



digital
TOOLS for
TEACHERS
writing/blogging/websites

digital storytelling

creative writing

blogging & websites

Introduction

Teachers are always looking for tools to make their lives easier. And so are we. That's why the Global Digital Citizen Foundation created this ebook series called "Free Tools for Teachers."

In this volume, we feature free tools for writing, blogging, and websites. Check out some of the best free resources on the Web for digital storytelling, creative writing, blogging, and also great tools for building free websites.

Explore these great free online tools we've picked just for you, and most of all, have fun learning!



PART 1: Digital Storytelling Tools



storybird.com

Storybird is the ultimate digital story tool on the Web. It's beautiful to look at and great fun to use. The artwork donated by writers and designers all over the world is stunning, and the templates are customizable. There is a special section for educators that has terrific resources and useful tools to explore.



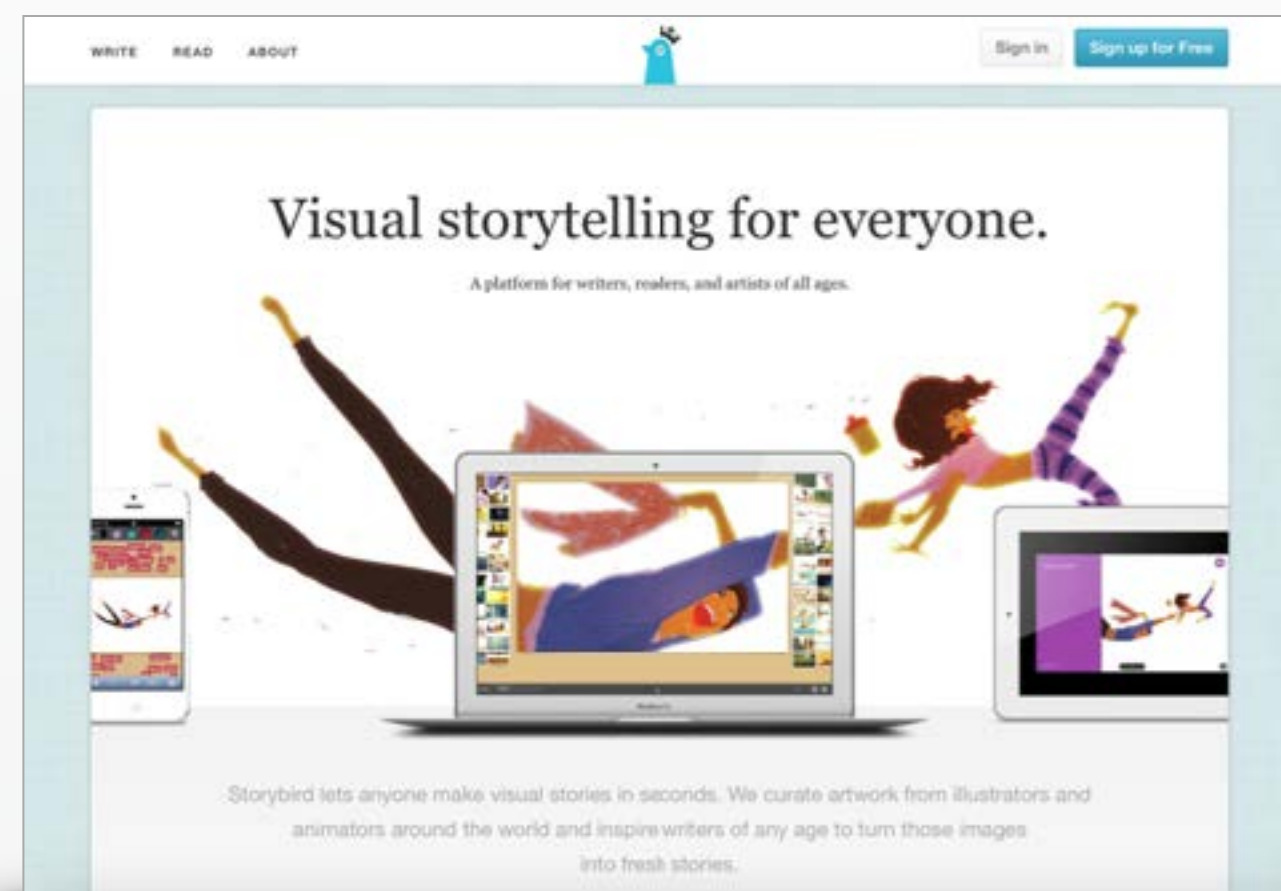
www.pixton.com

Pixton is an online comic panel and storyboarding tool. It's available for personal, educational, and business applications. You can create comics, banners, posters, and more. A set of pre-designed templates allows you to get started quickly. Characters are fully customizable and posable once you are working in the templates.



goanimate4schools.com

GoAnimate for Schools is a great way to make animated videos for school projects. It offers a 4-day free trial and the plans are reasonably priced. This is a tool based on digital citizenship principles. Use either the quick video maker or the full version. The tool libraries all have plenty of great content to work with.



MAKE BELIEFS COMIX

www.makebeliefscomix.com

Make Beliefs Comix is another online comic creator that's free to use. The interface uses scroll, click, and drag techniques to build comics with a wide variety of characters. Lots of backgrounds and objects are also available, and you can add simple colours as well. There is also a good printables library for downloading.



ZooBurst

zooburst.com

Zooburst is a tool for creating digital pop-up books for storytelling. It has an app for iPad as well. You can use your own images or choose from the thousands of pics in their database. Zooburst can also make use of your webcam to both create and control pop-up books using an augmented reality feature.



PUPPET PALS

www.polishedplay.com

An app that has enjoyed thousands of downloads, Puppet Pals is fun to use for telling digital stories. Pick out actors and backdrops, drag them on to the stage, and tap record. Your movements and audio are recorded in real time for playback later. You can also enjoy the in-app purchases that give you even more content.





launchpadtoys.com

Toontastic is a creative storytelling app that lets you draw, animate, and narrate original cartoons. Select from over 200 settings, characters, and cool special effects. You can also take photos with the app, and draw original characters in the app canvas. Sharing on social networks is easy, and you can export to iMovie, too.



www.piclits.com

Piclits is a free online drag-and-drop image editor for making beautiful picture writing projects with a variety of images and built-in text. You can also create in freestyle mode which allows you to type in your own words. There are tutorials included to help you make the most of this simple but attractive tool.



zimmertwinsatschool.com

With ZimmerTwins, you can create high-quality animated cartoon films with classes of up to 40 individual students on an account. Each class gets a blog, and you can create and share lesson plans using animated movies. You can either make a film from scratch or pick from one of the “starters” and go from there.





www.smilebox.com

Smilebox is a tool for making cards, collages, and animated slideshows using your own images. Create your projects and add animations, music, and your own text. There are over 1,000 collages, invitations, cards, and slideshows to work with in Smilebox. You can also save projects to DVD, Facebook, or photo frames.



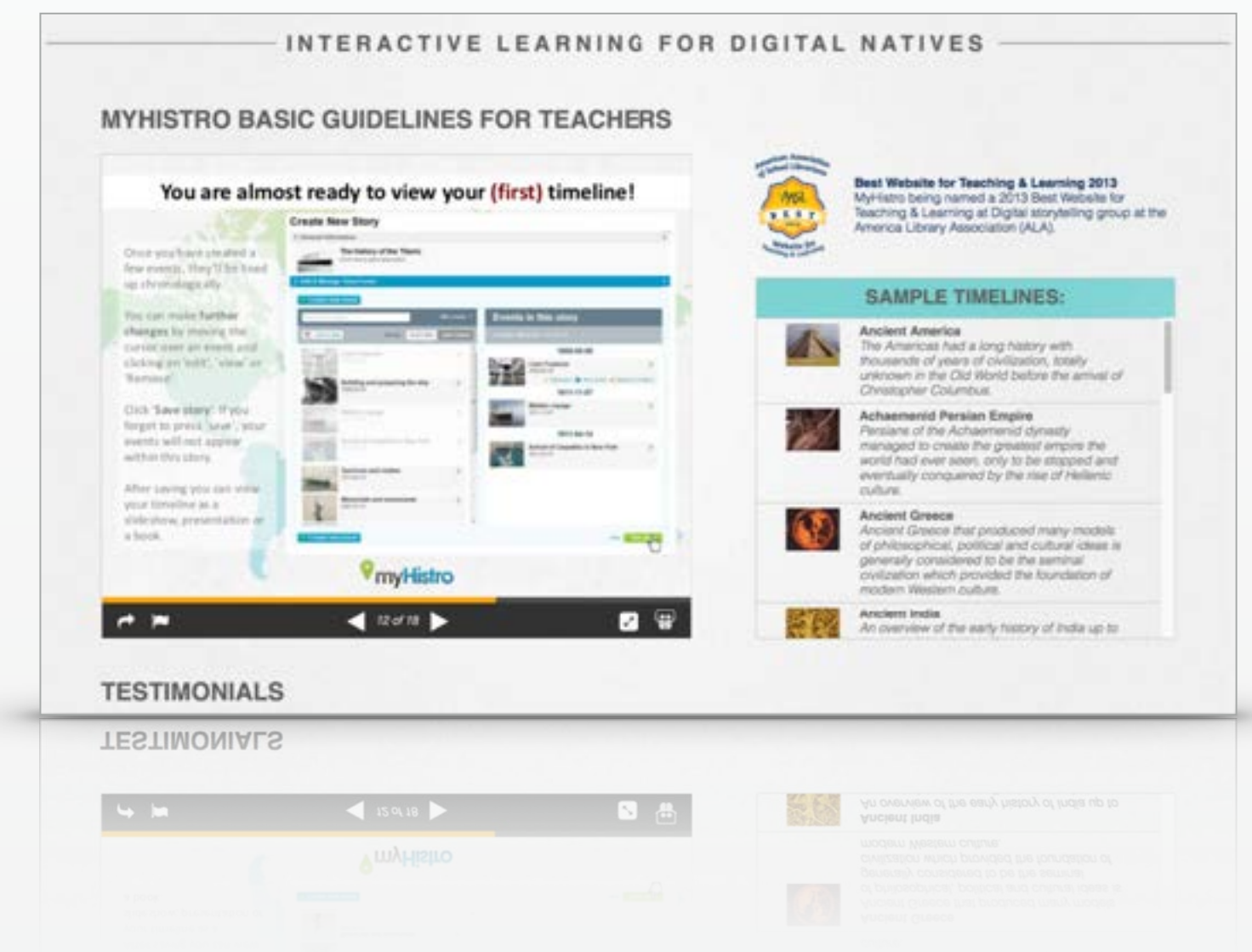
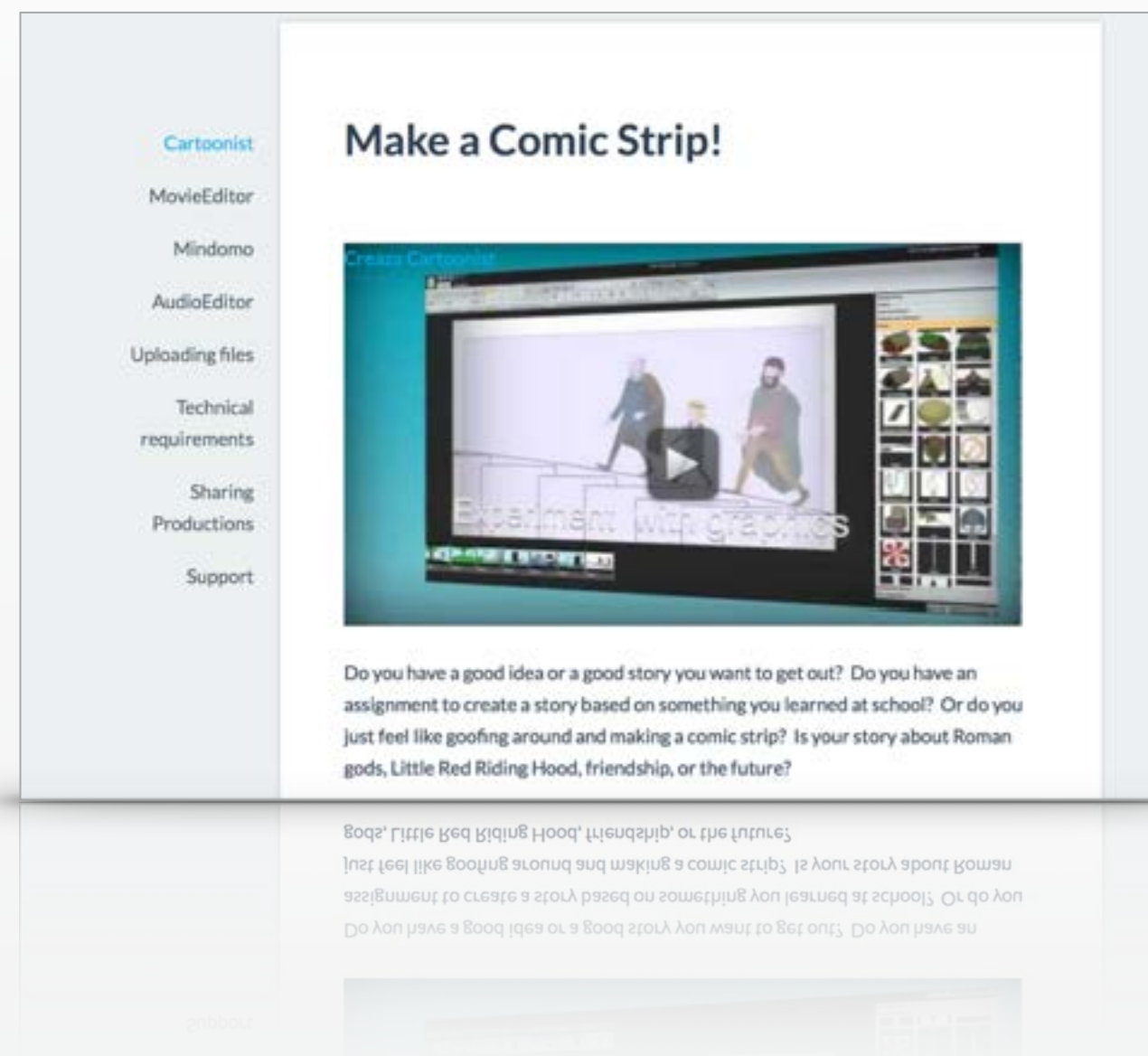
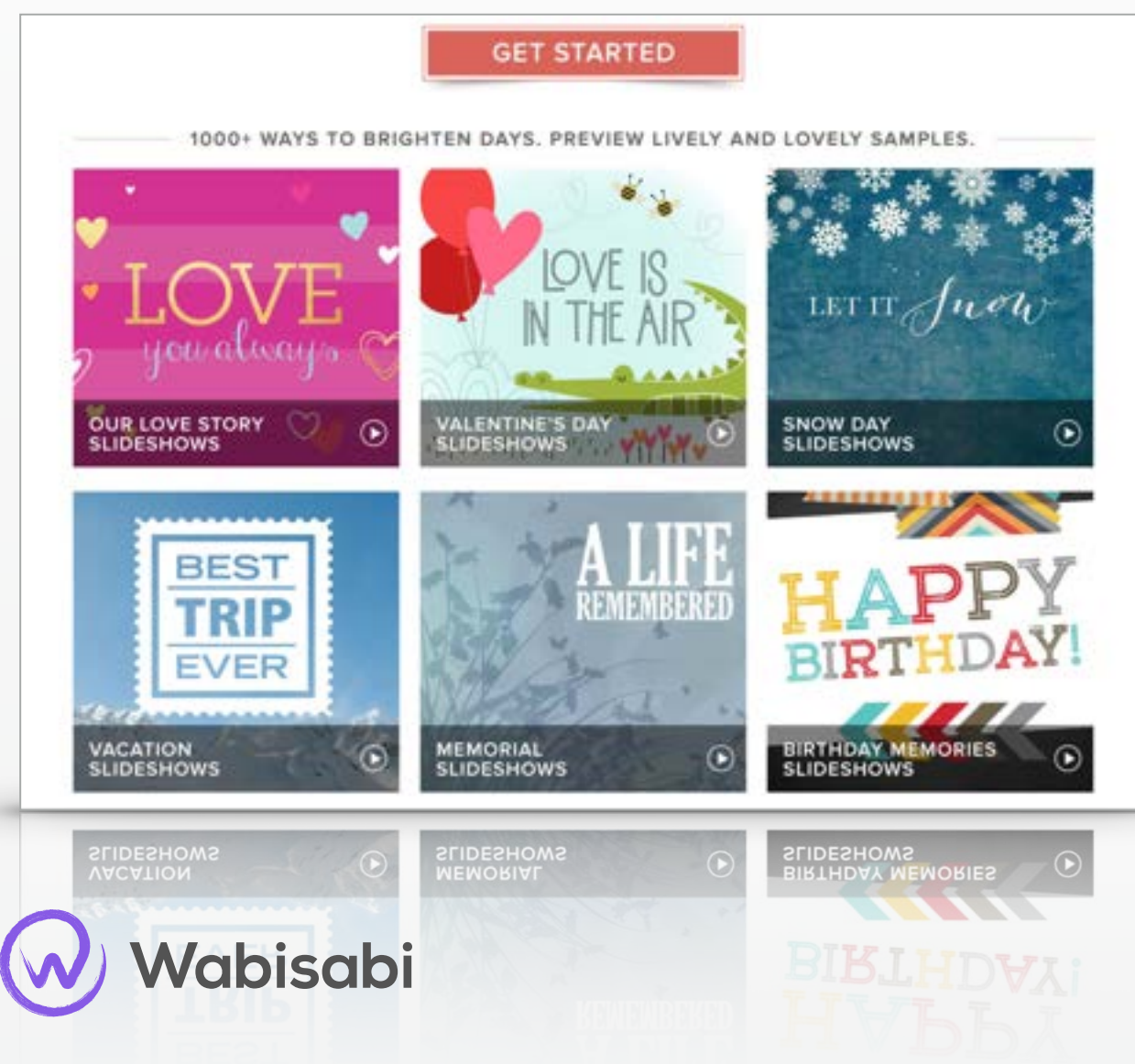
www.creazaeducation.com

Creaza is a digital tool that lets students work with different subjects and topics by creating mind maps, presentations, comic strips, movies, and audio productions. This is a very dynamic tool featuring a wide range of applications for the classroom. It also has a database of PBL lessons that are classroom-ready.



www.myhistro.com

MyHistro is an online storytelling tool that makes use of animated timelines. You can use text, video, and pictures to create a dynamic timeline project. MyHistro is also available at the iTunes App Store. MyHistro Education has got hundreds of historical timelines to work with, as well as great collaboration tools for group projects.



PART 2: Creative Writing Tools





www.creativity-portal.com

Creativity Portal is a resource depot for creative minds of all sorts. There are tools for writing, blogging, poetry, script writing, arts and crafts, and lots more. In particular, the writing prompt generators can be quite useful for all sorts of creative writing projects. Just click on “Get Next prompt” and fresh inspiration appears in the window.

The Story Starter

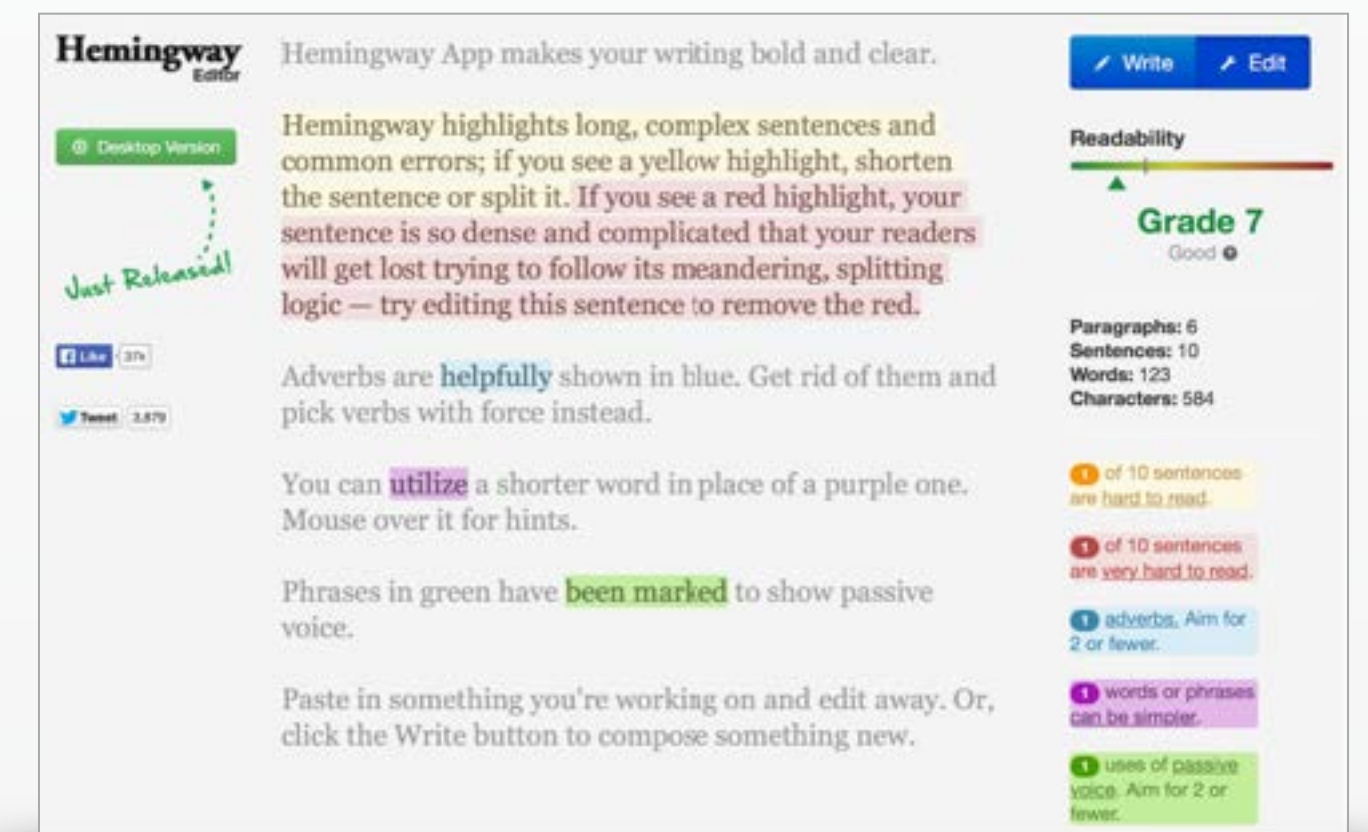
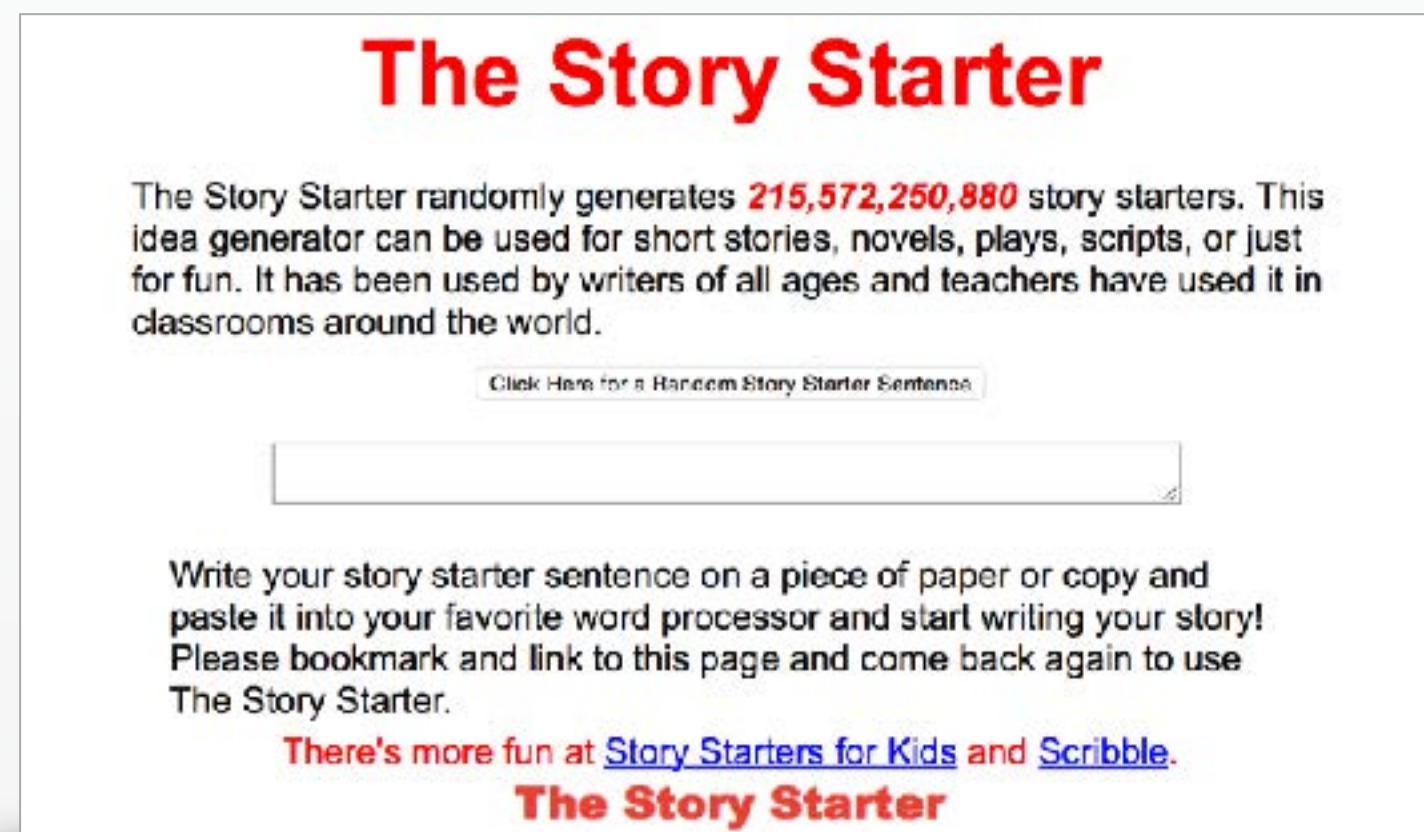
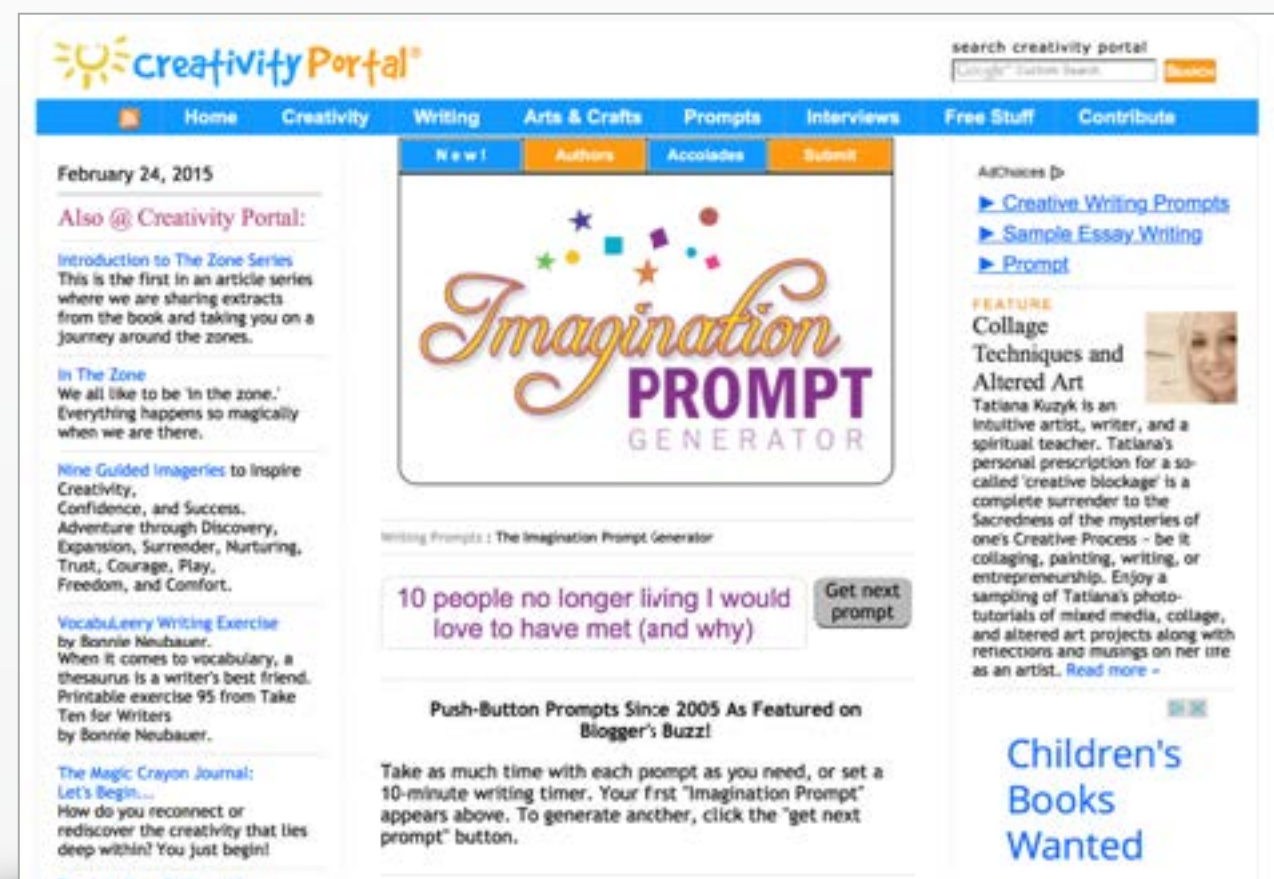
www.thestorystarter.com

The Story Starter is a simple and clean online tool that randomly generates millions of story starters. Use it for short stories, novels, plays, scripts, and more. The prompts it generates are quite unique and tend to incorporate different genres and themes into imaginative and fun combinations for any story project.

Hemingway Editor

www.hemingwayapp.com

Hemingway is a great way to check your content’s simplicity and also its readability. Simply copy in your text and watch as the analysis appears on the right side of the screen telling you what needs to be rewritten or improved. The highlights are interactive, and mousing over them gives you suggestions for substitutions and revisions.





www.spacejock.com

YWriter 5 is a piece of novel writing software created by Simon Haynes. It's a word processor that's designed specifically for authors. It breaks down your concept into chapters and scenes. The interface is meant to be distraction-free to allow you to focus simply on the creative process. It also creates automatic backups.



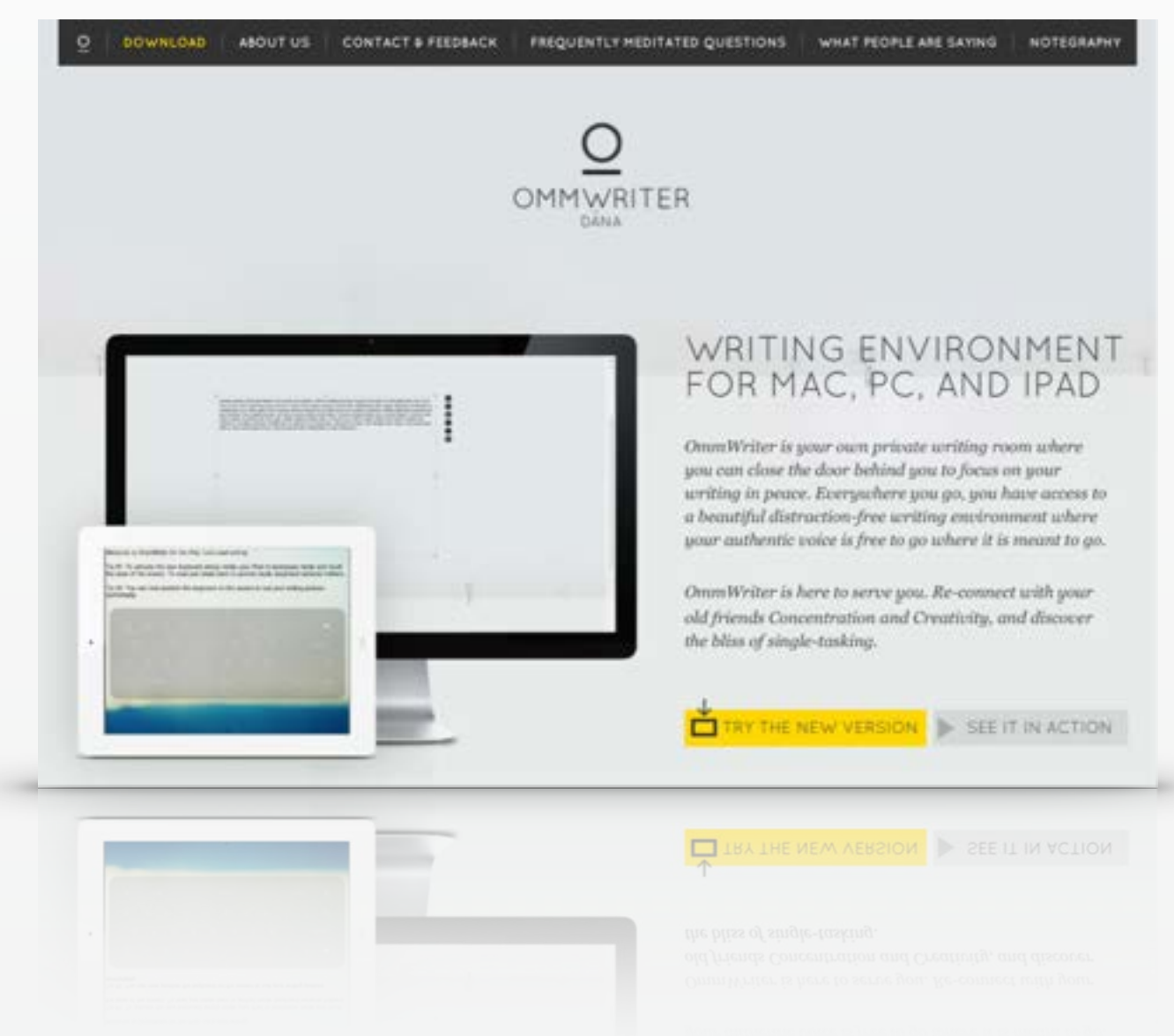
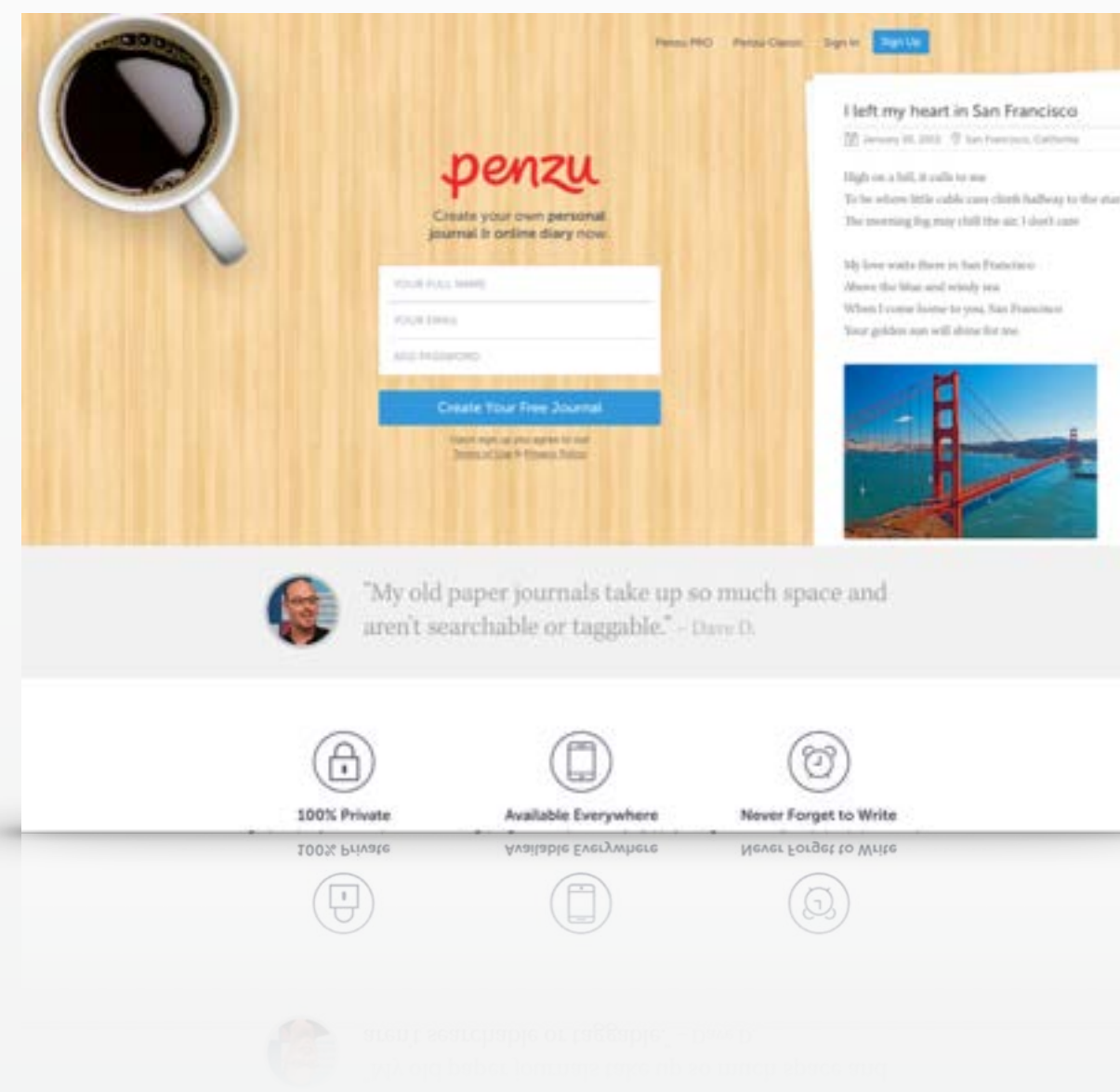
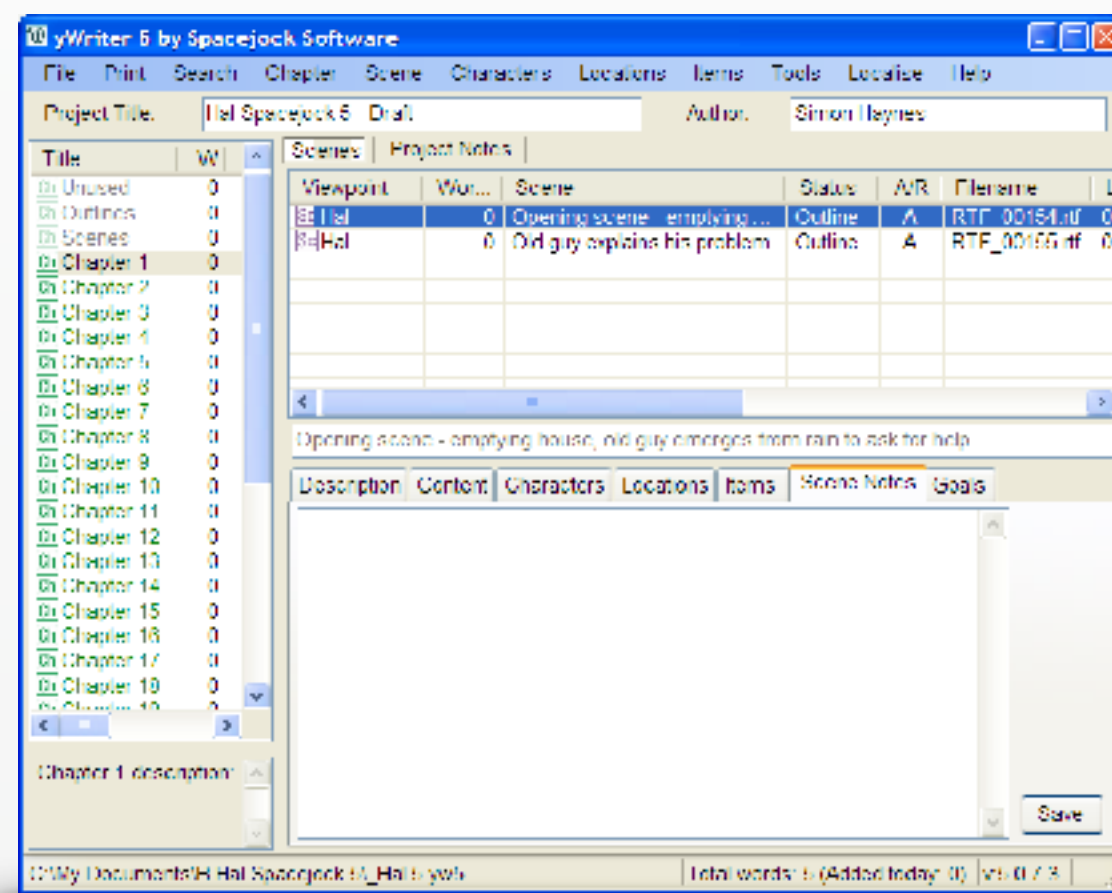
penzu.com

Penzu is an online journal-writing tool. You can create a basic journal with the free version. All content is private and secure, and you can access it from any mobile device. The Penzu Pro tool features options that will allow you to customize your journal with your own photos, textures, and fonts. You can have multiple journals, also.



www.ommwriter.com

This is distraction-free writing at its best. With Ommwriter, you immerse yourself in your own unique writing space. Choose from various desktop backgrounds to set the mood. Use audio tracks to stimulate your sense of peace. You can even customize the sound of your keyboard clicks. Ommwriter will set your mind free.





gottcode.org/focuswriter

FocusWriter is another distraction-free writing tool like Ommwriter. This one uses a hide-away interface that you access by moving your mouse to the edges of the screen. It has themes that are customizable, autosave and spellchecking features, and a daily goal and timer you can set to keep you on track.



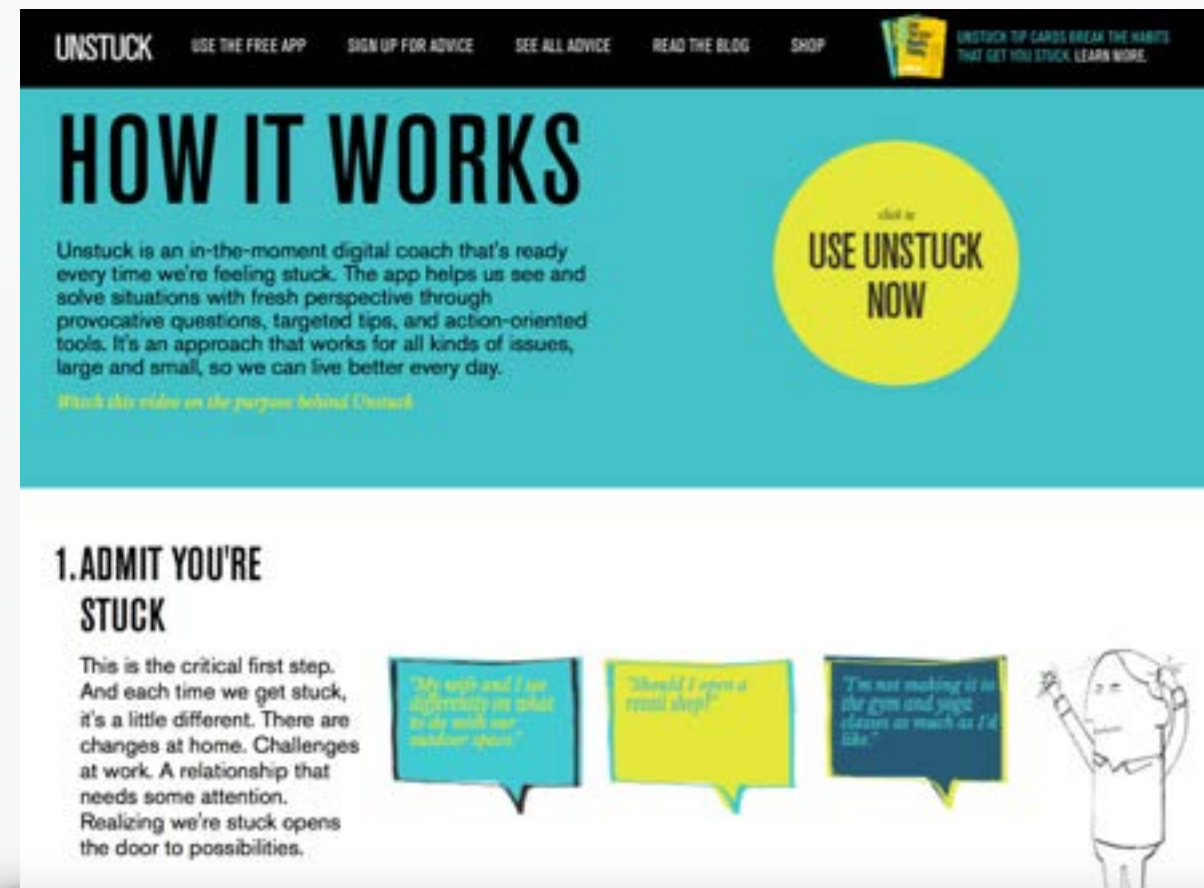
www.unstuck.com

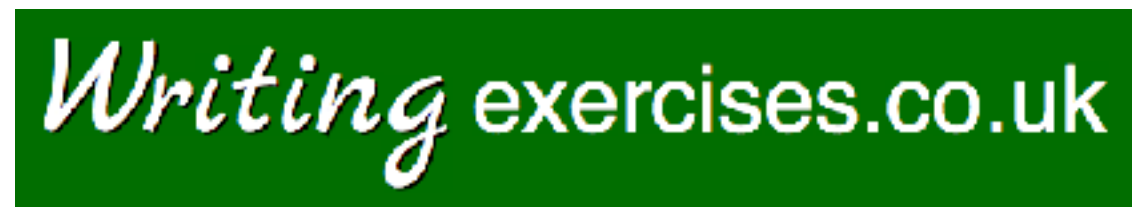
Unstuck is an online digital coach that helps you get through those “stuck” moments. It takes you through a fun and enlightening process of questions that allow you to really get to the root of the issue that’s keeping you from moving forward. After you are all done with the questions, it gives you advice for getting yourself “unstuck.”



www.seventhsanctum.com

Seventh Sanctum is a one-stop shop for random idea generators for pretty much any type of writing. In addition to the basic story prompts, there are plenty of other originals. Use the Envisioner for great writing ideas. Ask the “What-If-inator” for a hypothetical situation to spark your story. Explore all the tools on this great site.





writingexercises.co.uk

Writing Exercises is another website offering prompt generators for writing projects. In addition to story and plot ideas, you can also generate concepts for characters and dialogue. If you want to go even further, use tools like the Town Name generator, or dive into the writing exercises featured on the site. There are lots of useful tools here.



The
BRAINSTORMER

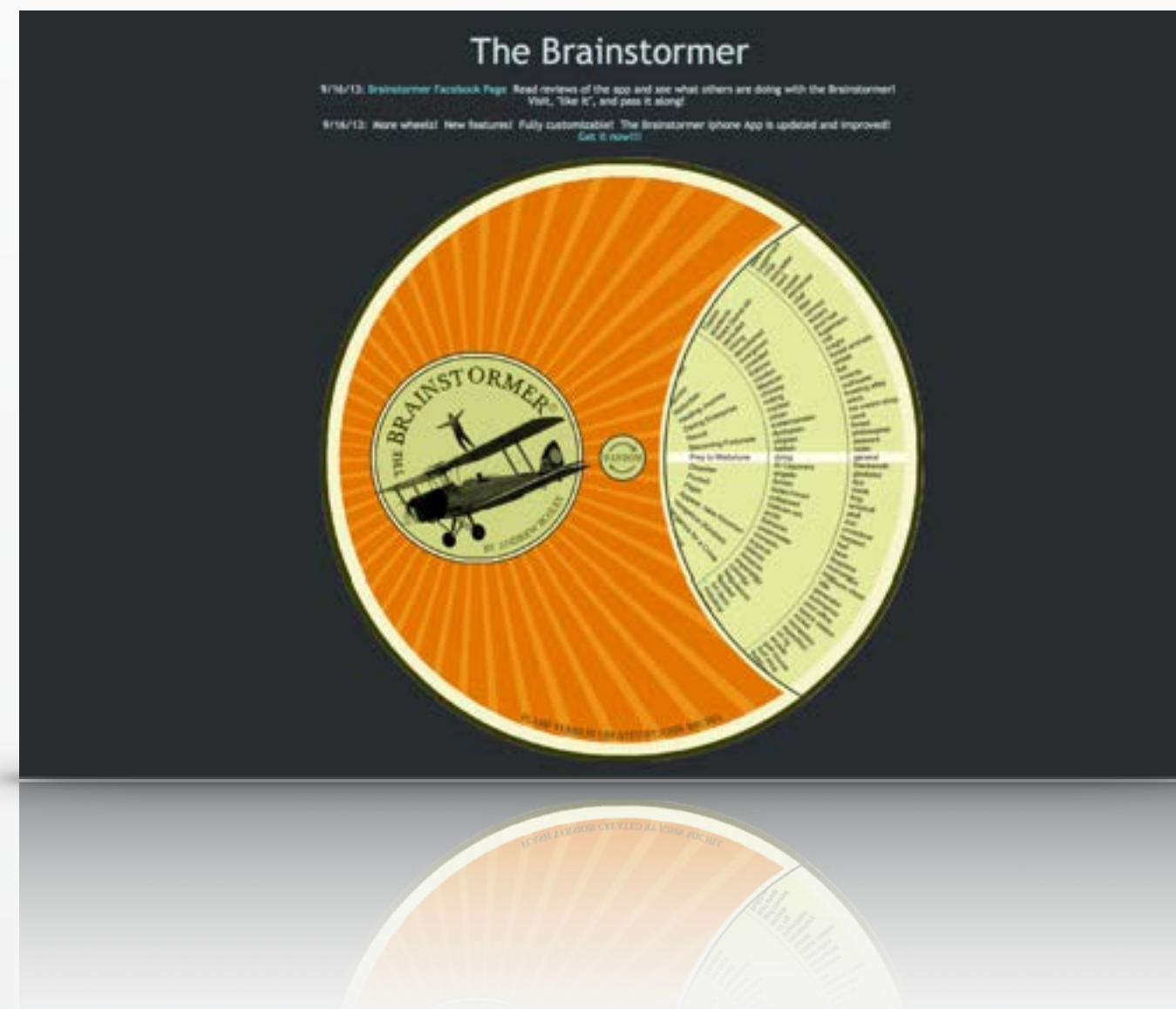
andrewbosley.weebly.com

This is a website for the popular app The Brainstormer by Tapnik. This is an app for connecting to random ideas and concepts for writing. The website works in much the same way as the app. The three wheels offer ideas for plot/conflict, theme/setting, and then subject/location. Manipulate them into whatever combinations you want.



www.protagonize.com

Protagonize is a fun free online author community for writers of all sorts. The sign-up is free, and you customize your profile to submit your work and connect with similar writers. Explore the latest works from the community members. Rate and comment on the work you like, and get involved in the contests featured for members.





www.abctales.com

ABC Tales is another community that supports freelance writers of all sorts. Write and submit your own work with your online profile, and read others' for inspiration. You can organize bigger projects like novels by linking all the components together. Get help and advice in the ABC Forums, and visit all the writer's blogs, too.



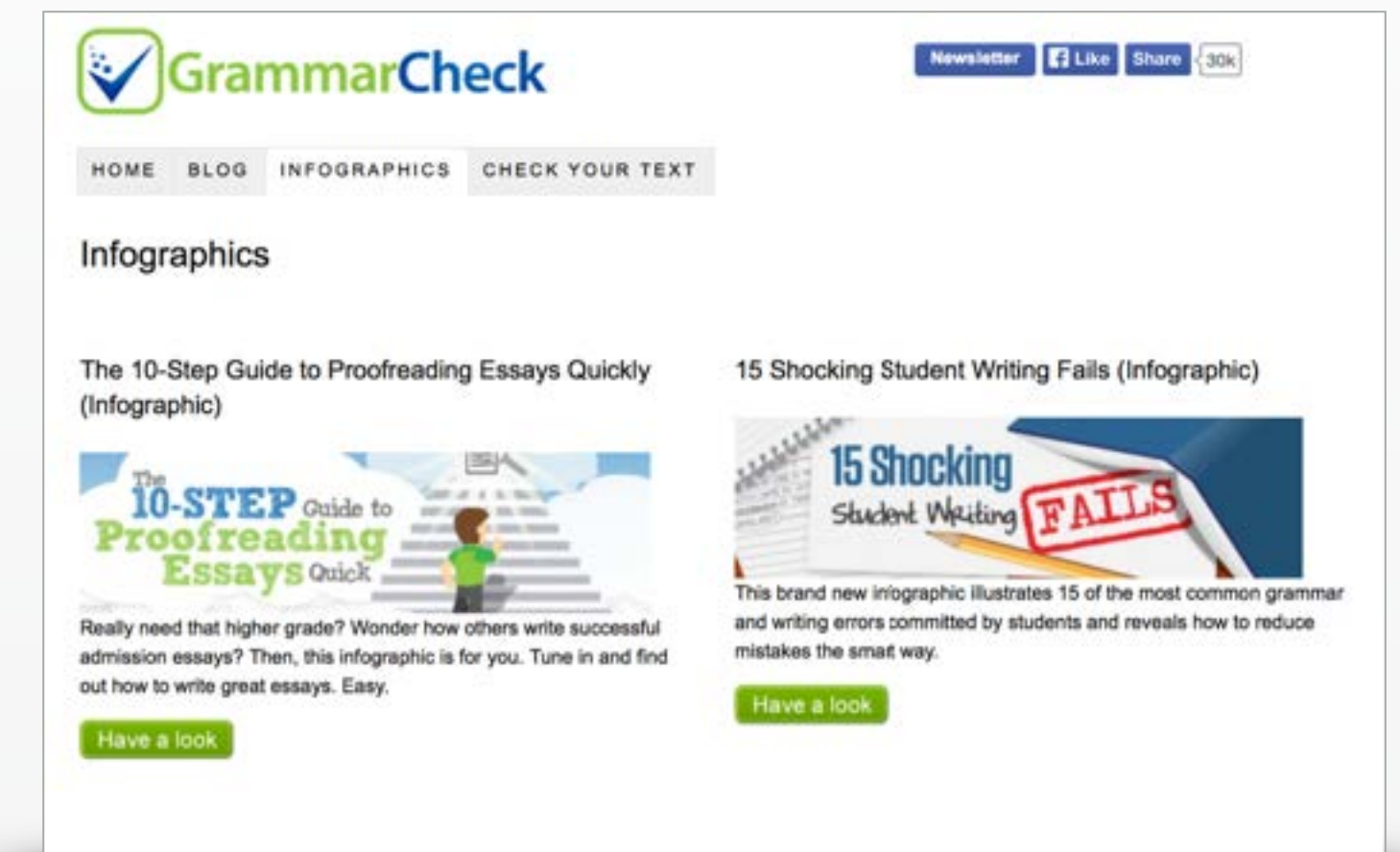
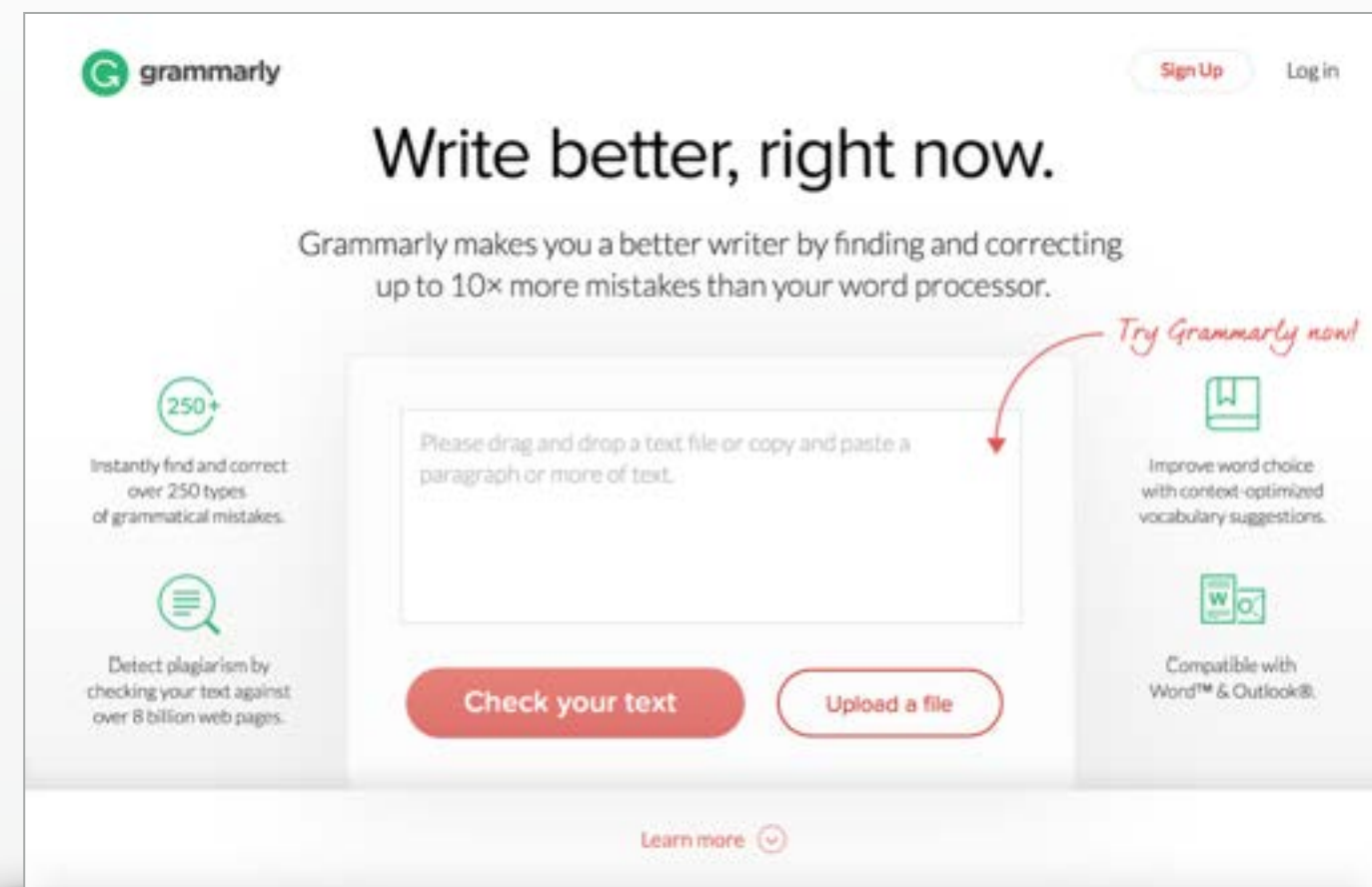
www.grammarly.com

Grammarly is a great tool for checking grammar and spelling. It checks your work against hundreds of possible errors and indicates where revisions are needed. In addition, there is also a plagiarism tool that cross-checks the text with over 8 billion web pages. You can also get vocabulary suggestions from Grammarly to improve writing.



www.grammarcheck.net

The GrammarCheck website is more than just a tool for checking your text. Use the editor and get a free check, or a "deep" check linked to sign-up on the Grammarly website. There is also a series of handy and informative infographics focused on improving writing skills and techniques. The blog is also useful for writing advice.





PART 3: Blogging & Website Tools



wordpress.com

WordPress is the heavy hitter today in website and blog building. Right now, WordPress powers over 20% of the Internet. They have a wide range of beautiful templates and the interface is super-simple to use. A simple sign-up process gets you started, and you can publish right away. It's also mobile friendly for either iPhone or Android.



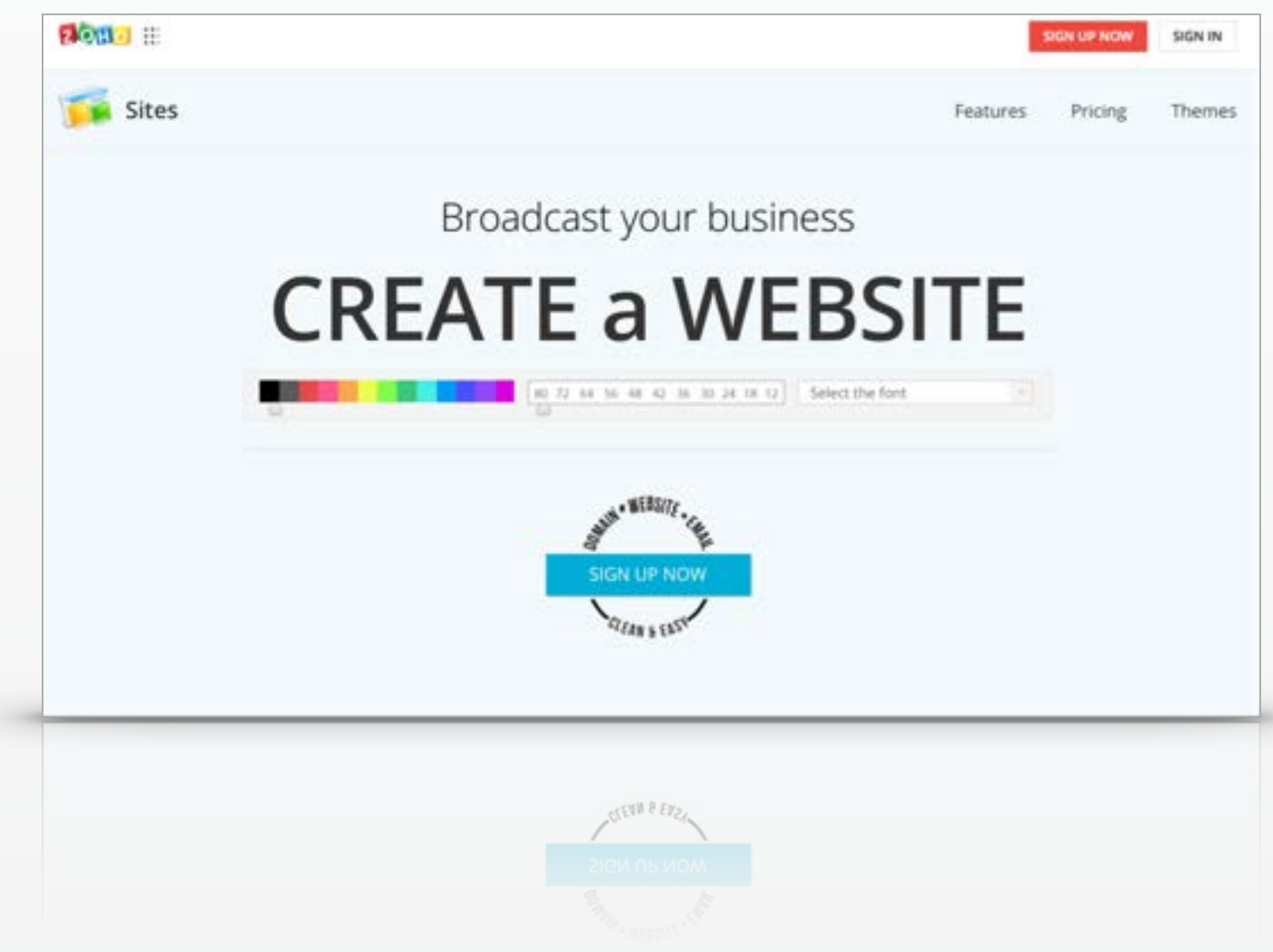
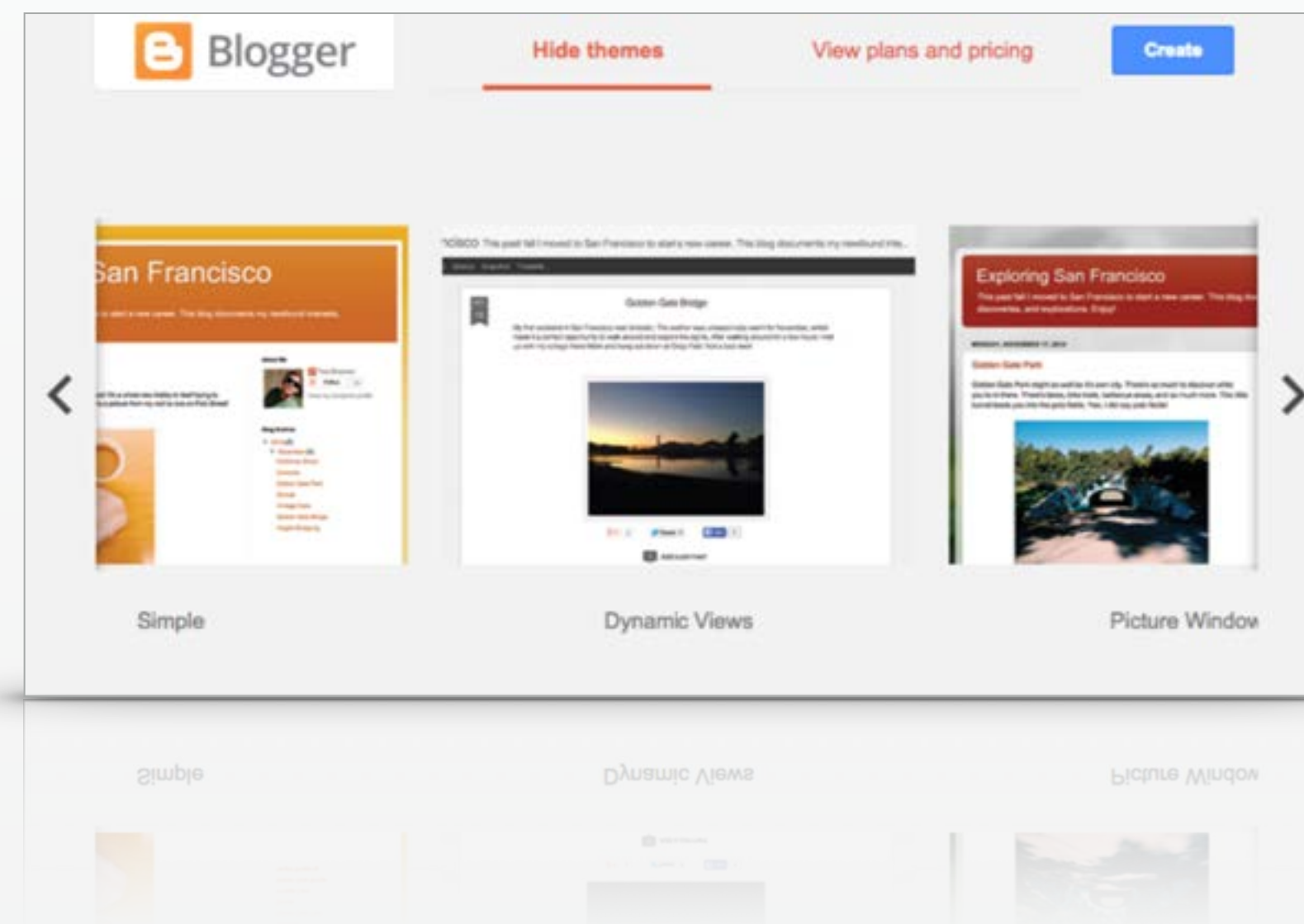
accounts.google.com

Now a part of Google, Blogger is still one of the highest-rated free blogging platforms on the Web today. Interface is simple and easy, and your blog is connected to the world's premier search tool. The amount of templates for your blog is unlimited since there are so many open-source templates you can acquire.



www.zoho.com/sites

ZoHo Sites has a fun drag-and drop interface that lets you build your blog and website nice and fast. The service is completely free, and they also offer free email support to their customers. There is a wide range of themes that are fully customizable so you can get your website looking exactly the way you want.





www.weebly.com

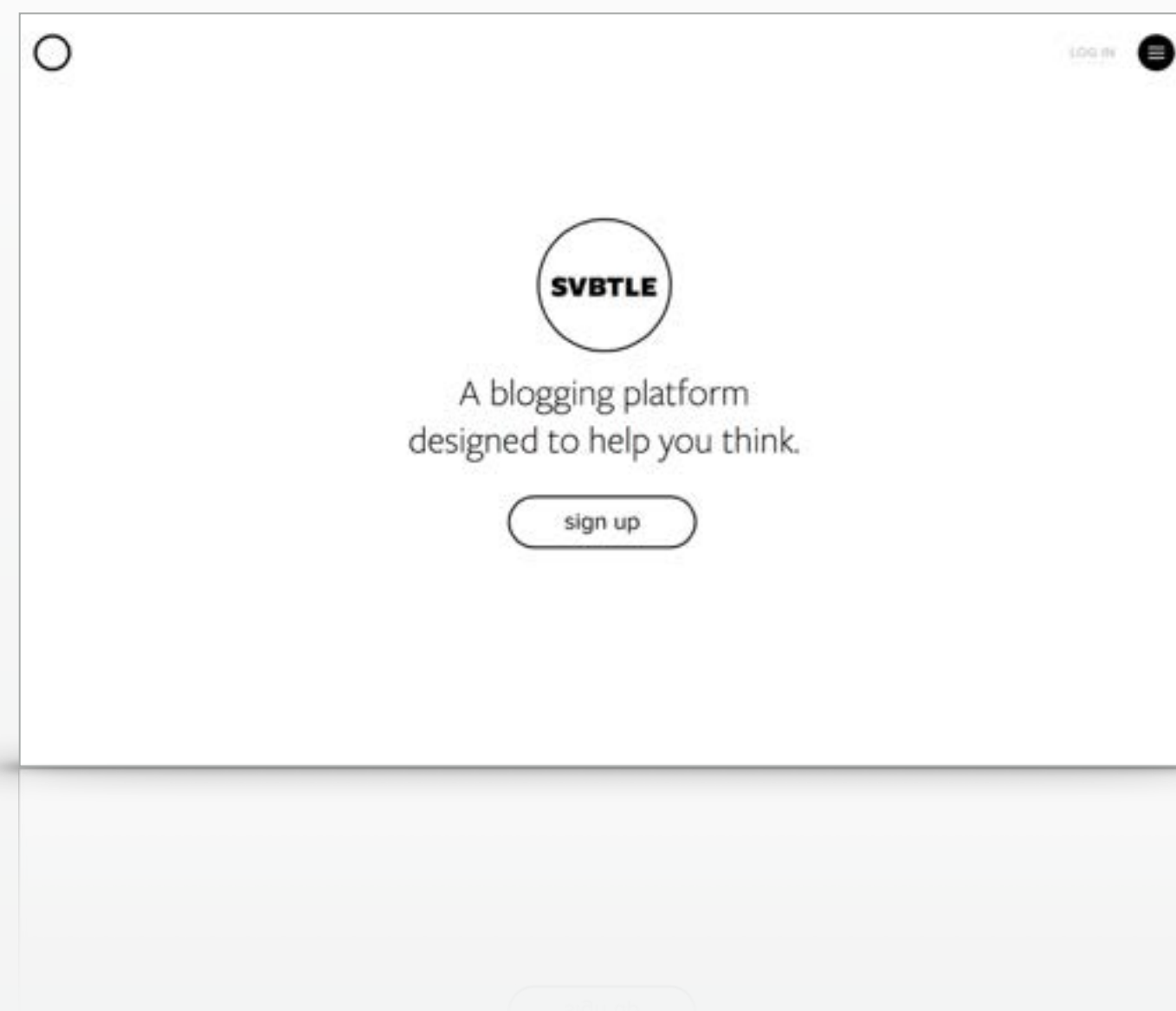
Weebly is another website builder that works off the drag-and drop system. This makes building websites and customizing them super-easy. You can create a blog and also build an online store for e-commerce projects. Weebly is also available as an app for the iPad, iPhone, and Android. The themes are a bit limited, but are visually appealing.



SVBTLE

svbtle.com

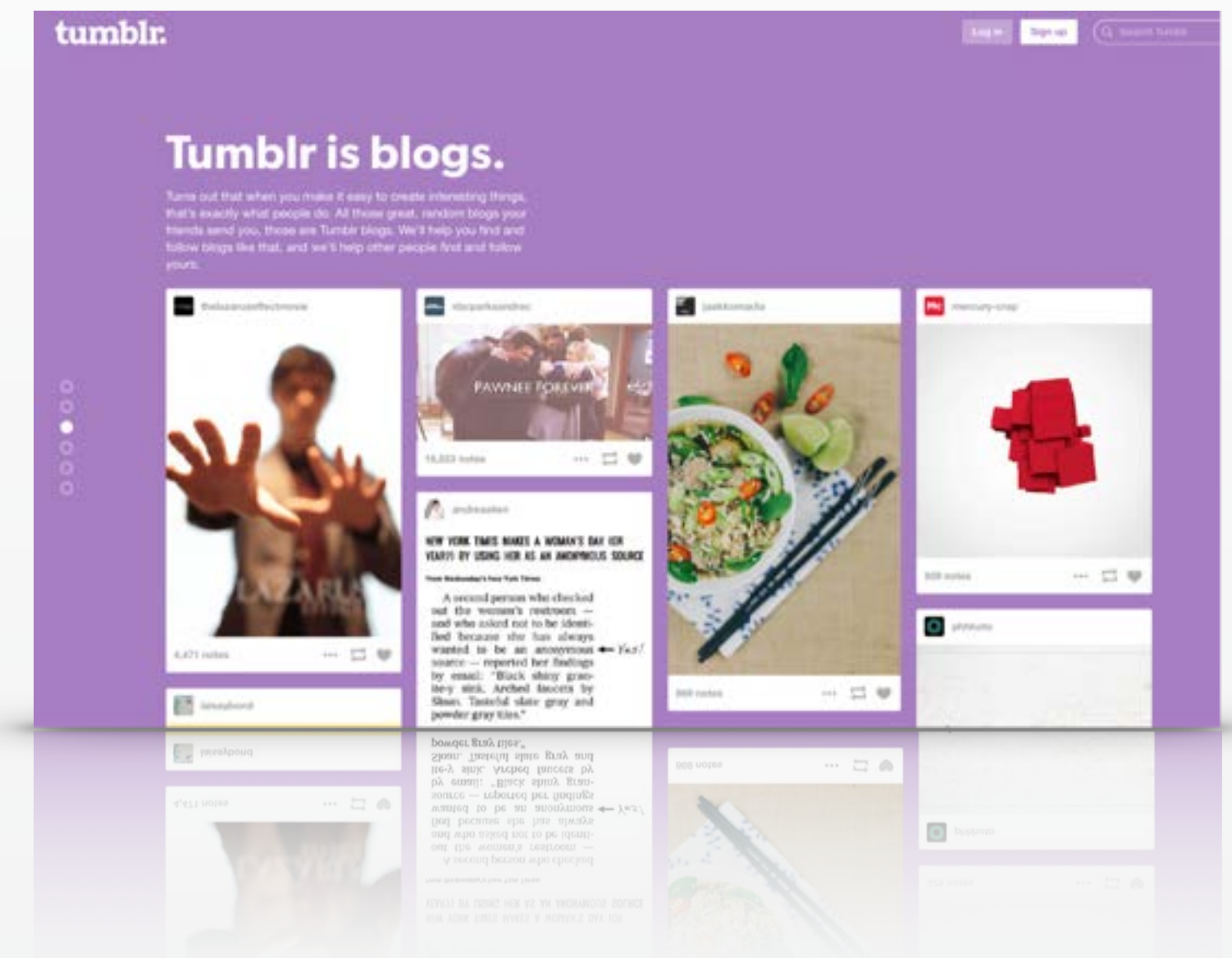
As the name suggests, this is about as subtle as blogging gets. Svbtle is a blogging tool that is “designed to help you think.” It works with two simple columns—fresh ideas and published articles. The writing interface is clean and distraction free, much like using Ommwriter. Svbtle is designed to be a “thought curator” for blogging.



tumblr.

www.tumblr.com

Tumblr is another one of the popular free blogging platforms for budding writers. Tumblr lets you put practically any kind of media into your posts. That includes GIFs, MP3 files, videos, and so much more. It’s also all about building community by connecting people with blogs of different interests. Tumblr is fun and very simple to use.



webs

www.webs.com

This is the free online website builder formerly known as FreeWebs. Webs allows you to place web stores, blogs, calendars, and other useful widgets onto your webpages. Like many other free site builders, it's drag-and-drop and very simple to use and publish with. You can customize your domain name and share on social media, too.

HubPages

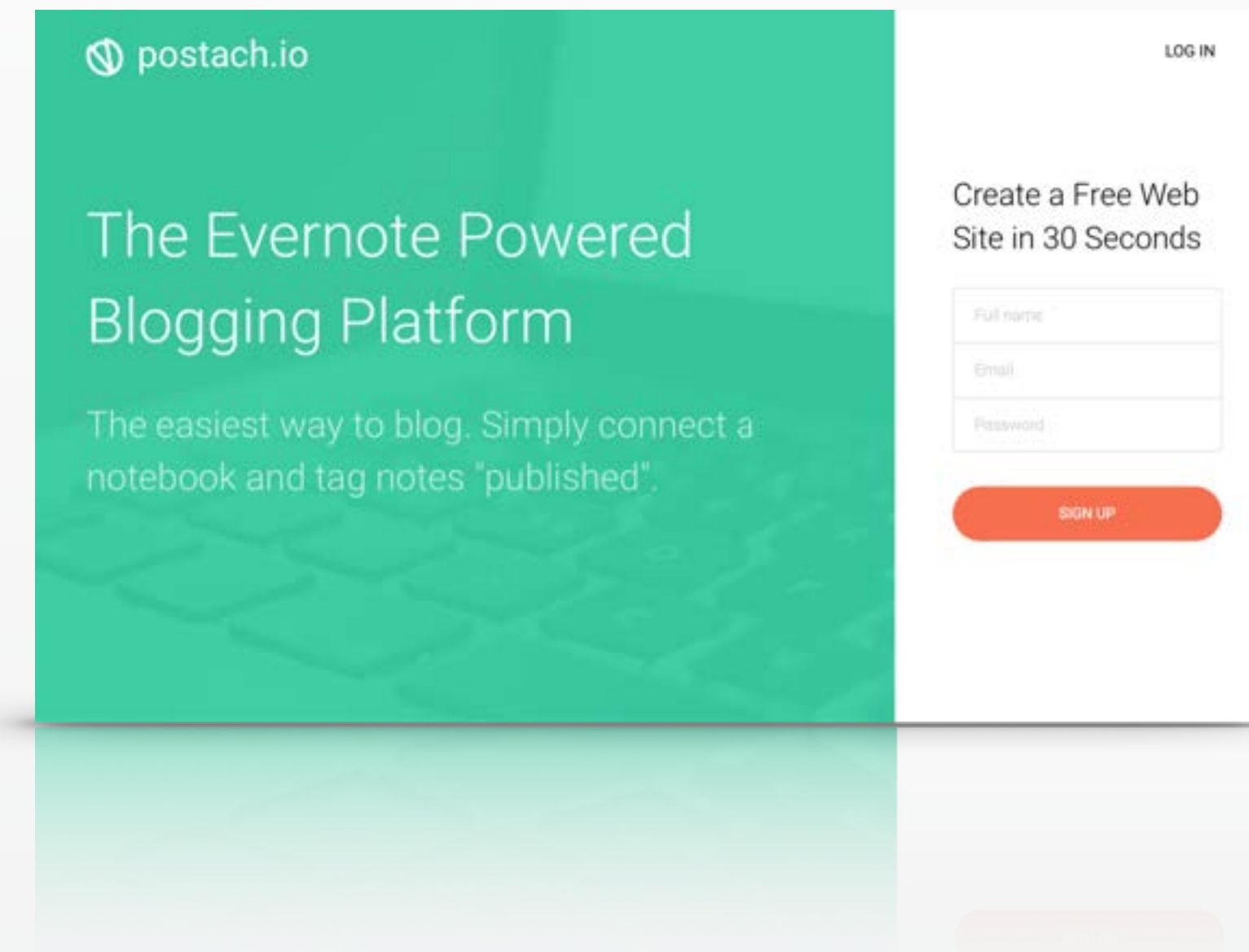
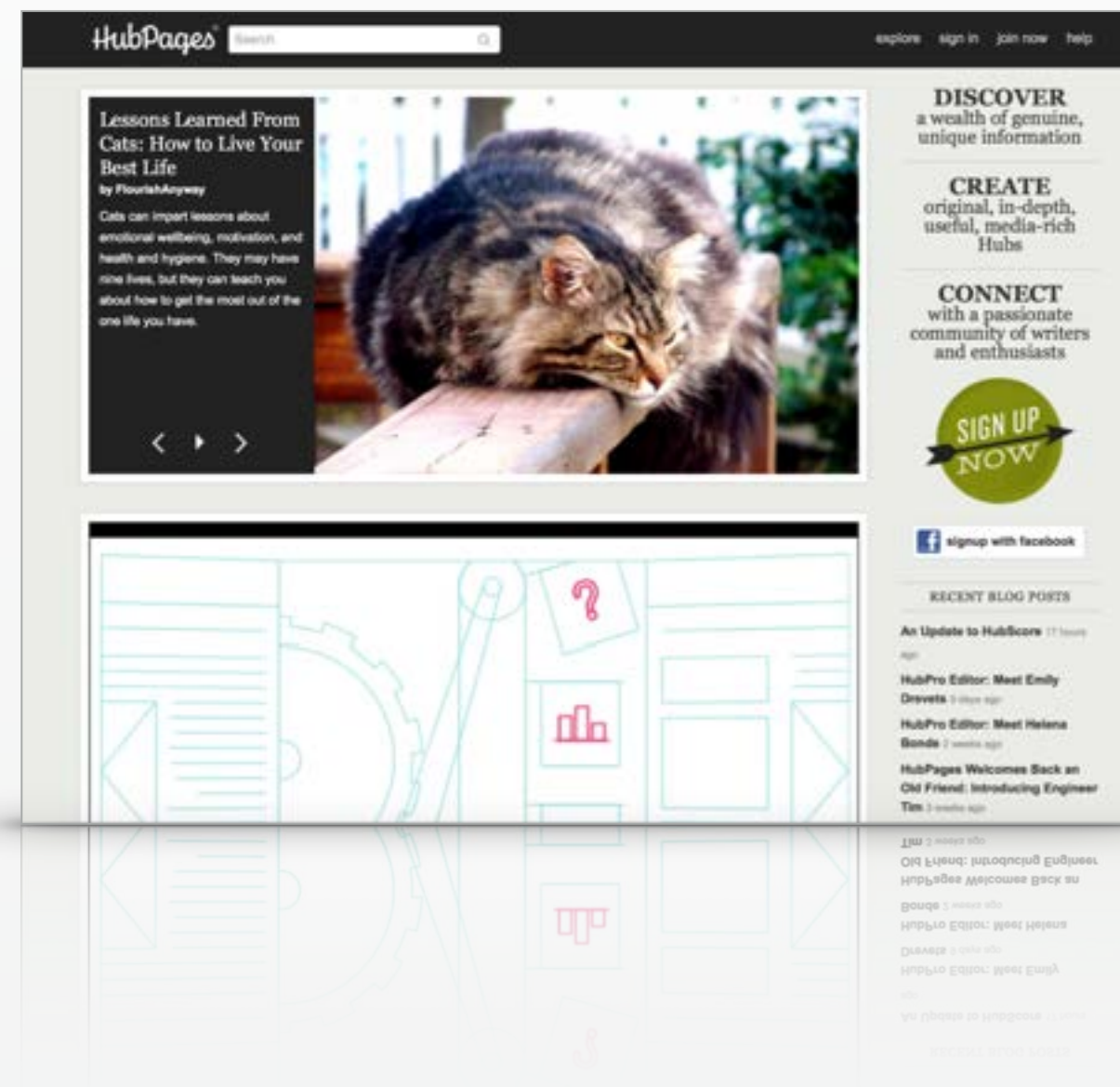
hubpages.com

HubPages is a blogging and sharing community for knowledge and interests. There are hundreds of topics to explore and comment on. Check in at the HubPages Learning Centre and take some tutorials on how to create Hubs and make them successful. This is a different kind of blogging platform that is very community-oriented.

 **POSTACH.IO**

postach.io

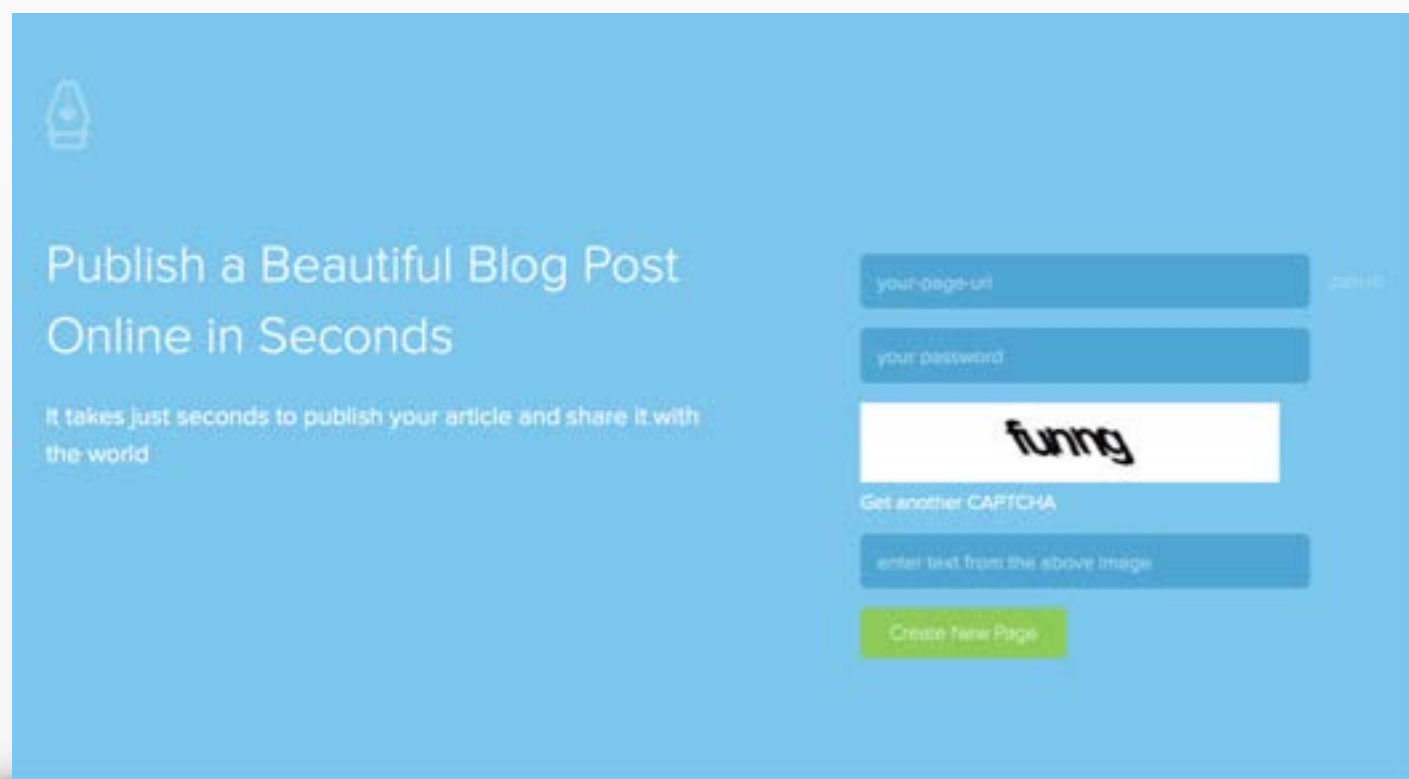
Postach.io is a blogging tool that is powered by Evernote, which you need to have installed on your computer or mobile device. Open the Postach.io notebook in your Evernote interface, write a post, tag it "published", and then sync it to Evernote. Compared to other blogging platforms, it's a bit more limited but still quite useful.





pen.io

Pen.io is a simple and fast publisher for blogs. It's more than just a blog tool, though. With Pen.io you can do things like share content, publish a story or an ebook, create an online resume or portfolio, brainstorm your next project, write in a journal, create an "About Me" page—pretty much anything you want to write and share.



sett.com

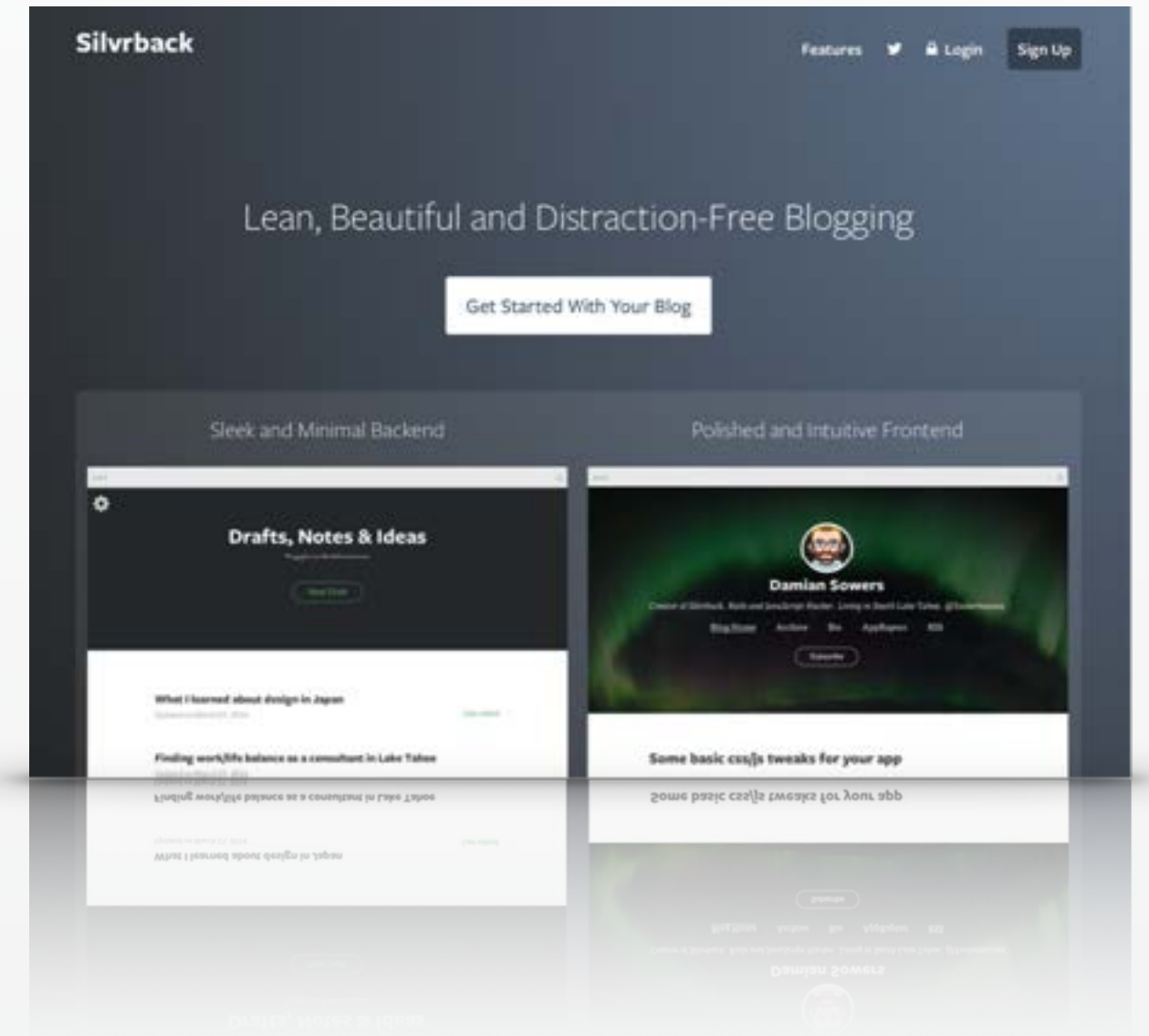
Sett is a blogging community that is designed to get you readers before you even get a first subscriber. They do this by using InstantAudience, which matches your post against other posts in Sett for similarity. Then it incorporates your post as suggested reading on multiple blogs, which then gradually builds your audience.



Silvrback

www.silvrback.com

Silvrback is distraction-free beautiful blogging and brand advertising. Your blog looks like a website home page with big graphics and easy navigation. Readers can subscribe to be notified by email whenever you publish a new post. Put popular posts, jobs, hobbies, and anything else you might want on your custom bio page, too.

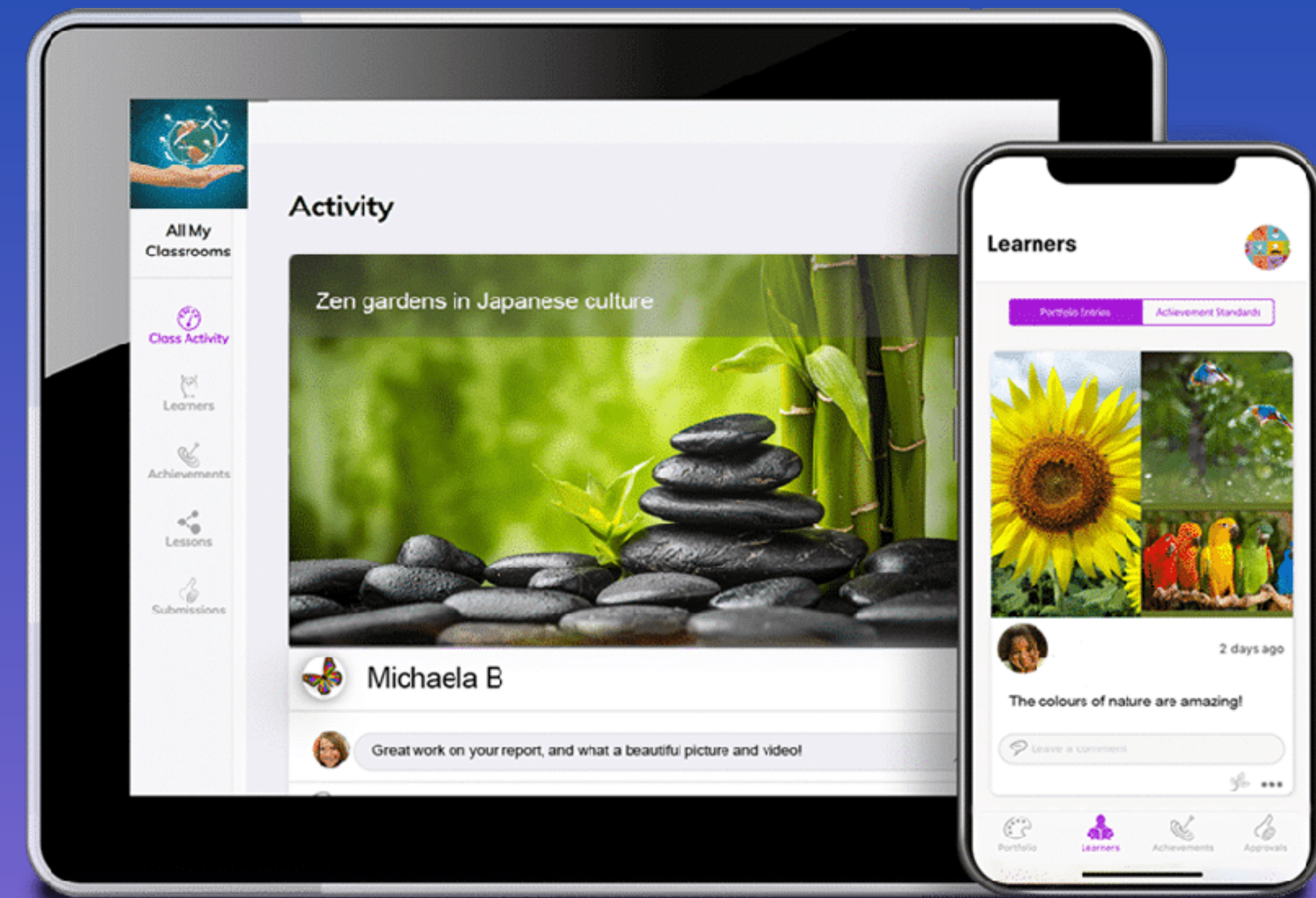


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