What is it?

A blog (web log) is a website consisting of discrete “posts” organised like a journal. Though blogs are typically thought of as personal journals, there is no limit to what may be covered in a blog. It is common for people to write blogs to describe their work, their hobbies, their pets, social and political issues, or news and current events. And while blogs are typically the work of one individual, blogs combining contributions of several people, ‘group blogs’, are also popular. The emergence and growth of blogs in the late 1990s coincided with the advent of web publishing tools that facilitated the posting of content by non-technical users. Although not a must, most good quality blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and discuss topics. In that sense, blogging can be seen as a form of social networking. Indeed, bloggers not only produce content to post on their blogs but also build social relations with their readers and other bloggers. Journals are more private versions of blogs.

What could you do?

Blogs and journals are diverse tools, providing many options for learning activities. For example a blog or journal could be used to:

- post assignments for the whole class
- develop and share ongoing portfolios of course work
- keep logs of responses to, or reflection about, course content
- write comments, opinions or questions relevant to your course
- discuss ideas explained in posts
- showcase and comment on student projects (writing, videos, images, etc.)
- host a teacher's blog and ask students to proved formative evaluation through comments
- interact openly with other classes, professional(s) and stakeholder groups, particularly if you use a public blogging system
- provide regular reviews and summaries of course content and activities
- document practicum placement as either a private journal or blog
- Keep student journals documenting a process or project throughout the semester. Consider asking students to write about issues, problems, problem solving, trialing of solutions or what they have learnt.
- Assess student learning. Student posts and comments can be assessed, Blackboard provides a range of tools to support assessing blogs and journals.
Tips?

There is great diversity of blogs, so if you ask students to write a blog you may need to specify what you mean.
Provide support so students know how to use the blogging platform.
You may need to provide advice about and examples of the structure you expect in blog posts.
If you are assessing a blog it may help to review the assessment criteria and standards expected, as students may not have much experience of blog based assessment.

What have people done?

Western Australia, Department of Education: Blogs in Education
Stephen Downes: Blogs in Education
UNSW | COFA: Using Blogs for peer feedback and discussion - Case study
http://online.cofa.unsw.edu.au/learning-to-teach-online/lto-episodes?view=video&amp;video=173