

Building a Website with WordPress

What is WordPress?

- WordPress is a CMS (Content Management System) a tool to manage website content digitally.
- You can build any type of website without coding: blogs, service-based sites, landing pages, or ecommerce sites — using drag-and-drop.
- Best suited for freelancers, business owners, and web developers who need to build websites quickly.
- Behind the scenes, WordPress runs on PHP (backend language) and MySQL (database) — you don't need to learn this, since you'll work through a visual drag-and-drop tool.

Setting Up Hosting (Using Hostinger)

1. Go to the Hostinger website and open “Services”.
2. Select “Web Hosting”. Hostinger provides hosting, domain, email, and SSL — all at affordable prices.
3. Choose the “Premium Plan” if you plan to host multiple websites. It includes:
 - Free SSL
 - Free email creation
 - One year of free domain
4. Pick a plan duration (e.g., 48 months) for the best price, or 24 months.
5. Apply a discount coupon code at checkout if you have one.
6. Continue to the payment window, fill in your details (name, country, phone, address, city).
7. Choose a payment method (Card, Sadapay /Nayapay, PayPal) and complete payment (OTP verification via your registered mobile number if using a card).
8. Once purchased, your hosting appears in your “Hostinger Dashboard”.

“Key point:” SSL is automatically installed when you host with Hostinger — no separate setup needed.

Connecting Domain + Hosting and Installing WordPress

1. In the Hostinger dashboard, go to "Home" → find the option to set up hosting.
2. Click "Continue", then choose "Create a Website."
3. When asked if you want an HTML page, choose "WordPress" instead (selecting HTML will NOT auto-install WordPress).
4. Enter your "WordPress account details":
 - Username and password — these open your "WP Admin panel" (accessible by typing `yourdomain.com/wp-admin`).
 - "Save these credentials somewhere safe" — you'll need them every time you log in.
5. Select "English" as the setup language, then click Next.
6. Choose "Create Blank Site" (skip the pre-made theme option since you'll build from scratch).
7. Select your "domain" (the name people will use to visit your site — different from hosting, which is where your data is stored).
 - If your domain was purchased from a different provider (e.g., GoDaddy) and hosting is from Hostinger, you'll need to update the "nameservers" to connect them.
8. Select your "country", then click Next.
9. WordPress installation begins — this sets up hosting + installs WordPress on your domain. This step takes a little time; wait for it to finish.

Hostinger also gives free SSL and lets you create multiple subdomains, plus built-in caching plugins to keep your site fast.

Creating a Subdomain (Optional)

- A subdomain looks like: `blog.yourdomain.com`
- Steps: Hostinger Dashboard → Domains → Subdomains → enter subdomain name (e.g., "blog") → optionally create a custom folder → Create.
- You can install a separate WordPress instance on a subdomain the same way (via Hostinger's WordPress Overview → Install WordPress → select the subdomain).
- Note: A subdomain counts as a separate website/domain for practical purposes, even though it's part of your main domain.

Login & Dashboard Overview

1. Open your site and add `/wp-admin` to the URL to reach the login screen.
2. Log in with the username and password you set earlier.
3. You'll land on the WordPress Dashboard. Key sections:

Section Purpose

- Updates | Shows pending updates for plugins/themes |
- Posts | For blog content — includes Categories, Tags, Comments (this is WordPress's original core feature)
- Media | Stores all uploaded images/files
- Pages | Create the static pages of your site (Home, About, Contact, etc.)
- Comments | Stores comments made on posts/pages
- Appearance | Manage Themes, Menus, Widgets
- Plugins | Add extra features (SEO, forms, sliders, page builders, etc.)
- Users | Manage who can access the dashboard, and their roles
- Tools | Site health, import/export data
- Settings | Site URL, permalinks, media size, privacy policy page, etc.

User Roles

- Administrator— full control (can edit/delete anything)
- Editor — limited functionality
- Author — can manage their own posts/pages
- Normal User— no dashboard functionality

Understanding Themes vs Plugins

- Theme = your website's design/layout. Choose a theme based on your site type (blog theme, service theme, ecommerce theme, etc.)
- Plugin = extra features/functionality (SEO tools, image compression, forms, page builders like Elementor).
- Rule of thumb: Only use a plugin when the theme doesn't already provide that functionality.

Installing a Theme

1. Go to Appearance → Themes → Add New.
2. Popular free themes: Astra, OceanWP, Extra, Hello Elementor, Zeta, Blocksy*
3. Search for your chosen theme (e.g., "Extra"), install it, and Activate.
4. Always clear the cache after changes so you can see them reflected on the live site.
5. Premium themes usually let you import "dummy content" for a ready-made look, but for full customization from scratch, use a free theme and build manually.

Basic Branding Setup

Adding a Logo

1. Go to Appearance → Customize → Header → Site Title & Logo.
2. Remove the default site title text if you don't want it displayed.
3. Click Select Logo and upload your logo image.
4. SVG logos need an extra plugin (WordPress doesn't support SVG uploads by default):
 - Go to Plugins → Add New → search "SVG Support" → Install → Activate.
 - Return to Customize → Header → re-select your SVG logo → Skip Cropping → Publish.

Adding a Site Icon (Favicon)

1. Appearance → Customize → Site Identity → Site Icon.
2. Upload the icon image → crop/skip cropping → Publish.

Creating Pages

1. Go to Pages → Add New.
2. Name your page (e.g., Home, About, Blog, Contact) and click Publish.
3. Repeat to create all needed pages (a typical starter site needs Home, About, Blog, Contact).
4. Delete any default/demo pages created automatically by your theme, if not needed.

Permalinks (Page URLs)

- The Permalink/Slug is the URL segment after your domain (e.g., `yourdomain.com/about-us`).

- Edit it via Quick Edit on the page list.
- Go to Settings → Permalinks and choose "Post Name" for clean, readable URLs (this also fixes many "page not opening" errors — clear cache after changing).

Setting Up the Homepage & Menu

Set a Static Homepage

1. Go to Settings → Reading.
2. Choose "A static page".
3. Set your Homepage (e.g., "Home") and your Posts page (e.g., "Blog").
4. Save Changes, then clear cache.

Build the Navigation Menu

1. Go to Appearance → Menus.
2. Delete any default menu, or create a new one and set it as the Primary Menu (this is your main visible menu).
3. Add your Pages (Home, About, Blog, Contact) to the menu.
4. Drag and drop to reorder items.
5. Click Save Menu.

Submenus (Dropdown Items)

1. Create a new page (e.g., "About Us – Karachi") and set its Parent page (e.g., "About Us") in the Page Attributes panel.
2. Go to Appearance → Menus, drag the child page slightly to the right/under its parent to nest it as a dropdown.
3. Save.

Custom Links in Menu

- Use the Custom Links option in Menus to add any external URL (e.g., link to another website) with custom label text.

Adding Content to Pages (Default Editor)

- Open a page → Edit.
- Use Columns blocks to split the layout (e.g., two 50/50 columns).
- Add an Image block on one side (upload or select from media library).
- Add a Paragraph block for text content on the other side.

- Add Video blocks — paste a YouTube video URL directly.
- Add a Gallery block to display multiple images.
- Add Headings and set text alignment/color as needed.
- Add Buttons:

- Set button text, then use the Link option to connect it to an internal page (search by page name/slug) or an external URL.

- Enable "Open in new tab" if needed.

- Customize background color, text color, size, padding, border, and shadow.

Always Save/Publish after edits, and refresh with cache cleared to see changes.

Blogging Features (Posts, Categories, Tags)

WordPress originally launched as a blogging platform — the Posts section is where blog functionality lives.

Categories

1. Go to Posts → Categories.
2. Create categories (e.g., "Digital Marketing," "Web Development").
3. Each category gets an auto-generated slug (used in the URL).

Creating a Post

1. Go to Posts → Add New.
2. Add a Title.
3. Add your content/description in the body.
4. Set a Featured Image (the main image representing the post).
5. Assign it to the correct Category.
6. Add relevant Tags (short keywords describing the post).
7. Click Publish.
8. Repeat for multiple posts across categories.

Post vs Page — Key Difference

- Page = represents a specific fixed URL/section (Home, About, Contact).
- Post = one entry in a list; clicking it opens a detail page. Blog listings show multiple posts.

Controlling How Many Posts Show Per Page

- Go to Settings → Reading → "Blog pages show at most."
- Set a number (e.g., 2 or 10). Extra posts appear on the next page automatically (pagination).

Adding Blog Categories to the Menu

- Go to Appearance → Menus → Categories tab, select your categories, and add them to the menu (nest them under "Blog" as dropdown items if desired) → Save.

Sidebar & Widgets (For Blog Pages)

Go to Appearance → Widgets (or your theme's Sidebar/Widgets builder — e.g., inside "Extra" theme's Dashboard).

2. The Main Sidebar area controls what appears beside blog posts (Search, Categories, Recent Posts, Comments, Archive, Calendar, custom images, etc.).
3. Delete unwanted default widgets.
4. Add widgets one at a time:
 - Search widget
 - Categories widget (with a heading)
 - Recent Posts widget (with a heading)
 - Calendar widget (shows clickable dates when posts were published)
 - Image widget (for promotional banners, etc.)
5. Adjust font size/heading size for consistency.

6. To show the same sidebar on individual post detail pages: go to theme Dashboard → Blog → Customize → Single Post settings → choose a layout with a sidebar → Publish.

7. You can also enable Related Posts below single post content, and set how many to display and in how many columns.

Building the Footer

1. Open your theme's Footer Builder (Appearance → Customize → Footer Builder, or via theme Dashboard).

2. Choose a column layout (e.g., 3 columns).

3. Column 1: Add a heading ("About Us") + a paragraph widget with your about text.

4. Column 2: Add a heading ("Quick Links") + a Navigation Menu widget.

- If you don't want the dropdown submenu style to appear in the footer, create a separate "Footer Menu" (Appearance → Menus → create new menu → assign to Footer Menu location) and use that in the footer widget instead of your main menu.

5. Column 3: Add contact details (address, phone) using a Heading + Text/HTML editor widget, formatting with basic HTML tags like `
` (line break) or `**` (bold) as needed.**

6. Publish, then check the live site (clear cache).

Adding a Contact/Registration Form

Installing a Form Plugin

1. Go to Plugins → Add New → search "Royal Elementor Addons" (a free Elementor add-on plugin with extra widgets, including Forms).

2. Install → Activate.

3. Refresh your Elementor editor — new widgets (Form Builder, Form Styler, etc.) will now appear.

Building the Form

1. Drag the Form widget into your layout.
2. Customize fields — remove/add fields like Name, Email, Phone (set field type, e.g., "10" digit limit for phone).
3. Style the form:
 - Label color, spacing between fields
 - Field background (e.g., transparent for a clean look)
 - Placeholder text color
 - Border, Border Radius
 - Button width, color, and alignment
4. Add Validation: In the form's Content settings, set fields as Required = True so users must fill them before submitting.

Setting Where Form Submissions Go

1. Click Edit on the form → go to the Email section under Content.
2. Set the "To" email address (where you want to receive submissions).
3. Set a custom Subject line.
4. Set the "From" email (should ideally match your live server's domain email once deployed).
5. Publish. Test by submitting the form — you'll see a "Submission Successful" message (customizable in the form's settings), and the data will arrive in the connected inbox.

Essential Plugins to Install

Plugins

- Smush: Compresses images automatically and adds lazy loading, improving site speed. Millions of active installs. |

- Yoast SEO / RankMath / All in One SEO: Manage meta titles, descriptions, keywords, sitemaps, and robots.txt for SEO — pick one. |
- LiteSpeed Cache(often pre-installed by Hostinger) | Caches your HTML, CSS, and JS so returning visitors get faster load times.

Elementor — Page Builder Plugin

Elementor is a page builder plugin that lets you design any layout visually (drag-and-drop), rather than being limited by the default block editor.

Installing Elementor

1. Go to Plugins → Add New → search "Elementor."*
2. Install and Activate (it's one of the most widely used WordPress plugins).

Layout Options Elementor Gives You

1. Keep the theme's header/footer and design only the middle content area.
2. Remove the header/footer entirely and design a full custom landing page (no header/footer = a landing page, since visitors "land" there without site navigation).
3. Build your own custom header/footer inside Elementor (requires an add-on plugin for this specific feature).

Elementor Global Settings

Access via the hamburger menu (≡) → Site Settings inside the Elementor editor:

- Global Colors: Set Primary, Secondary, Text, and Accent colors used across buttons and elements.
- Global Fonts: Set default fonts for Primary, Secondary, Text, and Accent styles.
- Typography: Set default colors/sizes for body text, links, H1–H3 headings.
- Layout: Set Content Width (e.g., 1200px) — this defines your page's main content area width; set padding and column gaps.

- Breakpoints: Predefined responsive breakpoints — Mobile (0–767px), Tablet (768–1024px), Desktop (1024px+). Usually left as default.

Basic Elementor Workflow

1. Create a new Page, then click Edit with Elementor.
2. Choose Page Layout in Page Settings:
 - Elementor Full Width → keeps header/footer.
 - Elementor Canvas → removes header/footer (for landing pages).
3. Use Containers to structure your layout:
 - Click +to add a container, choose a column structure (e.g., 2 columns).
 - Adjust each column's width using Edit Container → set % width.
 - Set the column gap in the Layout tab.
4. Style any container/element via the 6-dot handle → Style tab:
 - Background → set a solid color or upload a background image (use "Cover" for display size so it fills properly).
 - Border, Border Radius, Box Shadow for visual polish.
5. Widgets available (drag from the left panel into your layout):
 - Heading – for titles (choose H1–H6 tag)
 - Text Editor – for paragraph content
 - Image – with size, alignment, opacity, and filter controls
 - Button – with link, alignment, size, and full style controls
 - Video – paste a YouTube URL
 - Gallery/Image Box – image + heading + description combo
 - Icon List – icon + text combinations (e.g., feature highlights)
 - Accordion– for FAQ-style Q&A sections
 - Google Maps – embed a location

- Form (via an add-on plugin, see below)
- 6. Use Advanced tab on any element for Margin, Padding, Motion Effects (entrance animations), and Custom CSS Classes for fine control (e.g., forcing an image to 100% width via a custom class + Additional CSS).
- 7. Check your Mobile view using the responsive preview icons at the bottom of the editor, and adjust font sizes/spacing separately for mobile — these are independent of desktop settings.
- 8. Click Publish after each major change, and Preview to check the live result.

Adding Tracking/Analytics Code (No Plugin Needed)

1. Go to Appearance → Theme Editor → header.php (technical step, but manageable).
 2. Paste your tracking code (e.g., from an SEO/analytics provider) just before the closing `</head>` tag.
 3. Click Update.
- Tip: Avoid installing a separate plugin for every small task — for things you can do directly (like adding a code snippet), do it manually instead of relying on extra plugins.

Applying Elementor to Blog Posts Too

- Elementor works on both Pages and Posts.
- Open any Post → Edit with Elementor to fully redesign that individual post's layout using the same container/widget system covered above.