



# Blogging Using Live Cams

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Grades 3 or 4 (in a Computer Literacy class)

**Common Core Curriculum Standards** CCSSELA Writing 3.10 CCSSELA Literacy Writing 2.2, 3.2, 4.2, CCSSELA Literacy Writing 2.5, 3.5, 4.5, CCSSELA Literacy Writing 2.6, 3.6, 4.6

**New Jersey Common Core Curriculum Standards** 5.3.2.B.2, 5.3.4.B.1, 5.3.2.C.1, 5.3.2.C.2, 5.3.2.C.3, 5.3.4.C.2, 5.3.2.D.2, 5.3.4.D.1

*NOTE: The live cams show different birds living in different locations around the world. The cams operate according to when the nests are active. Many have archived video footage from prior nesting seasons. Do a bit of research on each cam or species prior to observing. Introduce the concept of live cams by showing one of the videos or if timing is right tune in together to watch a live cam. Blogging can be done individually, in small groups or whole class as a shared writing experience. Students dictate to a writer (teacher or student) what they observed. The first blog might be done in this way to model how to write a blog. Once students get the idea, teacher hands over the blogging reins to students. Make reading and commenting on classmate's blogs part of the daily or weekly routine. In a computer lab environment (in which I teach) all students can be actively engaged at once. In the classroom, observing, blogging, commenting can be done throughout the week. Small groups are assigned the duty to observe and blog one day of the week. Students in that group work cooperatively to compose the blog entry for that day, checking/editing before posting. Other groups may have the opportunity to read and comment on blogs written by their classmates. Roles are rotated so all students experience both roles, writing the blog and commenting.*

***While this lesson is designed as a digital writing experience, it can easily be modified to a pencil/paper writing activity.***

## **Objectives**

- Students will write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast life cycles of various birds and the habitats in which they live
- Students will develop an awareness/appreciation of our natural world and have a better understanding of predator/prey connections
- Students will be able to use social media in a responsible and meaningful way

## **Materials**

- Computers/Chromebooks/iPads with Internet connections
- Blogging Forums (See below)
- Live Cam URLs (See Resources)
- Research Sites (See Resources)

**Vocabulary** bird of prey, habitat, blog, comments, digital citizenship, live cam

**Background Skills:** Prior to using the live cam as a blogging/commenting topic, students should already have engaged in lessons in Digital Citizenship, including being cyber safe and smart, no publishing of person/private information, writing is appropriate in content and mechanics, and the written work is on topic, kind, and thoughtful. In the elementary classes I teach and encourage “screen names” without personal identifiers. We have had the occasional family issues with restraining orders against one parent, a screen name allows the students to publish work on the Internet safely. This is important if you are using a more public forum, rather than a closed system where users must login to see written material. See helpful background for teachers in the Blogging Forums section of this lesson. Students should also have knowledge of blogs and commenting including what they are, how they are written, have had the opportunity to read examples, and have had experience writing comments.

## **Procedures**

**Day 1:** Gather in a central location of the room (carpet area, preferably in front of a computer or projected screen). Ask students to recall details of blogging. Discuss and review the Blog and Commenting Rules and expectations established and posted in the room for reference from prior lessons. (15 minutes)

Students references should be reviewed, displayed, and use encouraged.

#### Blog Content:

- date of the observation
- written observations of the eagle/bird activities of that day
- history and facts researched about bald eagles/birds in New Jersey, sources cited
- comparisons of the life cycle and activity of other birds or bald eagles in other states
- always write in full sentences with proper spelling, use of capital letters, punctuation, and no abbreviations
- screenshots/original artwork of what was observed may be included
- screenshots should give credit to the live cam you are watching
- poem
- leave questions for your readers to think about and to which they can respond in comments

#### Comments:

- written in full sentences with proper spelling, use of capital letters, punctuation, and no abbreviations
- are meaningful and thoughtful
- are kind
- may offer a different opinion but is respectful

#### Comment Starters:

- That reminds me of when...
- This is important because...
- This made me think about...
- When I read this I learned...
- This made me wonder...

As a reminder and review of what Digital Citizenship is all about have students watch the video, [Digital Citizenship](#). Discuss. Tell students that they will have the opportunity to blog about the Duke Farms live eagle cam. How does THINK relate to blogging about the live cam.

Break into small groups. Each group will discuss together, then tell the class one part of THINK as it relates to blogging about the eagle cam. (Group 1 - true, group 2 - helpful, group 3 - inspiring, group 4 - necessary, group 5 - kind.) By remembering THINK, help students understand they will be able to teach others about our national symbol and to educate them about these birds. (15 minutes)

Students should spend some time observing the [Duke Farms Eagle cam](#).

Teacher should circulate among groups to discuss what is being observed and begin to think about comments or blog topics based on the observations. (10 minutes -adjust time according to interest and cam activity)

**Day 2:** Students will login to the computer, open an Internet browser, navigate to the class blog site (example can be viewed in the Blog Forums section), and login. Check on a shoulder buddy, assist if needed, and come to the carpet when done for a lesson overview.

Teacher will remind students of the Blog Rules and its use as a reference. Students will be composing their own blog for others to read. Link that writing a blog is similar to writing an essay. Teacher may wish to model how the forum of choice works so students understand how to use the technology, how to navigate the window, locate and use certain features, reading for key words and using the mouse to hover over buttons reading the dialogue box to find tools they need in to enable them write. Link forum tools to similarities of tools used in Word, Google Docs, or other program/app in which students have had experience using.

Students will work independently to compose an original blog post. Teacher will circulate the room, lending assistance where needed.

Students will peer edit and will save the post as a draft. Students will sign up for an editing session with the teacher. If necessary revisions will be made or the blog may be posted.

Early finishers may go to the class blog page to read blogs and comments, and engage in dialogue by leaving meaningful comments to the bloggers or other comments. Students may also return to the live cam.

**Extensions - Day 3 and beyond (especially for students who need a challenge):** As time goes on, students may wish to view other live cams featuring other species of birds. This will give students the opportunity to compare and contrast the life cycle of these birds as well as the habitat in which they live. This extension will provide students the opportunity for deeper understanding of the topics being explored. Students will have more blogging topics in which to write and comment extending meaningful conversations. Connections can be made from cam to cam.

Teachers may wish to extend the lesson to include students researching and blogging about the history, future, and background information about the species they are observing.

Students may wish to add screenshots of observations. Teacher may provide small group mini lessons to instruct how this is done. Students must credit the live cam as the source of the screenshot.

Students may wish to create original artwork of an observation using a drawing app or software such as Pixie. If the software is not known by students, teacher will need to provide a mini lesson in the use of the program. Be sure the app/software has the ability to create a jpg in order to insert the image into the student blog.

**Modifications:** Expectations and required elements for support students will vary according to needs and IEP goals. Teacher may restate or read directions to students as needed. Teacher will check for understanding of directions before working. The number of required elements (length of writing) may be adjusted as necessary.

**Evaluation:** Blog Post, teacher observation using tools and peripherals, students participating appropriately during lab period, and posted work.

### ***Blogging Forums***

- Kidblog [kidblog.org](http://kidblog.org)
- Edublog [edublog.org](http://edublog.org)

The idea is to get the students excited about writing and establish a purpose of it by using the excitement the live cam provides. There are many other blogging services available to teachers. I have used Kidblog with 3rd and 4th graders and loved it.

Our district is using Google Apps for Education, and I plan on using it rather than Kidblog. You, as a teacher, have many choices as to how your students can blog. All students in the district have an account. I am using Google Classroom and have posted two assignments in Google Classroom using the live cam. Google Classroom is private, so only members of the class can see what is written once they sign into the account. No screen names are necessary here. Directions can be posted right in the assignment description. You can attach links to websites, videos, or files you have created and to which you wish the students to add information. Students may write about their observations in a google doc and share it with others in the class. They can also use the comments section to write shorter comment type observations with others able to then comment on that.

ASSIGNMENT Feb 7

DUE JUN 26

## Live Cam Blog

Bald Eagles have been nesting on the Duke Estates in nearby Hillsborough, New Jersey since 2004. At a recent workshop I attended at Duke Farms I met the man who first found the nest. Duke Farms also told us that the original eagles were both banded and came from south Jersey! The first female is now gone. They usually mate for life, so unfortunately something must have happened to her. The new female does not have bands on her legs. From that first observed nest through last year, there have been 15 birds fledged (hatched, raised, and flown away to begin a new life somewhere else) at Duke Farms.

Let's blog about the eagles! Check the resources below. They will help you to write meaningful blogs. Part of the blogging assignment is also to read and comment on classmate's blog. Please also review the commenting resources.

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DONE

24  
NOT DONE



Duke Farms - Eagle Cam Twitter Widgets Event HubTwitter Widgets Event Hu...  
<http://dukefarms.org/en/Stewardship/WildlifeCams/eagle-cam/>

Cornell Lab Bird CamsTwitter Widgets Event HubTwitter Widgets Event HubFa...  
<http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/all-cams/>

Raptor Resource Project BirdcamsAddThis utility frameDecorah Eagle CamUs...  
[http://www.farmyou.com/falcon\\_cams/index.html](http://www.farmyou.com/falcon_cams/index.html)

Eagle Cam - Live FeedSouthwest Florida Eagle Cam - YouTubeFacebook Cros...

Third and fourth graders are also tracking nest activity in a spreadsheet. We want to create a database to use year to year to see if the weather has any impact on when the eagle lays her eggs.

ASSIGNMENT Jan 20

DUE JUN 17

## Duke Farms Eagle Watch

Let's create a data base to use this year and in the future, and see if we can answer some of our questions. The eagles seem to be spotted back in the nest each year sometime in early December. They are seen making repairs and adding to the nest in preparation of the new nesting season. We are all wondering when the first egg will be laid and how many there will be this year. We also wondered if weather has an impact on when the eggs are laid and could that be related to the food source. When you tune into the eagle live cam, take a moment to record what you see on this spreadsheet. Be sure to read what the observation before you says. There is no need to repeat observations for the same day and time period. Write about what you observed in the comments section below too. Share your thoughts and questions about the eagles here.

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DONE

24  
NOT DONE

## Second Grade Modification/Introduction

I have introduced my second graders to blogging/commenting and Digital Citizenship in Google Classroom with the live cam. I've created an assignment in their classroom. The students couldn't wait to write about what they were seeing, or to ask a question about what was observed.

ASSIGNMENT 7:59 AM

DUE JUN 26

### Duke Farm Eagles

Bald Eagles have been nesting on the Duke Estates in nearby Hillsborough, New Jersey since 2004. At a recent workshop I attended at Duke Farms I met the man who first found the nest. Duke Farms also told us that the original eagles were both banded and came from south Jersey! The first female is now gone. They usually mate for life, so unfortunately something must have happened to her. The new female does not have bands on her legs. From that first observed nest through last year, there have been 15 birds fledged (hatched, raised, and flown away to begin a new life somewhere else) at Duke Farms.

If you are watching the nest, take a moment to write about what you saw by leaving a comment. With more eyes watching, we will be able to better know what is happening in the nest. Students remember to ask a trusted adult before using the Internet. When you comment on this blog, be sure you follow the class Commenting Rules. Remember what we talk about in class.

0  
DONE

0  
NOT DONE



Duke Farms - Eagle Cam Twitter Widgets Event HubTwitter Widgets Event Hu...  
<http://www.dukefarms.org/en/Stewardship/WildlifeCams/eagle-cam/>

Commenting Rules  
Google Docs



Add comment...

## **Resources**

### **Live Cams**

We always begin with the Duke Farms live cam because it is local and practically in our backyard. A natural extension and to help students develop a deeper understanding of the natural world around them, introduce other live cams featuring different species of birds in other habitats. Students are also encouraged to research the birds they are watching and blog about what they find. Comparing and contrasting life cycles, how the environment/climate impacts the timing of nesting, understanding what it means for a species to become endangered or threatened, how it happened and what we can do to help all become questions students can explore.

- Duke Farms Bald Eagle Cam <http://dukefarms.org/en/Stewardship/WildlifeCams/eagle-cam/>
- Diane Cook Bald Eagle Blog <http://www.frsd.k12.nj.us//site/Default.aspx?PageID=885>
- Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ: osprey, falcon (find the cam links under the Wildlife Education tab at the top of the page) <http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/>
- Cornell Ornithology Cams: barn owls, hawks, herons  
[http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/?\\_hstc=161696355.e19fae2b894e97b649c90e4b36e16a4a.1421883511151.1422721370218.1423315822066.8&\\_hssc=161696355.2.1423315822066&\\_hsfp=674190670#\\_ga=1.156482171.1970528022.1421883511](http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/?_hstc=161696355.e19fae2b894e97b649c90e4b36e16a4a.1421883511151.1422721370218.1423315822066.8&_hssc=161696355.2.1423315822066&_hsfp=674190670#_ga=1.156482171.1970528022.1421883511)
- Hanover, PA Bald Eagles  
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=1592549&mode=2>
- Raptor Resource Project eagles, owls, falcons, and more  
[http://www.farmyou.com/falcon\\_cams/index.html](http://www.farmyou.com/falcon_cams/index.html)
- Ozzie and Harriet - bald eagles of Florida <http://www.dickpritchettrealestate.com/eagle-feed.html>
- Explore - osprey, penguins, owls, puffins <http://explore.org/live-cams/player/live-osprey-cam>

### **Background Research Sites**

- Conserve Wildlife Foundation <http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/species/fieldguide/>
- Cornell Ornithology <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=1478>
- Delaware Valley Raptor Center <http://www.dvrconline.org/raptorprof.html>
- The Raptor Trust <http://theraptortrust.org/the-birds/>
- Audubon Society <http://www.audubon.org/>



***Background Information on Blogging with Students and Teaching Digital Citizenship/Safety***

- <http://anne.teachesme.com/2005/03/30/inappropriate-commentsteachable-moments/>
- <http://anne.teachesme.com/2006/02/02/comments-make-a-difference/>
- <http://adavis.pbworks.com/w/page/1379937/Significant%20Comments>
- <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/blog/how-to-teach-your-students-to-think-before-they-post>
- <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/internet-safety-younger-elementary-mary-beth-hertz>
- <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/digital-citizenship-mary-beth-hertz>

Student Handouts to distribute to all, display in the classroom, post online, or all. See documents attached, Blogging Rules and Commenting Rules.

### ***Blogging Rules***

When you are writing, you are communicating information to the reader. Remember who is reading your work. Write to them. If your reader can't understand what you wrote, you wasted your time writing.

### ***Blog Content:***

- always include the date of the observation
- written observations of the eagle activities of that day
  - how many birds did you see
  - what were they doing
  - what were they eating that day
  - what were the weather conditions
  - did you observe any other animals
- research history and facts about bald eagles in New Jersey, sources cited
  - endangered or threatened
  - how did the above happen
  - how many birds are living in NJ
  - why is this important
- comparisons of the life cycle and activity of other birds or bald eagles in NJ and other states
  - number of eggs
  - when they are laid
  - when they hatch
  - how they grow
  - what they eat
  - habitat/climate
- always write in full sentences with proper spelling, use of capital letters, punctuation, and no abbreviations
- ask someone to read and help you edit your work
- screenshots/original artwork of what was observed may be included
  - screenshots give credit to the live cam you are watching
  - use a Pixie (or similar drawing program) to illustrate something you saw and export it as a jpg to use in the blog

- write a poem
- leave questions for your readers to think about and to which they can respond in comments

Remember THINK when blogging!

### ***Commenting on a Blog***

When you are writing, you are communicating information to the reader. Remember who is reading your work. Write to them. If your reader can't understand what you wrote, you wasted your time writing.

### ***Writing Comments:***

- read what you wrote, make sure it makes sense and sounds right
- is it on topic
- write in full sentences with proper spelling, use of capital letters, punctuation, and no abbreviations
- make it meaningful and thoughtful
- it is true
- make it kind
- you can disagree with another comment, but your different opinion is respectful

### ***Comment Starters:***

- That reminds me of when...
- This is important because...
- This made me think about...
- When I read this I learned...
- This made me wonder...
- Today I observed...
- While I watched I noticed...
- I have a different opinion...