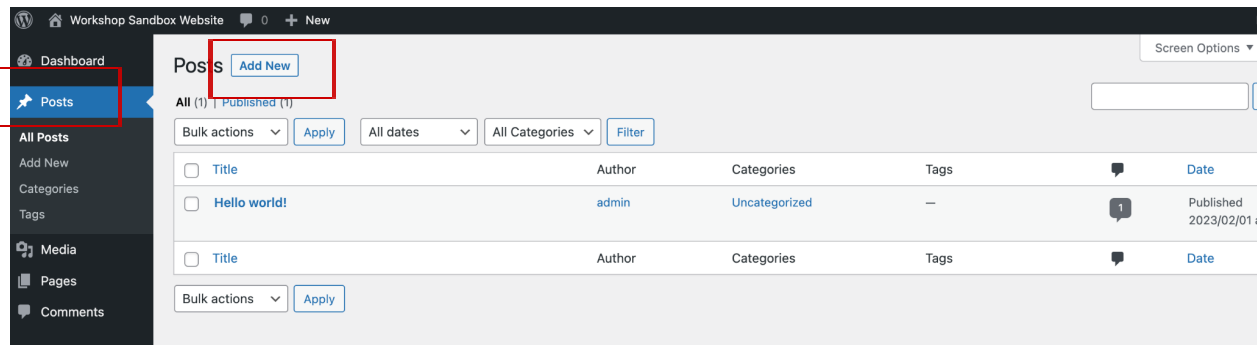


3. You can always view **the public side** of your website by clicking on the website title in the upper left corner. Additionally, to **access your account settings**, select your profile icon in the upper right corner.

Creating a New Page or Post

The content of your WordPress website can be categorized into Pages or Posts. **Pages** are for stable, permanent content on a website. **Posts** look similar to pages, but are designed for blogging and appear in a series. Any blog posts you publish will auto-populate on a **posts page** where site visitors can read a stream of posts.

1. To create a new **page** or **post**, select your option from the menu in the left column.
2. Click on the blue **Add New** button at the top of the page.

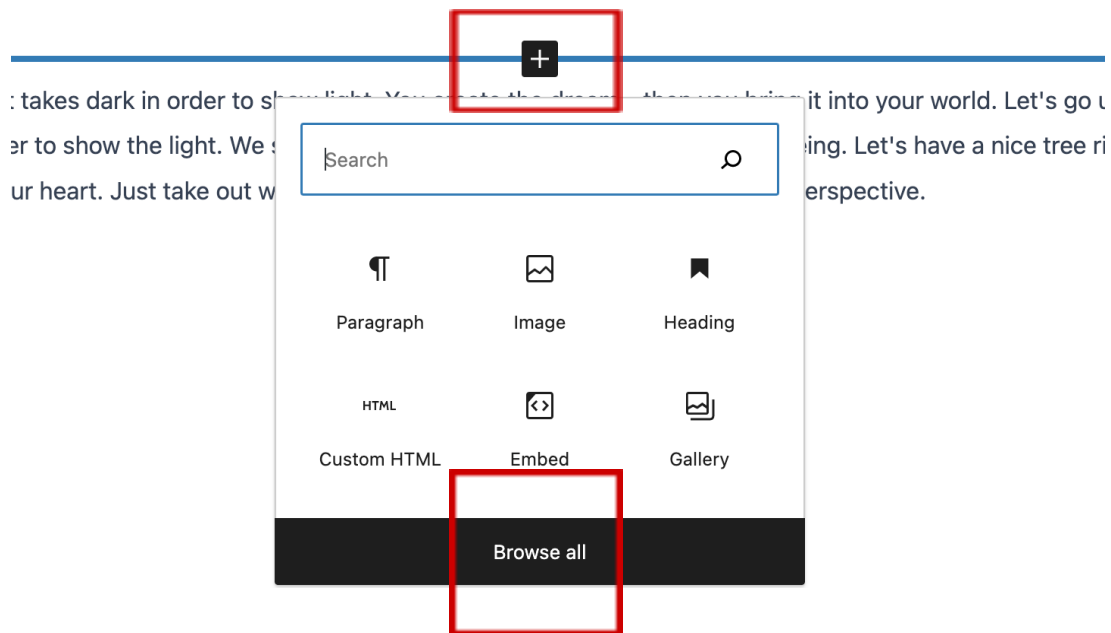


3. **Preview** or **Publish** your post when you are ready. You may edit or delete posts at any time from the Posts landing page of the website dashboard.

Adding Content using the Block Editor

WordPress uses a visual editor for building content. This is an editing page where you can add different types of content blocks and arrange them in a variety of styles. For more information about blocks, check out the [WordPress documentation on blocks](#).

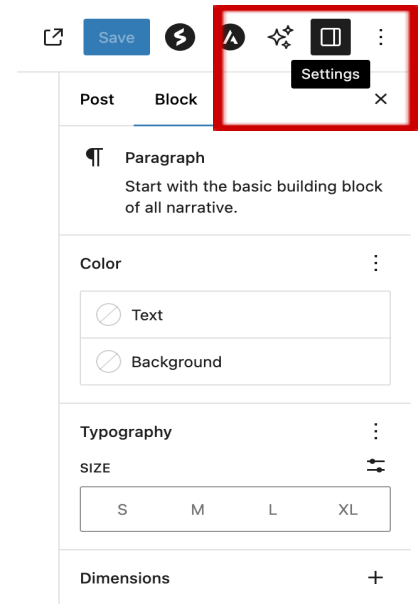
1. Add different content blocks by hovering your cursor on the page until the **+** button appears. Clicking on it will open options for adding text and media content blocks into your page. Select **Browse All** for a full library of text, media, design, widget, and embed options.



2. Repeat the process of adding and arranging content blocks onto the page as you build out the content of your blog post.

Tip: if you are trying to pair an **image/media** with text, use the **columns** content block which can help you better organize your content into side-by-side displays.

3. The **block settings** feature in the upper right corner of the page gives additional styling options to edit the appearance of your content blocks. Media and text blocks have a variety of different settings (colors, fonts, dimensions, interactivity etc.). Explore these options to edit the style and appearance of your content blocks.

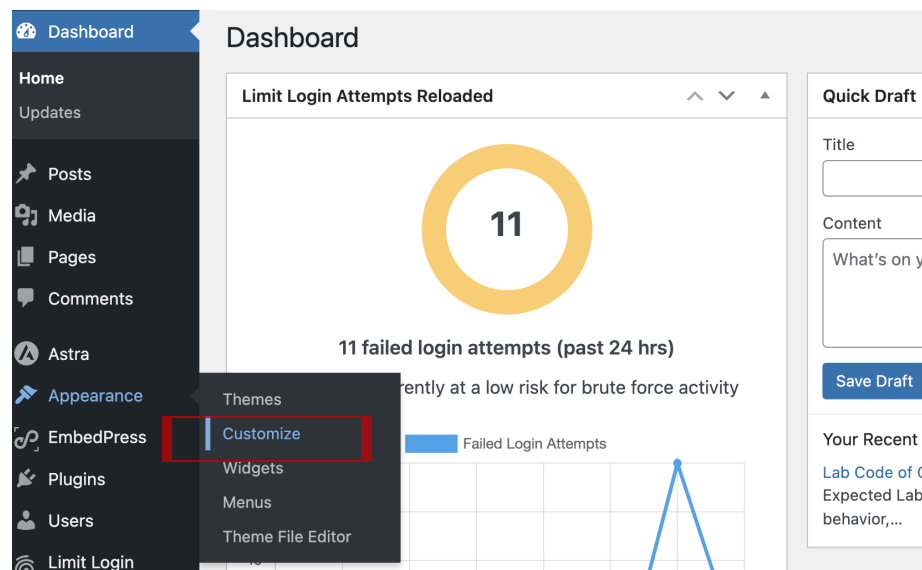


Customizing the Appearance of your Website

WordPress uses **Themes** for altering the overall appearance of your website. After creating a new site, you will see a “Twenty Twenty-Four” theme installed. You are welcome to explore this theme, but know that it has a very different interface than WordPress’s other themes. There also appears to be issues with linking pages to the top menu.

WordPress offers hundreds of free and “freemium” themes based upon the type of website you want to create– a blog, portfolio, small business website, etc. It may be difficult to find a good theme that does exactly what you want it to do, so do some research on which theme might work best for your site. The **Astra** theme is a great place to start.

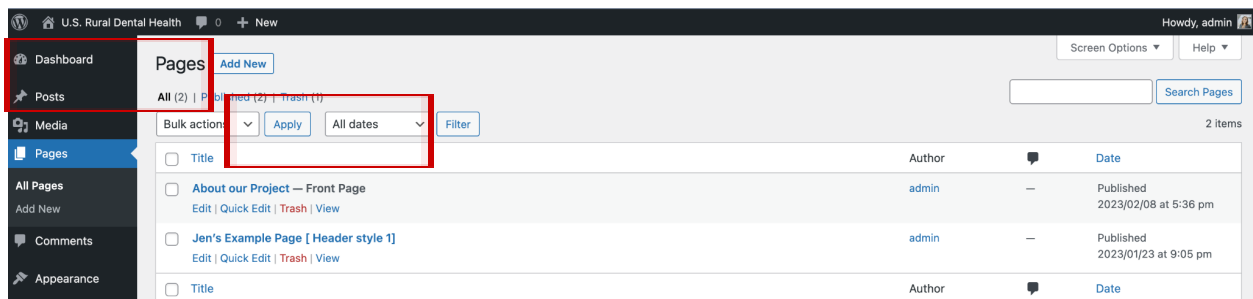
1. From the Dashboard, go to the left menu and select **Appearance** and then **Customize**.



Creating a New Page

Content can be categorized into Pages or Posts. **Pages** are for when you want to put content onto a website for others to see and then leave it. **Posts**, on the other hand, are designed for blogging. The following instructions are for creating pages.

1. You can create a new page by selecting the **Pages Tab** from the dashboard and selecting the **Add New** button. Alternatively, you can edit an existing page by hovering below the title and

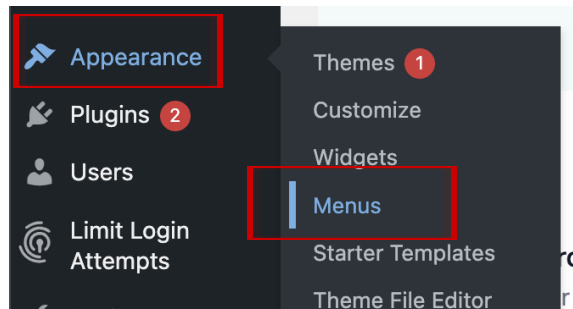


2. A new page will open with a visual editor where you can alter the fonts, colors, layout, and other appearance options on your website.
 - a. **Tip: Install and activate the plugin “Customify”** to give you even more appearance options! To do this, navigate to **Plugins** from the left menu, select **add new plugin**, and search “customify.” You may also browse other plugins that WordPress offers.
3. From the Customize page, you can also manage your site identity, change your **Homepage settings** (where you can change your landing page to a static page or a Posts page), and add widgets (calendar, search bar, etc) to your site.
4. Experiment with all of these customizing options to transform the appearance of your website. Know that themes are limited through preset options, so trialing different themes and plugins will help you find the right look for your site.

Adding a Page to a Menu

WordPress *will not* automatically add your page to the top-level menu of your website. To set up a menu manually, follow these steps:

1. From the dashboard, hover over **Appearance** and select **Menus**.
2. A new page will open where you can manage the items on your menu (can be pages, posts, custom links, categories).

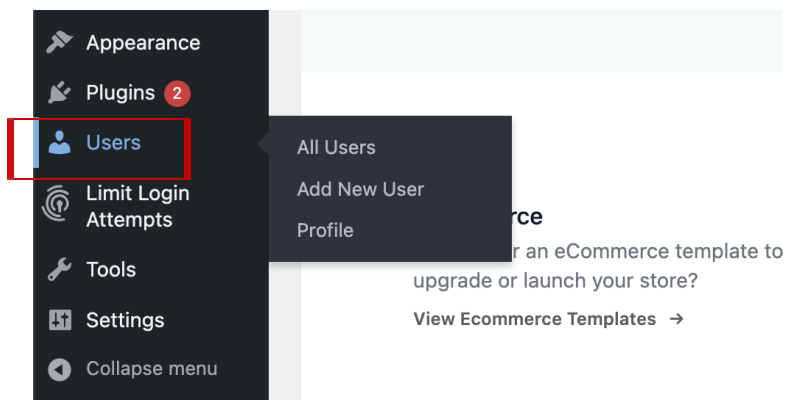


3. You can also click and drag menu items to create a dropdown menu. Select one menu beneath another item and move it slightly to the right to make it a sub-item.

Adding Users to Your Website

If you are using your website for a class blog or a group project, you can add multiple users to your website.

1. From the dashboard, navigate to **Users** from the left menu.



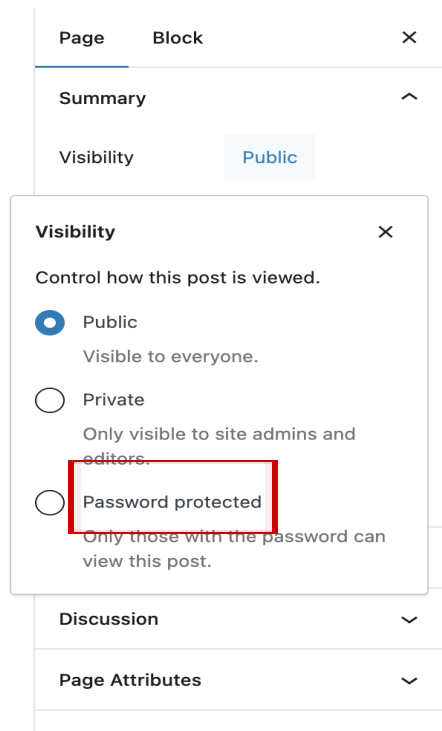
2. Select **Add New User** and fill in the required fields. The lab will use student usernames and emails for creating project/class websites.
3. Ignore the automatic password created for the account (but don't delete it). Make sure that the **Send User Notification** box is checked.
4. Select the **User Role** from the menu provided. For a list of what each role means, see [the definitions list from WordPress](#).
5. Select the **Add New User** button– this will send a registration email to the user and prompt them to set up their own password. You may edit or delete users from the **All Users** page from the dashboard.

Password Protecting a Single Page on your Website

WordPress allows you to create a unique password to protect a page on your website. This way, only users with the password will be able to view the content.

1. While editing a page, navigate to the right menu where you will find **visibility**.

Select the “public” button and a menu will appear.



2. Select **Password Protected** and type in the password that you want to use.
3. Publish your page to save your changes.
4. Now your page will display a message saying it is password protected and prompt visitors to type in a password to view the content.

Managing Comment Settings

1. From the Dashboard, go to **Settings** and select **Discussion**.
2. A new page will open where you can adjust the comment settings for your website.
3. We recommend turning off the ability for non-users to comment by selecting the option “Users must be registered and logged in to comment” from the **Other Comment Settings** section.
4. Be aware that leaving the comment ability open to non-users will probably bring a lot of spam comments to your site. Limiting comments to users-only has been a good fix for class blogs that ask students to comment on each others’ posts.

Web Accessibility

User experience is a critical part of any Digital Humanities project. There are many resources available for evaluating and improving accessibility:

1. [Write helpful alternative text](#) (alt-text) for visuals so that they can be interpreted by assistive technology. Similarly, **use descriptive text for hyperlinks** and **make transcripts available** for video and audio content.
2. [WhoCanUse](#) is a browser-based tool for evaluating color and text contrasts for people with a variety of visual impairments.
3. [Coolers](#) is a color palette generator that includes checks for contrast and color blindness. It’s also a great tool for creating brand colors!
4. The [Photosensitive Epilepsy Analysis Tool \(PEAT\)](#) is a free, downloadable software that identifies the seizure risks of video and animations.
5. The [Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool \(WAVE\)](#) is a way for website creators to evaluate their content and make it more accessible to people with disabilities. You can either enter in your website and review its accessibility, OR there is an option to install a browser extension to regularly evaluate web content.
6. The [Color Blindness Simulator \(COBLIS\)](#) is a free tool to evaluate the color blindness accessibility of still images.

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