

Maintaining a blog while we were in Peace Corps (Jamaica 2012-14) - and the skills we developed while doing so - was really rewarding for my husband and I. Today, we use those skills to support ourselves with creative, online work so that we can continue traveling. In fact, we were living in Ecuador during most of the original Boot Camp Blog Challenge! It all started by being more intentional with our blog, publishing consistently, and constantly working to improve.

My hope is that participating in this Challenge will be a really practical (and fun!) way to help you make an even bigger impact with your blog.

As a reminder, here's how the Blog Challenge will work:

- You'll get 10+ prompts to guide you through creating interesting, meaningful blog posts abroad
- You'll have a week for each prompt to write your response on your own blog. I highly recommend scheduling a weekly writing day, a proofreading/editing day, and a publishing date on your calendar.
- Since we want to keep this Challenge free for everyone, we just ask that you include the "Blogging Abroad Challenge" badge/link (detailed instructions will be provided) on each of your blog posts to help spread the word about us.
- You can share the links to your Challenge posts in the comments section of the corresponding "round ups" on our site. This will ensure we see what you've done and allow your posts to get more exposure. Please join us in sharing!

Tell someone

One of the best ways to hold yourself accountable to a new goal (like completing a Blog Challenge) is to tell someone about it. For example, you could:

- [Share this page](#) in your cohort's Facebook group and invite them to join or follow along
- [Tweet this: "Join me and culture bloggers around the world in @BloggingAbroad's Blog Challenge"](#)
- Take an Instagram photo of your keyboard and let people know your fingers will soon be spending a lot of time there during the Blog Challenge
- Please tag @BloggingAbroad when you share on social media

Sincerely,

Michelle C.

Peace Corps Blog It Home winner, Jamaica '12-14

Founder of Blogging Abroad and IntentionalTravelers.com

WEEK ONE: And we're off!

It's day one, week one of the Blogging Abroad Challenge. I'm so excited to be on this adventure with you, and I hope you're ready to kick things into high gear! Instructions for your first challenge are below:

1. Write a blog post for the following prompt: **Your Why**

Details: This your chance to introduce yourself to the Blogging Abroad community and revisit why you went abroad. So often, we get caught up in the day-to-day realities of our life that we forget to sit back and look at the big picture. Even readers who have been with you for a while will appreciate a recap of your Why.

Below are some thoughts you might want to include (though you don't need to write a novel answering all of them!):

- How did you get to where you are?
- What were your hopes when you first went abroad?
- What personal values and priorities influenced your choice?
- What challenges and sacrifices did you overcome to get here?
- Have you achieved some of the goals you set for yourself through this experience?
- It would be a good idea to include a current photo of yourself in this post.

Optional: If you don't already have an About page on your blog, make one now using this prompt. You are welcome to submit a webpage rather than a blog post, just e-mail the link to hello@bloggingabroad.org because our feed won't pick up your page as a new entry.

Get creative (A few more optional ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own.):

- Share a timeline (with photos, if possible) as you went through the process of leaving home and starting your new life abroad.

- Turn your why into a concise personal mission statement. Let this be the centerpiece of your post and follow it up with a deeper explanation.
- Make a list of the goals and hopes you had for yourself before going abroad. Check off the ones you've already accomplished.
- Write your Why in recipe format, i.e.: "Take one year of study abroad, add to the a big dose of love for learning Spanish, and mix in two ounces of restless wanderlust."

As long as you show or tell us Your Why, you can do it however you want! The thoughts above are just ideas to help the creative juices flow.

2. Embed the Blog Challenge badge in your post



Upload the image above to your blog and make sure it's linked to <http://bloggingabroad.org/blog-challenge>

Note: If you really struggle with this, please just mention somewhere in your post that you're participating in our Blog Challenge and include our link.

3. Publish the post on your blog within the next week

Sharing your post with us is optional, but we'd really love to see it! Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #1](#). If you share on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook be sure to tag us @bloggingabroad!

Alright, let's do this!

[Tweet Now: "Join me and culture bloggers around the world in @BloggingAbroad's Blog Challenge"](#)

WEEK TWO

It's time for challenge #2! Are you ready? Hopefully, you've successfully completed challenge #1, Your Why, and have shared it with us.

Here is your next mission, should you choose to accept it:

Write a blog post for the following prompt: HOME

Details: You've introduced yourself and why you're abroad, now it's time to get your readers acquainted with your surroundings. If you're familiar with the MTV show, Crips (where celebrities would show off their homes), you could go that route to share your Home Away From Home. Or you could focus more on what other homes look like in your community.

You'd be surprised how curious readers are about where you live. What does it look like? How is it different from what you grew up with? Where do you spend the most time?

Side note: *Be sensitive to safety precautions when depicting where you live (especially if you're in an area where you could be targeted for robbery) and protect your neighbor's privacy as well.*

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- For brownie points, do a video tour of your abode. Practice what you're going to say and edit it down so it's short and sweet (under 2 minutes is best to hold peoples' attention).
- Take pictures or descriptions of each room and explain the items that might seem unusual to folks back home.
- Take pictures or describe the top five favorite parts of your home and share why they're important or memorable.
- Share pictures or descriptions of the different kinds of homes that can be found in your community.
- Feature a friend or co-worker's home if you've already shared your own.

Been there done that? If you've already done a post similar to this, you have the option of submitting the link to your old post to our Round Up. However, we challenge you to update your old post, or put a new spin on it to make something fresh and new!

As always, you can complete this challenge however you choose! The thoughts above are just ideas to help the creative juices flow.

Publish the post on your blog within the next week

Sharing your post with us is optional, but we'd really love to see it! Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #2](#). If you share on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook be sure to tag us @bloggingabroad!

WEEK THREE

Write a blog post for the following prompt: A Day in the Life

Details: This challenge is all about giving your readers a peek into your daily routine.

An *awesome* post will avoid rambling and highlight the parts of your day that deviate from what people back home would consider ordinary. You don't need to include every waking minute - just the highlights. There are a couple ways to do this...

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Recount your day in a series of "tweets" - updates that are under 140 characters each.
- Create a timeline for your day with brief descriptions at each point (i.e. 7:00am Wake up to sound of roosters, 8:00am Walk 1.3 miles to school)
- In addition to time markers for each activity, snap a picture and write a brief caption
- Go the extra mile and make a video of your day. Invite someone over to be your videographer or do a series of selfies. Just remember to keep it concise (under 3 minutes) with short clips, or you won't hold peoples' attention.
- Recount your most typical day, or alternatively, recap a day that was particularly unusual
- If you've already done a similar blog post about yourself, share a "day in the life" of someone in your community (either use observation and imagination, or actually interview someone)

Been there done that? If you've already done a post similar to this, you have the option of submitting the link to your old post. However, we challenge you to update your old post, or put a new spin on it to make something fresh and new!

Publish the post on your blog within the next week

Sharing your post with us is optional, but we'd really love to see it! Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #3](#). If you share on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook be sure to tag us @bloggingabroad!

WEEK FOUR

Before we dive in, here are a few friendly reminders:

- Please remember to **use the badge image and link** in each of your posts (details below).
- **Share your link** in the comments at the bottom of the corresponding Round Up post or **tag us on social media** so we can help share your posts too!

Write a blog post for the following prompt: On The Road

Details: Chances are, you probably witness some interesting things when you're out and about in your host community. Depending on how long you've been abroad, what once seemed strange and ridiculous has probably become normal now. Think back to what surprised you when you first arrived- or what surprises other visitors. Try experiencing your daily commute or walks through the community with new eyes. What do you see? Hear? Smell?

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Focus on just one of the senses and describe all of the sights/sounds/smells you encounter in a day
- Focus on just one particular encounter and describe all of the details (sights, sounds, smells) in the scene
- Create a list of the top 10 craziest things you've seen on the road
- Take pictures of the typical people (with permission) and places you pass on a daily basis
- Explain the various ways that people in your community get around, using words and pictures
- Take pictures of the same scene at different times of the day or week to show how it changes

Publish the post on your blog within the next week

Sharing your post with us is optional, but we'd really love to see it! Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #4](#). If you share on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook be sure to tag us @bloggingabroad!

WEEK FIVE

Our fifth challenge is underway!

Write a blog post for the following prompt: I Never Knew

Details: Even if you researched your host country before arrival, there were probably a few things about the culture that surprised you. And there are probably some misconceptions or interesting facts about the country that most people back home aren't aware of. This is your chance to uncover some hidden aspects of your host country that may seem obvious now but maybe you wouldn't know about until you visit. Take them along with you as you relive your journey of discovery.

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- This is a prime topic for a List Post. Choose 3-5 things you "never knew" and use headings, pictures, and a brief description for each.
- Choose one thing you didn't expect about your country and recount the story of when you discovered it
- Spend some time coming up with a catchy title that will intrigue people to find out more
- Narrow down the things you "never knew" to things that fall under one particular theme, like things you never knew about: community traditions and celebrations, transportation, superstitions, language, perceptions of Americans, etc.

Publish the post on your blog within the next week

As always, sharing your post with us is optional, but we'd really love to see it! Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #5](#).

WEEK SIX

Here's your sixth blog post prompt. That means you're about half-way through the Challenge! Let's do this!

Write a blog post for the following prompt: **Community Member Profile**

Details: This week you'll be introducing us to someone in your host community and sharing about their life. As usual, there are plenty of different ways to highlight a person. Choose your own style.

Please remember to be sensitive to cultural differences and personal preferences regarding privacy when you share on a public blog. Even if the individual can't actually read your blog, write as if they will read it.

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Interview someone in your community about their life and share an edited/translated script
- Ask a community member to introduce their home, work, and/or family on video or through written interview with pictures
- Describe a member of your community based on your past experience with them - What are their habits and beliefs? Where do they live? What do they do for work? (If necessary, change their name to protect their privacy)
- Create a description of a "typical" but imaginary mother/father/student/aunty in your community, based on an anonymous collection of real people. Explain the cultural rationale behind anything that might seem "weird" about that person to an outsider.
- Draw a picture of a community member's family tree or ask them to do it for you
- Tell the story about how you first met one of your community members
- Highlight someone you know well, or use this as an opportunity to get to know someone else a little better

Publish the post on your blog within the next week

As always, sharing your post with us is optional, but we'd really love to see it! Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #6](#).

WEEK SEVEN

We're on to blog prompt #7. Keep up the great work!

Write a blog post for the following prompt: Money

Details: Money, money, money. It's everywhere you go, but that doesn't mean its value is easy for everyone to grasp. Often, people back home are surprised to find out what things cost in other places. Like: what does a dollar get you in your host country?

Please remember to be sensitive to cultural differences and personal preferences regarding privacy when you share on a public blog. Even if the individual can't actually read your blog, write as if they will read it.

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Share a list or photos of items in your community that cost the equivalent of \$1
- Share a list or photos of items you purchase regularly and translate the cost into your home currency
- Explain what items in your community are especially expensive or surprisingly reasonable and why that might be the case
- Break down the typical cost of living, or give price ranges, for what people in your community pay per month/week

Note: Be cautious when sharing about money that you're not disclosing your valuables or anything that might affect your safety or reputation among your neighbors, if they were to see your post.

Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #7](#).

WEEK EIGHT

I hope you all are enjoying this Challenge and each other's posts as much as I am. Thanks for participating and making this project so fun and meaningful! Without further adieu, here's numero 8:

Write a blog post for the following prompt: Details

Details: We've done some big picture prompts, but now it's time to get hyper-focused! This week we're going micro! The tiny details in life are often overlooked and yet details are what help to fill in a story and make it come to life for the reader. What are the tiny details around you that people at home would never think about unless you showed them?

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Introduce your readers to the textures of your life with up-close "macro" images of things in your room, office, or market
- Hone in on one object or scene and describe the background details of what's going on
- List the sounds you hear when you wake up
- Explain or share a story of the small cultural details a visitor might miss that actually make a big difference

P.S. Don't be afraid to really hone in on one specific theme and keep the post short and sweet.

The Round Up for this prompt can be found here: [Round Up #8](#).

WEEK NINE

We are down to our final two challenges! Even if you've fallen behind, it's not too late to jump right back in and finish out the Blog Challenge with us!

Write a blog post for the following prompt: Zany Moments

Details: When it comes to living abroad, zany and unusual moments come with the territory. For this prompt, you're going to choose *one* zany moment to share.

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Introduce your readers to the single craziest part of your day, be it the commute to work, the gaggle of kids that greet you at home, or the sweet man on the street corner who always sings Christmas songs.
- Recount a time when your host country or culture really threw you for a loop
- Share a photo from your community that depicts something your readers would consider unusual or chaotic
- Think back to your in country "firsts" (these are often the times when the new things we encounter seem more unusual to us)

Notes:

1. Be careful when describing unusual moments to avoid calling the people or the culture "crazy" or "strange." Instead, state the facts of what happened, share how you felt, and use the opportunity to explain why this different phenomenon happens in your host culture.
2. With Blogging Abroad, fun and crazy stories should still promote respect, understanding, and responsible behavior.
3. Remember that you can submit a link to a previously written post that relates to the prompt, or spiff up a story you've used before and republish it.

The Round Up for this prompt can be found here: [Round Up #9](#).

WEEK TEN

Can you believe we're already to prompt #10? You have reached the final challenge! Thanks for taking part!

Write a blog post for the following prompt: Quotes & Proverbs

Details: Every culture has its nuggets of wisdom that often come in the form of a proverb or some other phrase that people say on a regular basis. Sometimes these cultural phrases are profound and shine a light on peoples' behaviors and values. Other times, they might seem a little bit wacky. Either way, choose a quote to be the centerpiece of your post and go from there.

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Share a traditional proverb along with the literal translation and a deeper explanation.
- Share a quote you often hear someone (or multiple people) in your community say. Explain the context of when it's said and what it means.
- Give a top five list of proverbs or phrases that you have a special appreciation for.
- Explain your host country's motto or a phrase from the national anthem that represents the heart of the culture.

As always, if you're pressed for time, remember that you can submit a link to a previously written post that relates to the prompt, or spiff up a quote-related story you've used before.

Please copy and paste the link to your published post in the comments section at the bottom of [Round Up #10](#)

Woohoo! Congrats! You've completed your 10 challenges!

As you may or may not know: our original Boot Camp Blog Challenge actually had 12 prompts. So I thought I'd share these with you as a bonus, just in case you're on a roll and want to keep going!

#11: Top 5 Tour

Details: Some of you are lucky enough to get visitors from home while you're abroad. But even so, there are probably plenty of folks back home who will never have the chance to step foot in your community. For this challenge, you're going to give your readers a virtual tour. But rather than show them everything at once, curate your tour down to five things. So... what are the "Top 5" things you would show a visitor?

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Take pictures of 5 places in your community that every visitor should see.
- You can include more than just locations to visit in your community. List must-try cultural experiences instead.
- Visitors come in all flavors. Choose a niche or theme for your tour- top 5 eateries, top 5 transportation experiences, or something of your choosing.
- Video your tour in real life.
- Write it out like a travel itinerary or brochure.

#12: My New Normal

Details: This prompt could also be titled "I Never Thought I Would..." What is something you now do on a regular basis in your host country that you didn't do back home? How have you adapted your routine or social behaviors to the culture around you?

Get creative (Some *optional* ideas to make things interesting. Choose one or make up your own):

- Share a before and after picture of yourself that depicts a 'new normal' in action
- Write a Top 5 (or 10) List of the things you never thought you would do before going to your host country
- Tell a story about when you first realized you had adapted to a particular cultural behavior
- Share the aspects of your new life that you hope to keep as part of your 'new normal' when you go back home