



Blog Post Guidelines

The History of English (Ling 390)
College of Staten Island
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Blog Post Guidelines

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There are two types of assignments in this class, History of English (Ling 390): (1) blog posts, of which there are six, and (2) a final paper.¹ As outlined on our syllabus, the blog posts are worth a cumulative total of 60% of your overall grade in this course. The present document is put together to clarify what should go into each blog post and how posts are graded, with examples of a good and a poor blog post.

The Basics

There are six blog posts, each of which worth 10% of your total grade. The blog posts are all meant to help you towards putting together your final paper, while at the same time reinforcing methods learned in class. Some blog posts will have you write what may end up being portions of your final paper, and some will be more about helping you acquire skills which will be useful for your final paper. Your blog posts should conform to the citation standards given in the [Unified Style Sheet for Linguistics](#). Step-by-step instructions on the nuts-and-bolts of posting to the course site can be found [here](#).

Sources

In most of your blog posts, you will refer to outside sources. These may include readings from class, or sources that you find on your own. You may refer to data (i.e. primary sources) and/or analysis (i.e. secondary sources). Unlike for your final paper, while analysis must be reputable, it need not be peer-reviewed for your blog posts. If you refer to a website, please include a link to it in the body of your post, like you would see in a normal online article (or in this very document). You can read more about different sorts of sources and how to find them in the [slides](#) from our Sept. 30 lecture. A list of resources for finding sources is on the [Resources](#) page of our website.

¹ For more on the latter, see the [Final Paper Guidelines](#) document on our course website.

Rubric

Each blog post is graded out of a possible total of 10 points. Since each blog post is worth 10% of your total grade in this class, that means that each point on your blog post is the equivalent to one point in your over-all grade. For blog posts 1 and 2, you all got full credit (i.e. 10/10). Blog posts 3–6 will be graded according to the following rubric.

Grading is done with reference to four standards, shown on the table below. Note that two standards – “address the prompt” and “write clearly & thoughtfully” – are graded out of a possible 3 points, while the other two – “meet basic requirements” and “refer to relevant sources” – are graded out of a possible 2 points.

Standard	3	2	1	0
Address the prompt	Post addresses all aspects of the prompt.	Post addresses most aspects of the prompt, but at least one question is left unanswered.	Post incompletely addresses the prompt.	Post does not address the prompt at all.
Write clearly & thoughtfully	Writing is clear. Thoughts build on one another. The discussion is well thought out.	Writing is clear. The thought-process behind the writing can be followed, but there are some non-sequiturs or unclear jumps in logic.	Some ideas are expressed clearly, but the overall point or message is hard to understand.	Thoughts are disconnected, reading like stream-of-consciousness or a series of separate, unrelated ideas.
Meet basic requirements		Post submitted on-time, meets word-count requirement, citations follow the right format.	Post submitted on-time, word-count is within 20 words of the required minimum, but citations are done incorrectly.	Submitted late, or is too short by 20 words.
Refer to relevant sources		Refers to relevant sources, peer-reviewed and/or of clear value.	Refers to relevant sources, but they are not peer-reviewed or their value is dubious.	Does not refer to sources, or sources are irrelevant.

Examples

Below is the prompt for blog post #3.

Blog Post #3

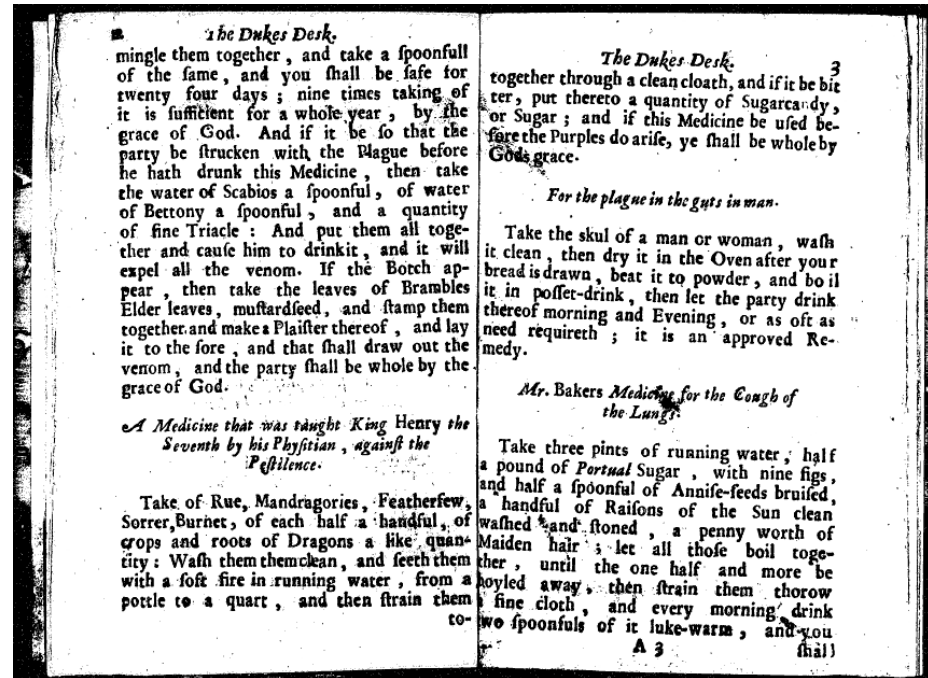
This week, you will be practicing your skills reading historic materials and working towards better understanding them. These skills are important in working with data (or primary sources) for your final research papers, as well as for future work in historical linguistics. You will choose one of the Early Modern texts discussed in class on Wednesday, 21 October, and with it, complete the following five steps: (1) Choose a passage of about 75 words in this text. (2) Take a screenshot of that passage, and include that screenshot in your post. (3) Transcribe that passage (i.e. retype it) in the body of your post. Do not modernize spellings or punctuation, but retype it with historic spellings intact, with the exception that you should replace the long s, <ſ>, with <s>. Include a citation below this transcription. (4) Underline or **bold** any unfamiliar words in the transcription. Try to find their definitions in the Oxford English Dictionary online or another reputable source, and include your findings below your transcription. (5) List your references, i.e. the source for your passage and any dictionaries that you used. (I included the citations to use for each text on our website.)

In the following few pages, I include two example responses to this prompt: one, a 10/10 response, which should serve as a model for you; and another, a 4/10 response, which should serve as a warning. These examples are my own fictional creations; neither are based on (or pulled from) the work of any actual student. Both responses refer to different sections of the same document, 1661's *The Dukes Desk Newly Broken Vp*, by W. Lovell. You can access this document for yourself [here](#).

Example One (10/10)

A Medicine that was taught King Henry the Seventh by his Physitian, against the Pestilence.

Take of Rue, Mandragories, Featherfew, Sorrer, Burnet, of each half a handful, of crops and roots of Dragons a like quantity: Wash them them clean, and seeth them with a soft fire in running water, from a pottle to a quart, and then strain them together through a clean cloath, and if it be bitter, put thereto a quantity of Sugarcandy, or Sugar; and if this Medicine be used before the Purples do arise, ye shall be whole by Gods grace. (Lovell 1661: 2-3)



- Rue: “Any of various southern European dwarf shrubs constituting the genus *Ruta* (family Rutaceae), esp. (more fully common or garden rue) *R. graveolens*, which has yellow flowers and bitter, strongly scented feathery leaves, and was formerly much used for medicinal purposes. Also with distinguishing word” (OED Online).
- Mandragories: Neither ‘mandragories,’ ‘mangratorie,’ nor ‘mandragory’ have entries in the OED. It seems to me that this probably referred to mandrakes, whose scientific name includes ‘mandragora’ in it. The OED defines the mandrake as “A poisonous and narcotic Mediterranean plant, *Mandragora officinarum* (family Solanaceae), with a very short stem and solitary purple or whitish flowers” (OED Online).
- Featherfew: “The plant feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium* (family Asteraceae (Compositae)), used medicinally for a variety of purposes including the treatment of fevers. In early use also: †any of several other plants used in the treatment of fevers,

spec. common centaury, *Centaureum erythraea* (*obsolete*); (with distinguishing word) †any of various other plants of the family Asteraceae (cf. feverfew n. 2) (*obsolete*)” (OED Online).

- Sorrer: The OED’s entries for ‘sorrer’ indicate it as a variant spelling for ‘sorrow,’ which seems inappropriate for this context. It could have been a variation of ‘sorrell,’ which the OED defines as “One or other of certain small perennial plants belonging to the genus *Rumex*, characterized by a sour taste, and to some extent cultivated for culinary purposes; esp. the common wild species, *R. acetosa*” (OED Online).
- Burnet: “The popular name of plants belonging to the genera *Sanguisorba* and *Poterium* (family Rosaceæ), of which the Great or Common Burnet (*Sanguisorba officinalis*) is common in meadows, and the Lesser or Salad Burnet (*Poterium Sanguisorba*) on the Chalk. The old herbalists confounded with these the Burnet Saxifrage *Pimpinella Saxifraga*, an umbelliferous plant resembling the Burnets in foliage” (OED Online).
- Pottle: “A pot, tankard, or similar container, (usually) *spec.* one having the capacity of a pottle (sense 1b). Now *archaic* and *historical*” (OED Online).

References

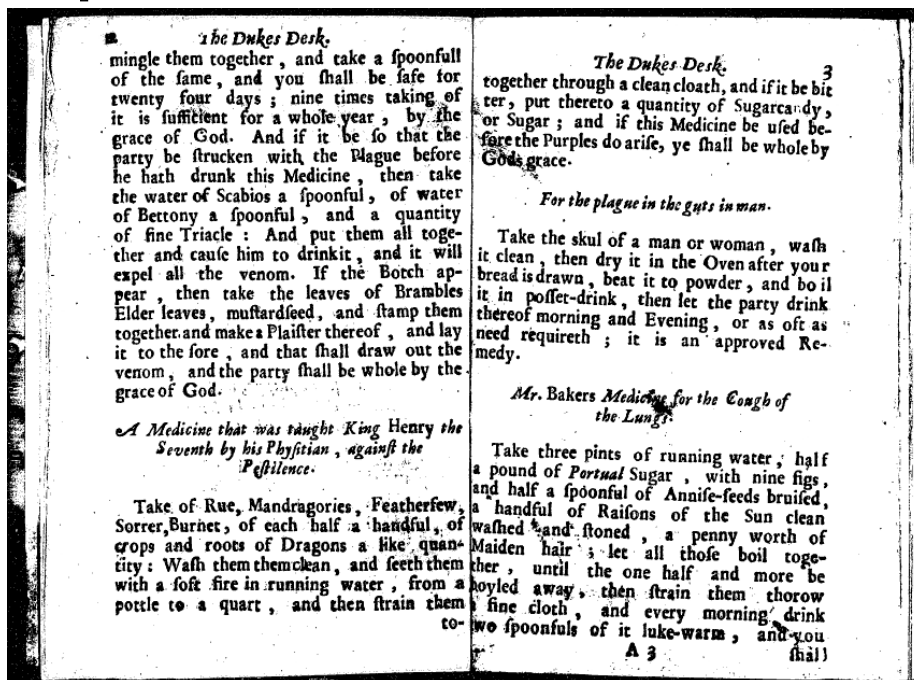
Lovell, W. 1661. *The Dukes Desk Newly Broken Vp*. London: Printed for John Garway.

OED Online. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed.com/> (18 October 2020)

Example One: Graded

The above blog post merits a 10 out of 10. It addresses all aspects of the prompt, earning it the full 3 points for the “address the prompt” standard. Although this post requires very little in the way of creative writing, the identification of uncommon words shows thought and consideration, so the full 3 points are awarded for the “write clearly & thoughtfully” standard. We can imagine that this was submitted on time, and we can see that the word count is correct and the citations all follow the right format, so a full 2 points are awarded for the “meet basic requirements” standard, and, finally, relevant, high-quality sources are referred to, yielding a full 2 points for the “refer to relevant sources” standard.

Example Two (4/10)



Mr. Baker's Medicine for the Cough of the Lungs.

Take 3 pints of running water, half a pound of Portugal sugar with 9 figs, and half a spoonful of Annise-seeds bruised, a handful of raisins of the sun clean washed and stone.

Annise: "An umbelliferous plant (*Pimpinella Anisum*), a native of the Levant, cultivated for its aromatic and carminative seeds. Confused by the ancients with the Dill (*Anethum graveolens*), which was probably the 'anise' of the Bible of 1611, where Wyclif has 'anete' [v.r. anese]."

References: OED.

The Duke's Desk by W. Lovell.

Example Two: Graded

The blog post above would have earned 4 out of 10 possible points – a failing mark. It addresses only some aspects of the prompt: it excerpts a snippet of significantly less than 75 words, and leaves out most of the passage that this is taken from (on page 3 of the document); additionally, it modifies several spellings; and finally, it neglects to cite the source of the passage. Taken together, these misdeeds merit a single point on the “address the prompt” standard. The thought process behind excerpting only a small portion of a larger passage is not explained, and it is not clear why some editorial choices were made, like replacing spelled-out numbers in the original text with numerals in the transcription. As a result, only a single point is given for the “write clearly & thoughtfully” standard. The transcribed passage is only 42 words long, over 20 words short of the “about 75 words” requested in the prompt. Since it is too short by such a large degree, no points are awarded in the “meets basic requirements” category. However, since the sources referred to are at least relevant and dependable, a full 2 points are awarded for the “refer to relevant sources” standard.



Cover image from *A Rehearsall both straung and true* (1579). [Source](#).

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