everything

YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STARTING A
MOM BLOG

SARAH TITUS

Everything You Need To Know About Starting a Mom Blog

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Blogging is a fantastic way to write about things that you are passionate about, help other people with the knowledge that you have, all while simultaneously earning an income from home. **Before I started blogging, I had no clue it could be so profitable.**

But, there's a learning curve if you have never done it before. In this eBook, **I will make it so easy, you'll wonder why you've not done it before.** Between my step by step video tutorial to all the screenshots walking you through it and this companion eBook, you will have no trouble setting up your own blog from start to finish. And the best news is, that it costs VERY LITTLE to begin!

But before you begin a blog, you'll need to ask yourself some questions first...

What's Your Passion?

The first thing you want to figure out is what type of blog to have.

What can you talk about for hours and hours? What is your favorite thing to talk about? What advice do your friends always come and ask you for? What does everyone around you say you're good at? What do you enjoy doing?

Perhaps you love to do DIY or home decor...start a DIY blog. Maybe you love to teach children...start a parenting blog. Maybe you love to cook...start a food blog. Whatever it is that YOU love to do, do it.

If you try to do a blog that you are not passionate about, you will fail. Sorry, it's true.

First, you won't stick with it. Blogging is hard work. No one wakes up a year down the line a superstar without having poured blood,

sweat, and tears into their blog. If it's not fun for you, if you don't enjoy it, if you don't wake up each morning excited to blog, all that hard work won't be worth it to you.

Secondly, your readers will smell it a mile away. Whatever you are passionate about or not passionate about, for that matter, comes through. Whenever I go through a day or two of not wanting to blog and just being tired and drained, boy is my blog dead. It's like they know. They feel it. They see it. They read it in my words, in my tone, in my language. **You can't fool your readers and you don't want to. You want to be genuinely happy you.**

Hosting

One of the first things you'll need to decide is who to host your blog through. Now, listen carefully when I say, **don't go through GoDaddy.** As a new blogger, my blog got hacked when I was with GoDaddy. They fully admitted it was because they didn't install an update and it should have been. Two other companies I've had serious issues with and would not personally recommend are Host Gator and Lunar Pages.

Likewise, I sat there and watched the hacker hack away at all my hard work and GoDaddy **could NOT get them off.** It was absolutely ridiculous. I have never heard anything good about GoDaddy since I've been blogging. Another company I had a lot of trouble with was HostGator. I wouldn't recommend them either.

A great company that is worth investing in (and backed by myriad of bloggers, including WordPress themselves!) is **BlueHost**. They are a great company and handle both small and bigger blogs, so you don't have to find another host for a long, long time. They

offer 24/7 support and will walk you through everything you need to know, without making you feel stupid.

So, why am I so obsessed with BlueHost exactly?

Reason #1 – They have great prices (you can enjoy prices as low as $2.95/month)!

Reason #2 – They have OUTSTANDING customer service. I don't know about you, but that is important to me! Nothing can ruin your experience more than being with a company with horrible customer service, leaving you all on your own to figure out all this blogging stuff. Every single time I have talked to them, they are quick, efficient, and super knowledgeable. They are not condescending at all and have a way of explaining things well (especially to non-techy's like myself).

Not only that, but if you do decide blogging isn't for you, or you are not satisfied with their service for any reason at all, they will issue a full refund for any months you have left on your account. I've fallen into the trap with other companies that do not honor that and I wanted to switch because their hosting service and customer service stunk and my website was always down. Bluehost's customer service is superb and they have a live chat as well as phone option, making it even more convenient, not to mention their customer service team is 100% based in the US.

Reason #3 – They are so easy to use (as you can see in the video below). Their platform ROCKS! My SarahTitus.com blog is too big and complicated now to NOT have a dedicated hosting plan with extremely frequent backups, however, with having a dedicated host, I'm dead in the water. I have NO CLUE how to work the inner workings of my site, so I have to hire it out. This costs me more

money. If you're just getting started, you need a platform that is extremely simple to use. I still have Bluehost on one of my other sites, as well as my friends and family all have Bluehost and I help them with tech work. Any time I work with Bluehost, it's always extremely simple.

Reason #4 – Trustworthy. Bluehost gets you on WordPress quickly, easily, and affordably. Not only that, Bluehost is #1 recommended by WordPress themselves for hosting services, making them incredibly trustworthy!

Reason #5 – Morals. In a day and age where money is king, Bluehost sets a higher standard by prohibiting pornography, nudity, and other adult content from being hosted on their servers! As a Christian, this is extremely important to me and as far as hosting companies go, this standard is incredibly RARE!

What's in a Name?

Everything! I'm a big fan of using your first and last name as your URL if you have a common name. It's easy to start out as something and change directions if your URL domain name is your own name. If it's something else, it's harder to change and I see lots of bloggers, new and established, re-brand and start over. Save yourself the trouble now!

If your name is something hard to spell or you really want to go with a niche, for the love of pete, pick something unique. I think of one of my friends, Deb Foglia from [Seeking Lavender Lane](#) on this one. She has a home decor blog and it's a pretty unusual URL. When I first visited her site, no, I would have never remembered the name, but because her content was good and the name was

unique, it made me WANT to learn more about her and her blog. So, I kept visiting.

Seeking Lavender Lane isn't a generic name. It's unique, it's different, just as **each and every one of you is unique and different, so should your URL.** Now, I'm not saying to go out and be all crazy, don't pick some really long name, but do let it represent YOU.

YOU are one in a million! Let your blog be too.

Click here to [see if your URL domain name is available.](#)

Themes

Themes are a little bit hard to understand. Right now, just know that it's best to have both a "parent theme" and a "child theme." You want both and you want to pay for both. Many blogs that get hacked is because they have free themes. The hackers know who has what, as it's public information. Having a paid theme means you are paying for support AND protection.

For the parent theme, I highly recommend the [Genesis](#) theme, for many reasons, but here are my top three reasons.

- It is the industry standard.
- The SEO (search engine traffic) is known to be better with Genesis, which helps you get more traffic!
- They are extremely user friendly

For child themes, there are some great ones out there. Before I started designing my own site, I really loved [Modern Blogger Pro.](#) Eventually after you get going for about 6 months and have your feet wet and know your direction well, I highly recommend

having a professional theme designed specifically for you and your audience. This can cost about $250-$600, depending on what you'd like to have done, but it is worth every penny.

Pick a Tagline

I spent 2 months picking out my tagline when I first started. I kid you not!

Your tagline defines you. It defines your site, and it's REALLY hard to re-brand your site with a new tagline once you are visible to the world, even on a small level. If it takes you months to pick something that is completely unique, then take that time. Trust me, you will thank me in the end.

Wanna know my secret weapon? Clary Sage Essential Oil. **When you want to be in a creative mood,** put Clary Sage on your eye brow bone and smell it; it will help drastically! I am NOT a creative person by nature and this helps me tremendously in so many ways on my blog.

Social Media Platforms

The next thing you'll want to do is grab your name on all the social media platforms A-sap! It's horrible when you're trying to brand yourself and someone else already has your name, so grab them quick. The main platforms you want to join are Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, Google +, and Instagram.

While it's a good idea to be present on all the platforms, I'd encourage you to pick ONE to focus on at a time. Honestly, I've not touched Google +, or Instagram yet, but I know Pinterest,

Facebook, and Twitter like the back of my hand and in knowing the platforms so well, I can really capitalize on the traffic.

It is better to know ONE platform very well, than all of them poorly!

Newsletter Anyone?

You want to establish this right away. I know, I know, at first you will be talking to yourself, get used to that. Everyone does it. **It's okay.** Just know that **it won't always be like that** and you can recycle your own best content again when you do become

famous.

It's not something you want to do all the time, but there have been a few articles or newsletters where I've gone back and was like, "Hey, that's good stuff. I bet I can make it popular now." And I have. We all start somewhere, but you need to establish yourself as a serious blogger with a newsletter.

Your newsletter is ONE thing that no social media platform can take away from you. It's YOUR list. So, your newsletter is gold. It is your most loyal readers. Never sell it and never harm it in any way. Protect it.

I use Madmimi for my newsletter. They've been great so far and I've been with them a really long time. They were the only company that provided in-depth support as a new blogger. They made video's of my own account for me to teach me and within 1 hour they respond by email to any email I send them. For a long time, I didn't have much of a newsletter, but Madmimi treated me well, as if I had a million, and now that I have a good sized list,

there is no change. It's always been impeccable service, service that goes beyond the norm!

What to Talk About

Whatever it is that you decide to talk about on your blog, whichever direction you go, you absolutely need editorial calendars. You can download each month you need for [2017 here](#) and for [2018 here](#).

Let's Talk Traffic, Shall We

Two of the best ways to get traffic as a new blogger (and even as a seasoned blogger) is to join link up parties. There are many link up parties to be involved in, and I plan to go into more depth in how to be successful at link up parties at a later time. In the meantime, try different ones and see which ones bring you the most traffic. Don't take on more than 5 per week and always be there when they open to post as close to the top as you possibly can.

Another great way to get traffic, and more importantly, is to connect with other bloggers by commenting on their blogs. I just LOVE hearing from my readers and most bloggers do. Every single comment that comes through this blog gets seen by MY eyes. I try to comment back on every single comment as well, though there are times I don't because there's not really anything for me to comment.

Either way, commenting regularly on YOUR favorite blogs is a great way to connect and get traffic and connect with other bloggers.

Speaking of Reaching Out

Make friends with other bloggers. The faster you get involved with other bloggers, the faster you will learn and be a part of a wonderful online group. Seek out those in your own niche. When I first started blogging, and even now, I totally admit that I stalk my favorite bloggers.

- Follow them on social media
- Comment on their blogs
- Email them reaching out to them, telling them I'm a fan and I love their work

A few haven't had time for me, but that's okay, I've met some AH-mazing bloggers in doing that. I love being a part of their lives and them in mine and all it takes is reaching out. Blogging is very much a social sport. Get involved. Always have the motto that it's NOT a competition. **There is room at the top for many.**

Hire a Coach

This may be last on the list, but it's definitely your first priority! Listen, when I first started blogging, I spent THOUSANDS of dollars doing everything wrong. I didn't know **where** to invest, so I did this and that and the other and NONE of it panned out. I was new and I was taken advantage of many times over because I simply did not know.

THE single, most important thing you can do for yourself and your blog after you hit about 50,000-100,000 in traffic per month is to hire a coach.

When I say hire a coach, be very, very careful. Again, there are sharks out there in the coaching world too. People who promise you fame and fortune and just take your money, but there are also some solid coaching programs as well. The ones that will profit you the most of course, are the ones that offer private mentoring. One-on-one personalized programs are where you'll learn the most amount quicker than any other training.

If I would have purchased some good, solid personalized one-on-one coaching when I first started, I would have paid at LEAST 1/4 of what I got scammed out of, I would have flew right from the start, and I would have known where, how, and what to invest my time into and what was a waste of time, energy, and money. I could have sped up my blogging career by a long shot.

That is my biggest mistake I made in my blogging career thus far. I wish I had the opportunity to take what you can now and the very reason I offer it and for so little. I have been told time and time again I should be charging at least $4,000, and I could, but I just want to prevent someone from going through what I did and set them on the right path straight away.

When researching mentors, always check them out thoroughly. Don't just believe everyone who says, "Oh, I have a million pageviews a month or oh, I make $40,000/month." You can easily flub or lie about those stats as a blogger and many do either unknowingly or knowingly. Be careful.

One of the first things I check out is their Alexa score. Just go to [Alexa's site](#) and type in their domain name. You want to see their score as 500,000 or less. If it's higher than that, they may not have enough credibility for their programs and it might be a waste

of your time and money. In all honesty, I would look for someone under 200,000 and if it's under 100,000 you know it's the real deal for sure.

You can also install the Alexa toolbar on your Chrome browser to check out sites quickly and easily.

The most important thing I can share with you is to take your time.

Blogging is not a spectator sport and it's not a sprint. You want to be in it for the long haul and that means investing time, patience, and money (spent wisely in the right things) to help you reach your goals. I also say this solely to show you that it's possible, but I know a few people, myself included who are less than 2 years old in blogging and run extremely successful blogs and genuinely have a million pageviews a month and more. It is very possible.

If blogging is your dream and you are willing to put the time into it, you will reap the rewards.

Ready to create your very own blog?

Starting a blog is super easy and literally takes less than 5 minutes to do.

Purchasing a Domain Name

You are going to want to start by going to the Bluehost webpage. You can access it by clicking here or by typing http://www.sarahtitus.com/bluehost into your browser.

After clicking through, this is what you'll see:

Then….click the green "get started now" button.

The first page it will take you to is the plan selection page as shown below.

Here is where you will decide which hosting option is the best for you. If you are just starting out, you will probably want to go with the starter or the plus plan. The starter plan is the least expensive because the longer you sign up for, the better deal you get. You will pay upfront, but again remember, no questions asked and you get your money back from them. They are not a hassle at all if you need to do so from what I've heard directly from Bluehost.

If you already have a blog that you are moving over from WordPress or Blogger, you might need to go with one of the larger plans as you'll have more content and need more resources. But for this tutorial, I'll assume you are new to blogging and continue walking you through it with that option in mind (the starter plan).

Your next step is to choose your domain.

The domain is the name of your site, or in my case, the SarahTitus in www.SarahTitus.com. Take a lot of time and thought with naming your blog. It will be the first thing people see for your site, and it will be what people use to look for you online.

It is best to avoid weird spellings because of this and I almost always recommend it be your first and last name (unless it's incredibly hard to spell–otherwise, your name is best because you will no-doubtedly change the direction of your blog a few times before really getting a sense of your final direction).

Even after a year and a half of blogging, I just changed my direction as well. Bloggers are always growing and evolving (for lack of a better word). But chose carefully as this will become the name of your brand and what you are most known for.

Next, you will fill in your personal information.

You will then select your package plan...

package information

Account Plan	[Basic 36 Month Price - $2.95/mo. ▾]
Hosting Price	$106.20 ($2.95 for 36 months)
Setup Fee	Free
Primary Domain Registration	Free
Domain Privacy Protection	☑ – $0.99 per month
	More information
Site Backup Pro	☑ – $2.99 per month (Billed to end of hosting term)
	More information
Search Engine Jumpstart	☐ – $2.99 per month (Billed annually at $35.88/yr)
	More information
SiteLock Security – Find	☐ – $1.99 per month (Billed annually at $23.88/yr)
	More information
Savings	$181.44 (63% off)
Total	$225.72

Purchasing hosting service longer is less expensive. This is your best option, because even if you do decide to cancel, Bluehost will refund your money for all of the months of hosting you did not use. The one extra feature that is mandatory you'll want to select is domain privacy.

This will prevent your new site and email from spam as well as preventing everyone online to be able to SEE YOUR ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER!!! For your own privacy, it's a really good idea to keep that stuff private. Where this wouldn't apply is say a business like JC Penney or Macy's. Obviously, they want people to know their address and phone number.

I'd also recommend Site Backup Pro. As you're setting up your blog, if something should happen, you will lose all your work if you are not have routine site backups. Think of this like your computer backups that save routinely. I have my blog save every single day!

Should something ever happen, I can restore to the last save and not lose all my hard work.

Then, you will enter your payment information. Be sure to read and click that you confirm. Then, click the green submit button.


And **congratulations!** You now have a hosting account!!!!

Setting Up Your Hosting Account

The next step you'll want to do is to install WordPress on your site. Think of this like the building frame to your home that you put on your land.
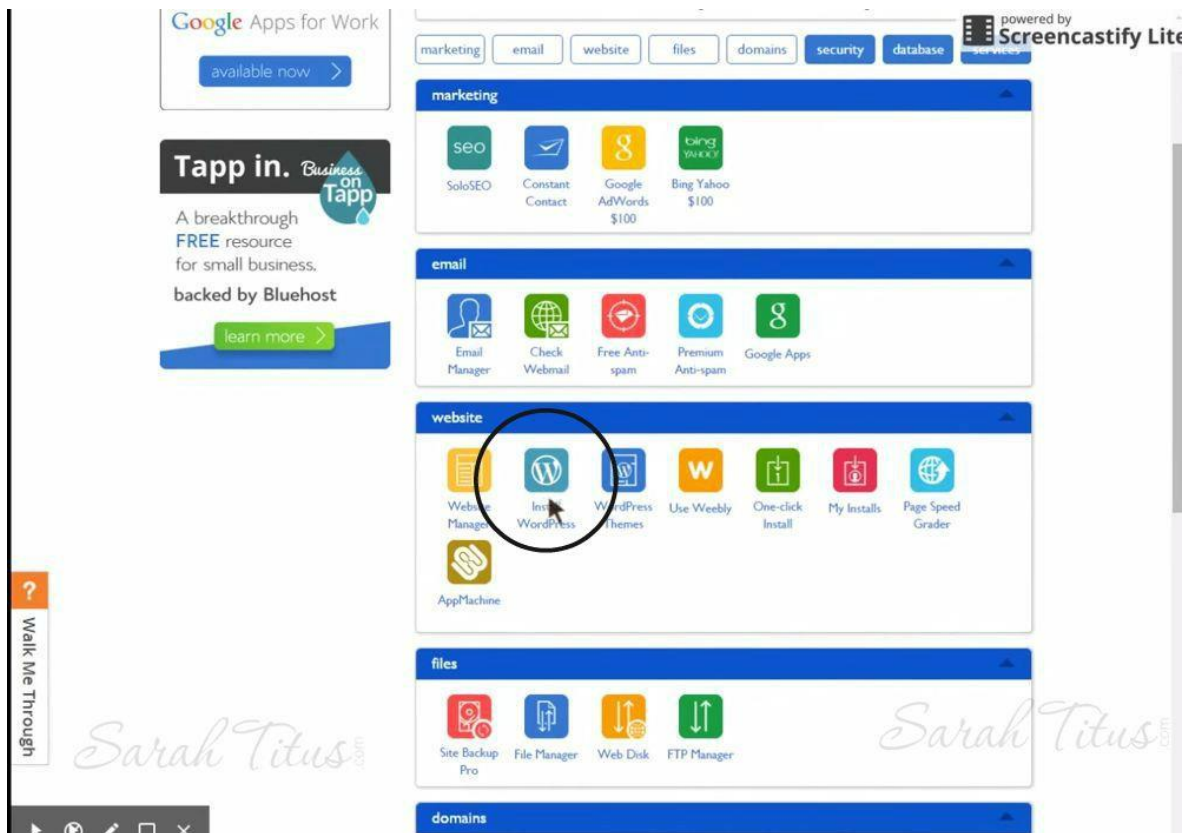
You can do this very easily on your Bluehost dashboard!

Immediately after clicking submit above, it will take you to your Bluehost dashboard. It will look like this:
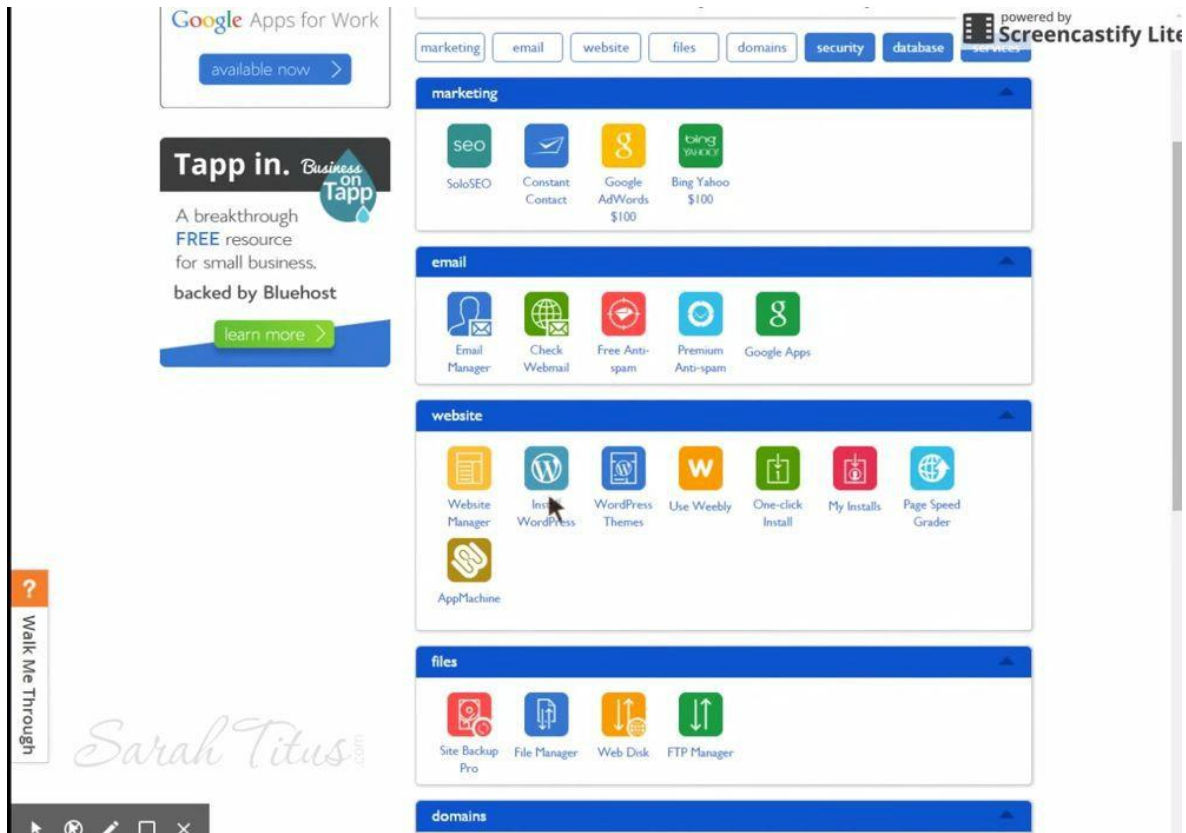
Installing WordPress on Your Blog

And you will want to scroll down to "website" and click "Install WordPress."

That will walk you through the steps to install WordPress to your blog. It will take a few minutes to load and the voila! You have WordPress!

From here, you will be able to login to your blog directly on WordPress. Your login page will be yourblogname.com/wp-admin. You can type that in to get to your login page!

The home screen when you want to log in to your site will look like this:

After you login, the next page it will take you to, will be your site's dashboard.
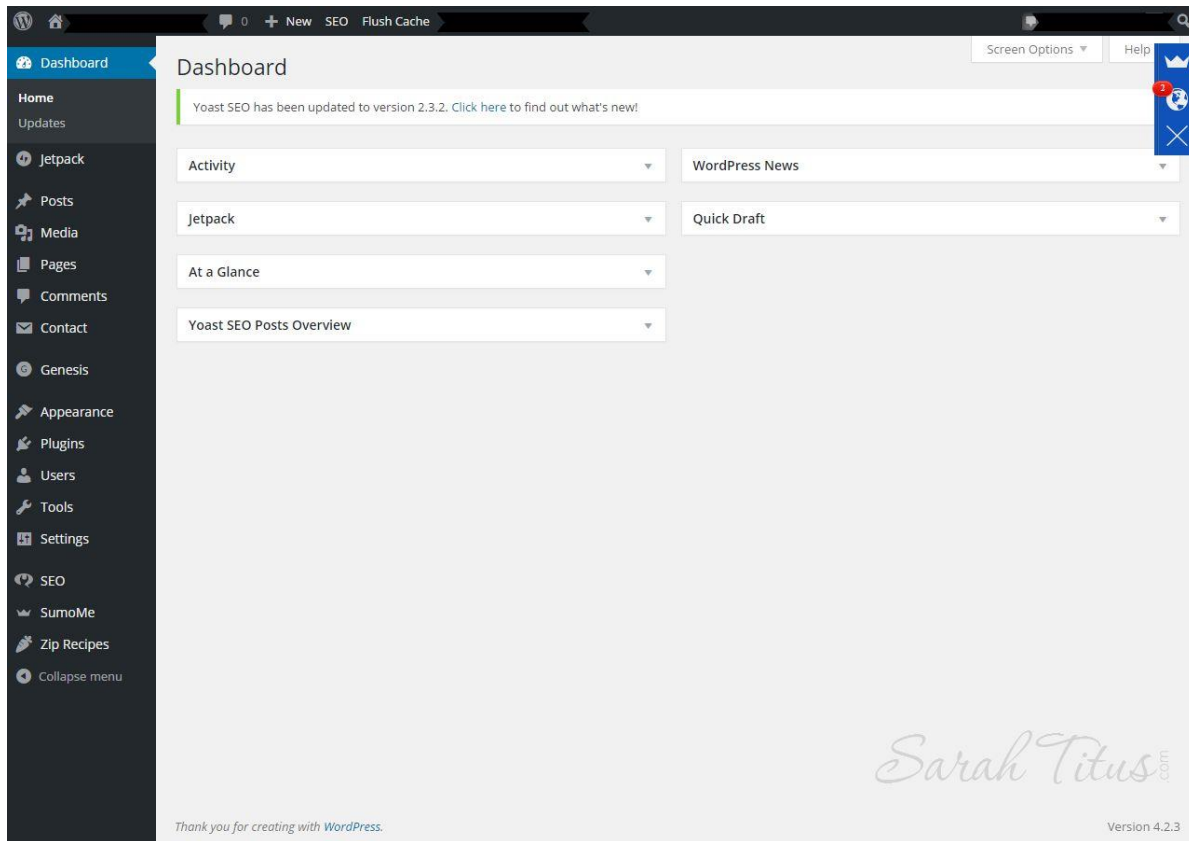
Your dashboard will be the place you spend the most time. It is where you will write, edit, and craft all of your blog posts.

Setting Up Your Theme

Remember from earlier, I mentioned getting the Genesis theme on your blog. You can do that now, by clicking <u>here</u>.
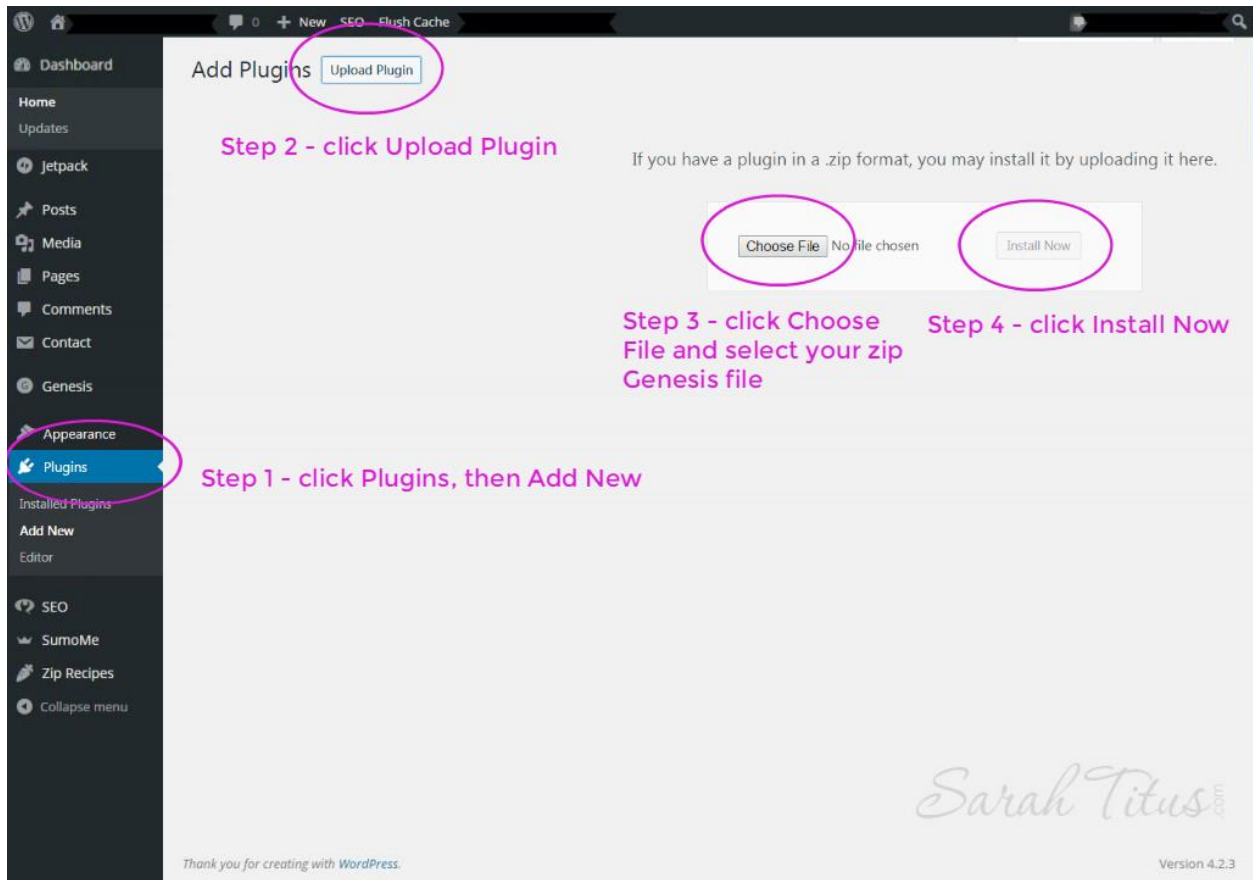
After you've downloaded the Genesis file to your computer, simply install that file on your blog. Here's how…

Step 1 – click "Plugins" in your left navigation bar, then "Add New"
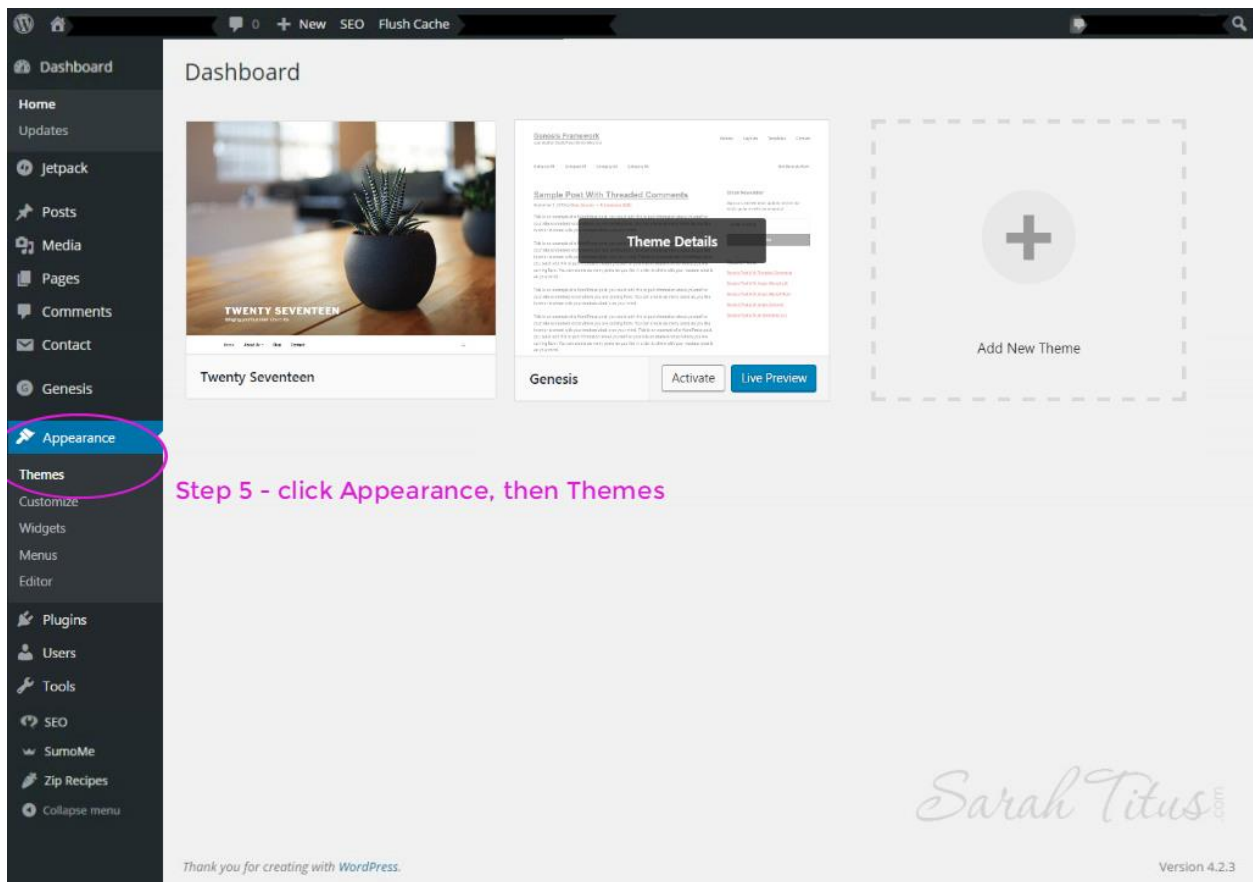
Step 2 – click "Upload Plugin"

Step 3 – click "Choose File" and select your zip Genesis file

Step 4 – click "Install Now"

Step 5 – Once your Genesis theme is uploaded, click "Appearance" in the left navigation bar, then "Themes."

Step 6 – click "Activate" on Genesis theme

Step 7 – once you like how your blog looks, delete any other free themes you have in there.

*Little known secret – a good way to get hacked is leaving free well-known themes on your blog. THAT is exactly how a hacker gets in and one of the main reasons to have a paid-for theme in the first place, the security of it. Delete your free themes to be safe.
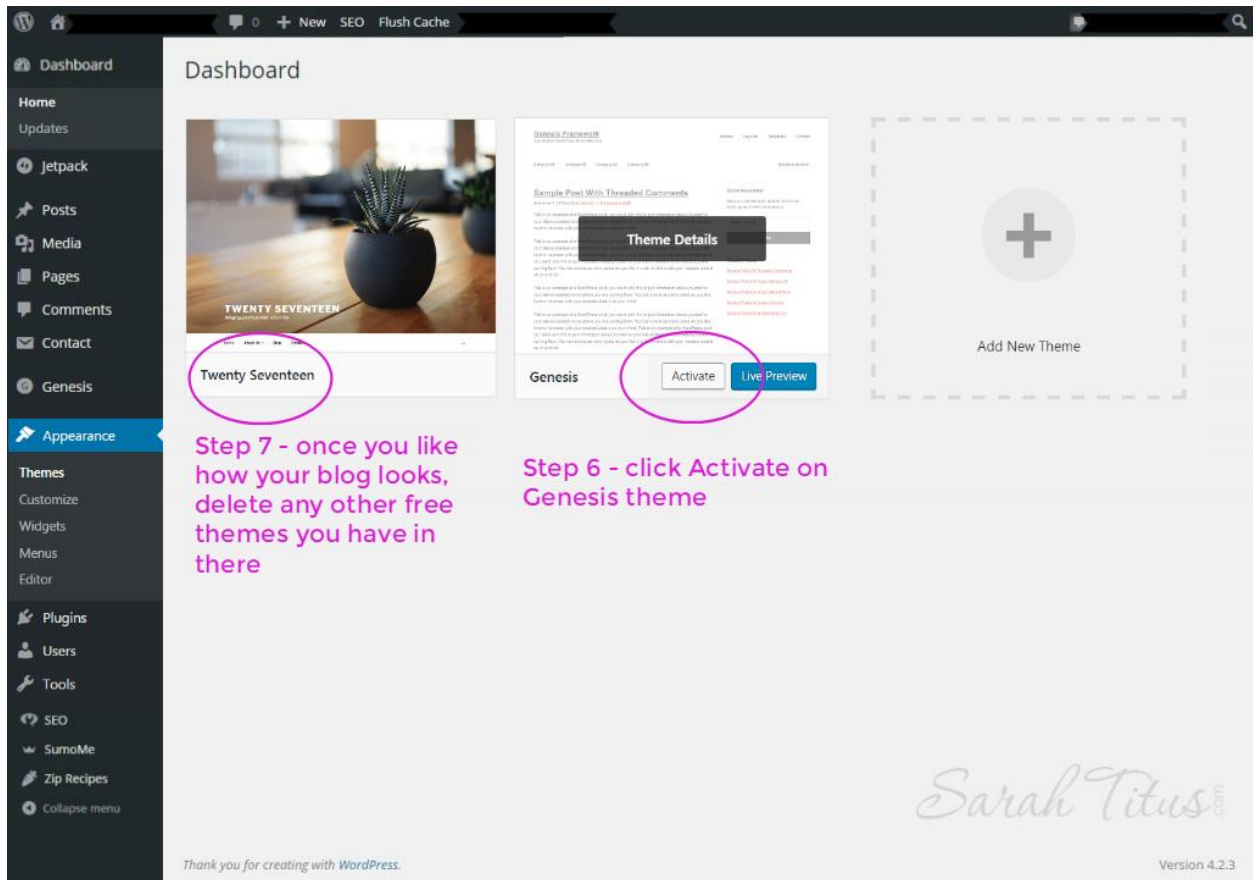
After you are done installing Genesis and deleting your free themes, get yourself a pretty child theme to customize your blog how you want it to be. As I mentioned earlier, I recommend the Modern Blogger Pro child theme.
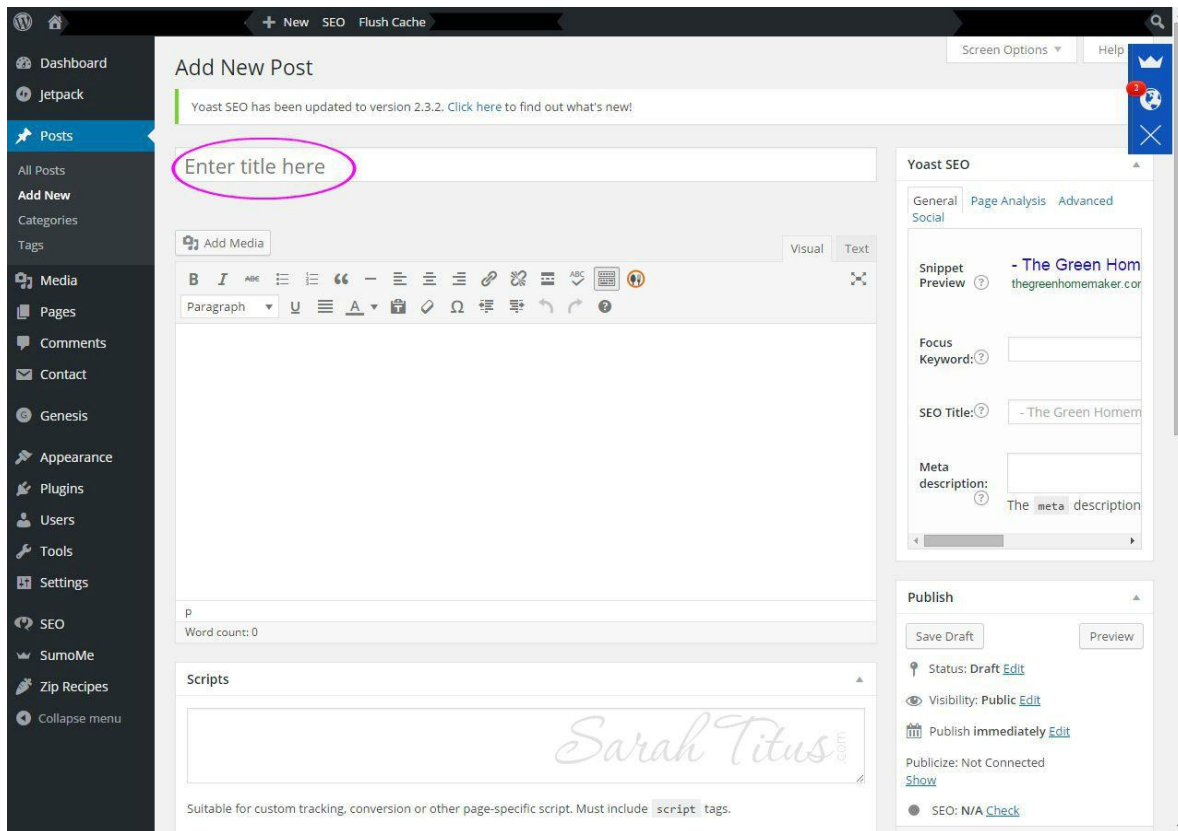
Creating Your First Post

To start a post, you simply go to the left side bar and find "Posts." Under that it will say "Add New."
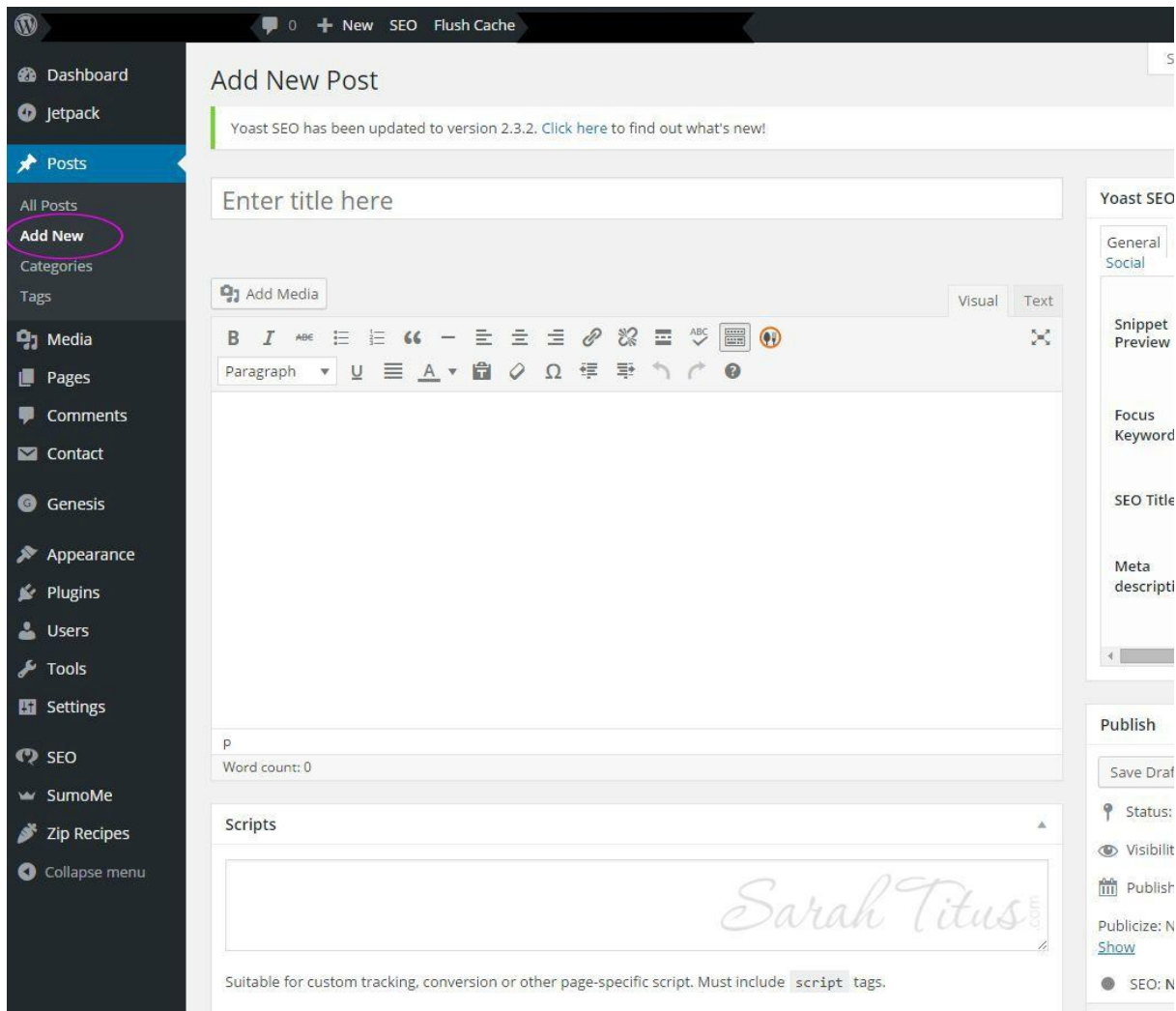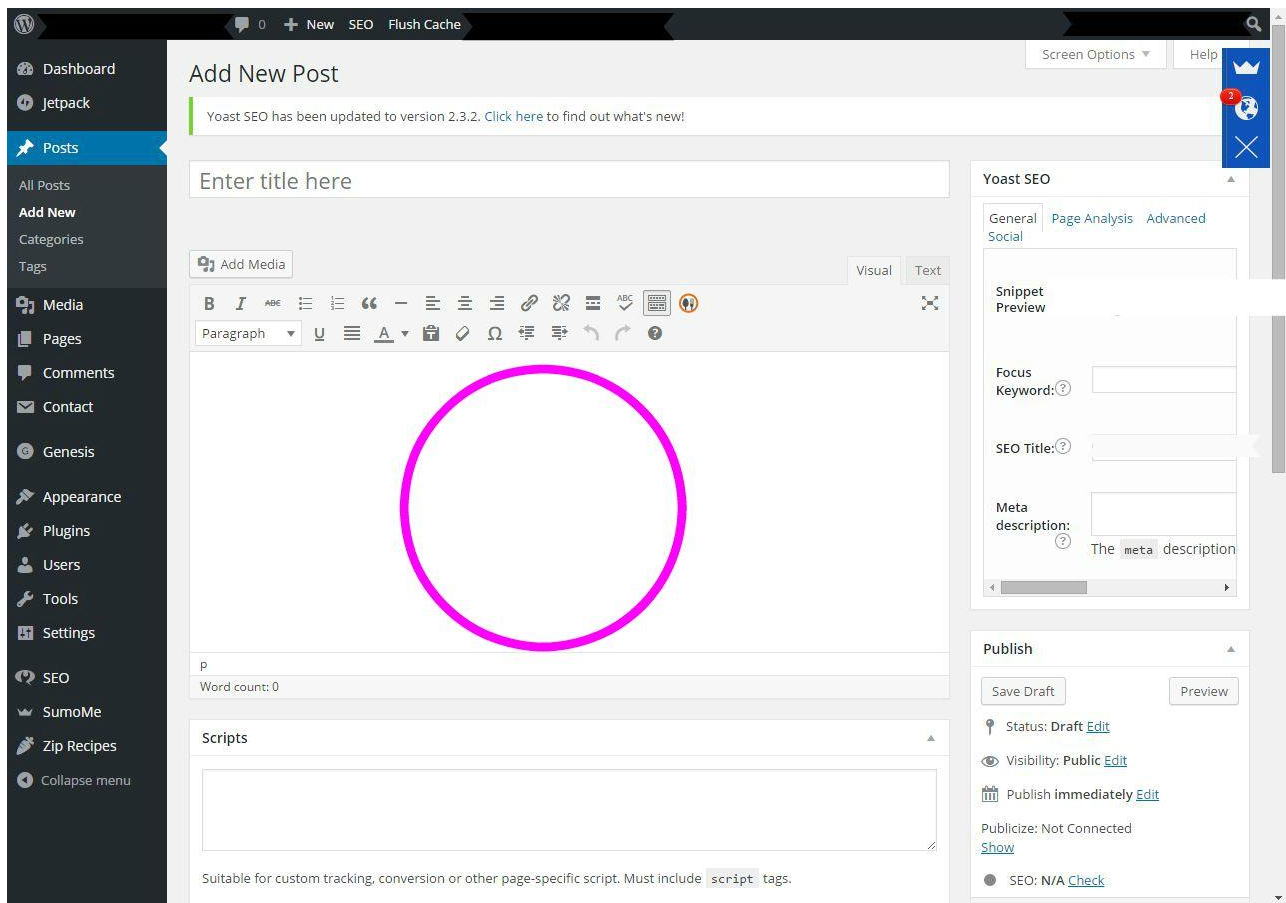
This is where you will do your writing / editing / blog work.
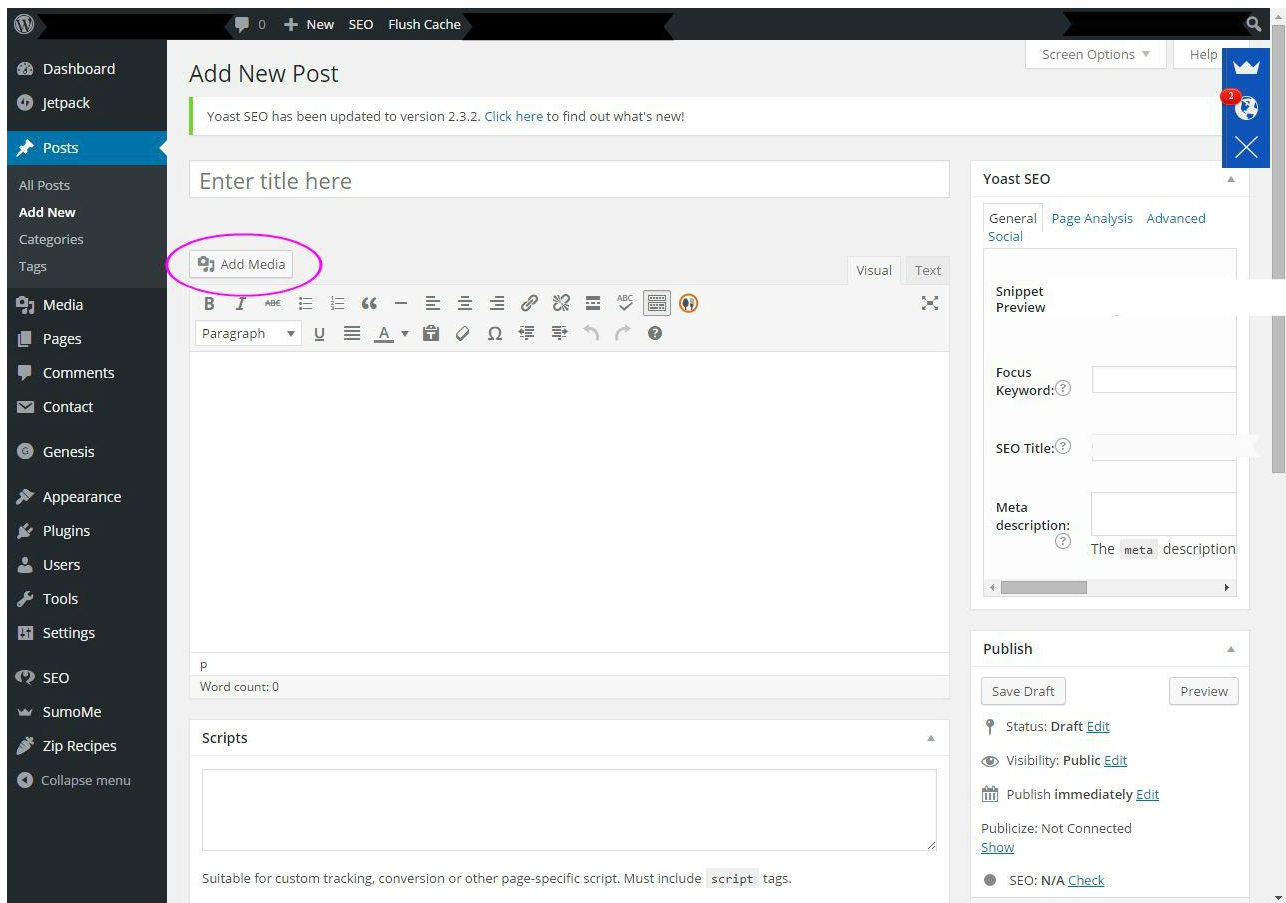
There is a spot for the title of your post

And the body is below that. That is where the actual content of your post will go.

Most bloggers now have pictures in their posts. These are good to have so readers can pin your post to Pinterest. To add a photo to your blog post, go to "Add Media" above the body.

Where to Get Pictures for Your Blog

And from there, you can upload pictures from your computer to your blog post. Make sure to always give credit where credit is due for the images you use if you are using free images from a site that allows you to use their photos.

Here's one popular site that offers free photos. I would highly suggest, as soon as you are possibly able to, to purchase a picture subscription as pictures are super important on a blog. Here's the company (BigStockPhoto) I've gone through for a long time and absolutely adore them! They don't require attribution (you telling your readers where you got the photo from), which is major in my opinion.

How to Schedule a Post

When you are done with the post, you can either publish your post right away, or you can schedule it to go out on another day and time of your choosing.

To schedule your post, you will want to go to "Publish immediately" in the right sidebar under "Publish," and then click "edit." From there, you will be able to set the time and date for your post to be published.
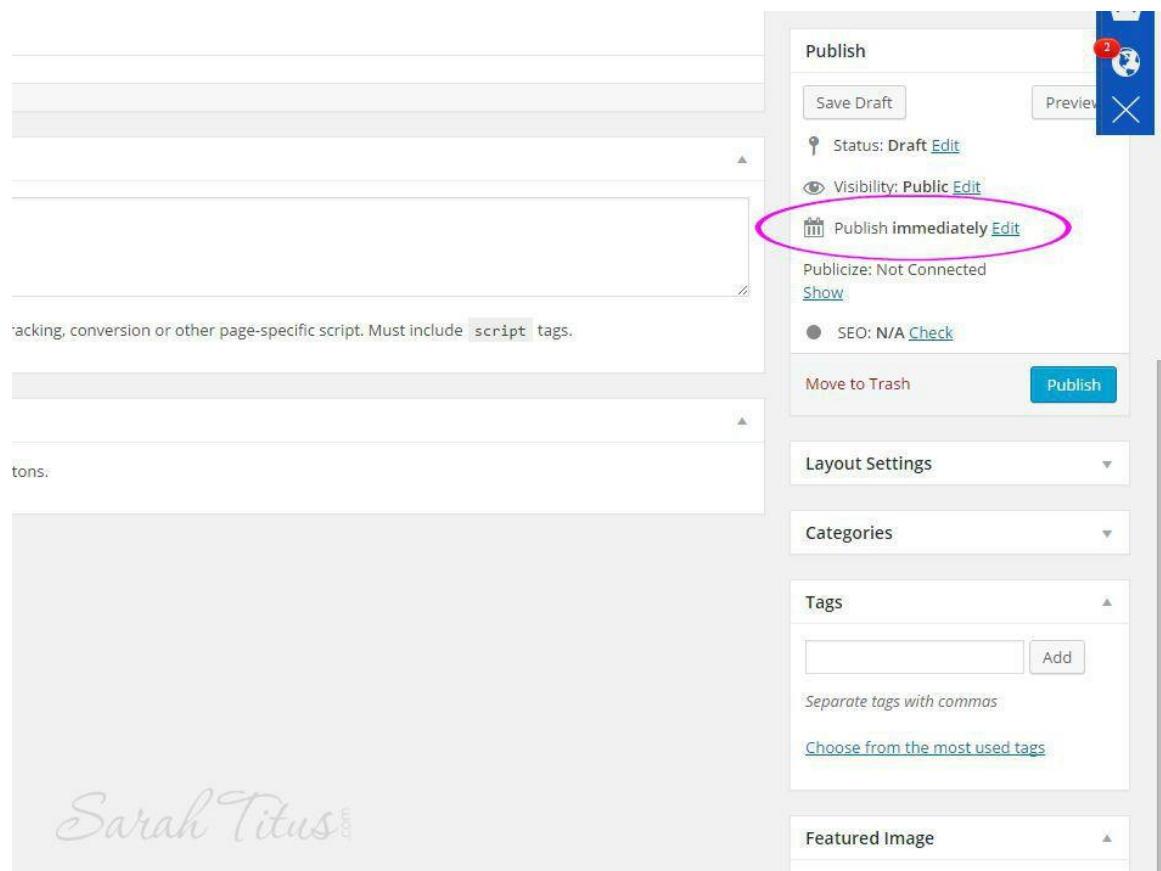
To publish your post immediately, you will just hit the blue "Publish" button.
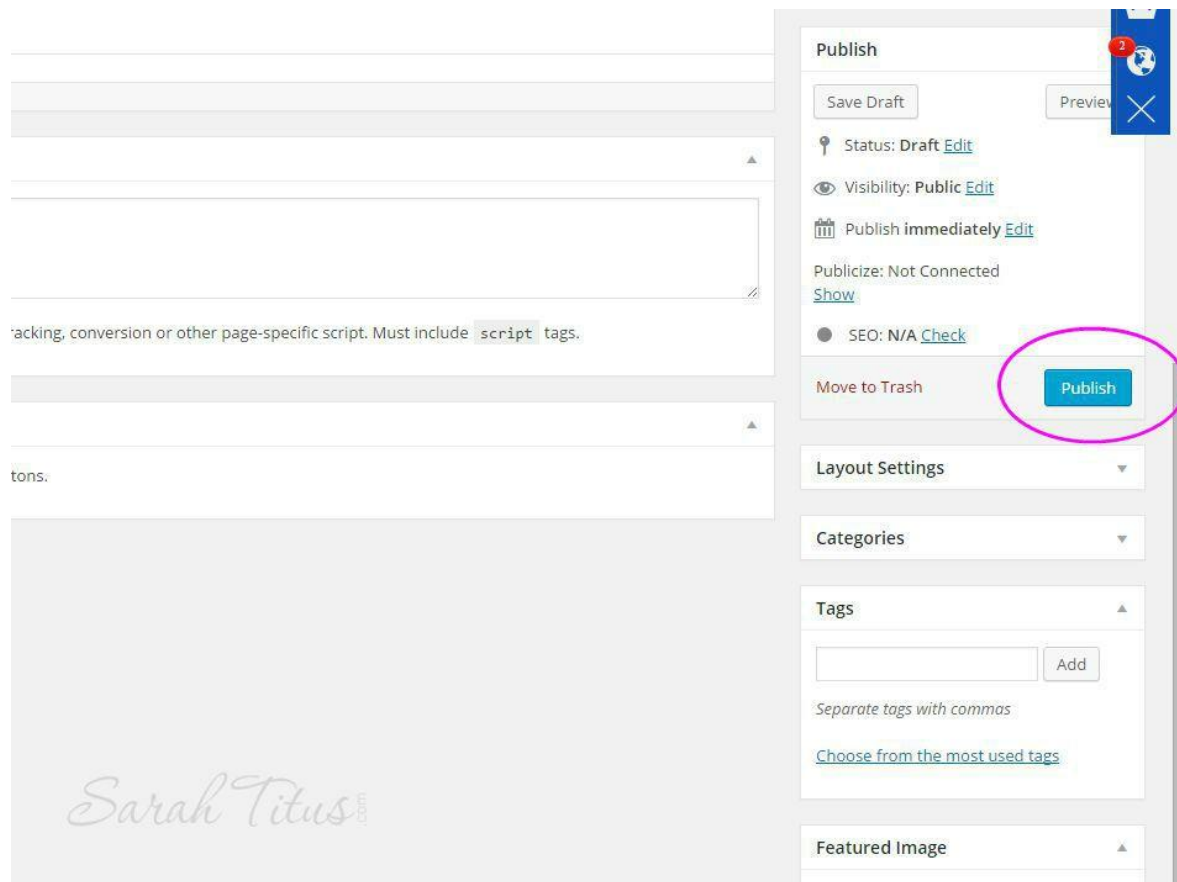
And that's it! You are now on your way to writing your very own blog! It can seem overwhelming at first. Take your time and get to know your WordPress Dashboard.

Use YouTube video's to research things and as always, come back here often to see more blogging tips and tutorials! Once you know where everything is, writing and editing on your site will not be difficult at all, and you can focus on getting your awesome content out there and building traffic, which we can cover at a later date.