

Comping Guide

Rafflecopter & Blogs

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Blogs

Blogs are an excellent resource for competitions and information, as they are constantly being updated with new content. Blog is an abbreviation of 'web log', and is an online journal of individual posts, displayed in reverse chronological order (with the most recent first). Blogs are designed to be interactive, with readers leaving comments, and most bloggers will publish several posts a week. Many companies – for example Clothing at Tesco and Dorset Cereals – also have blogs where they post the latest news and competitions. The PrizeFinder has a blog at www.theprizefinder.com/blog.

Following blogs

There are several ways you can follow a blog:

Email

If you're able to receive email updates from a blog, there should be a box to add your email address – you will usually receive a confirmation and will need to click the link in that email to activate your subscription. Mailchimp is a popular provider of this service.

NetworkedBlogs

NetworkedBlogs is a Facebook App for following blogs. At www.networkedblogs.com you can register, then search for and add blogs you like, or click the **NetworkedBlogs** button on a blog.

Bloglovin'

Bloglovin' is a way of following blogs, and getting their content delivered via email. Register with Bloglovin' at www.bloglovin.com and search for blogs to follow - or click the **Bloglovin'** button on a blog.

Commenting on blogs

Blogs are all about interaction with readers, so almost all of them offer the opportunity for you to comment on the posts. Blogs have different commenting methods and styles - some will have an empty comment box immediately after the blog post ends, for others the box will be at the bottom of all the other comments. If moderation is enabled on the blog, the comment may not appear immediately - comments are moderated by some promoters to prevent spam. You may also need to complete a 'captcha' as another anti-spam measure.

Here are the most common ways to leave a blog comment:

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Name *

Email *

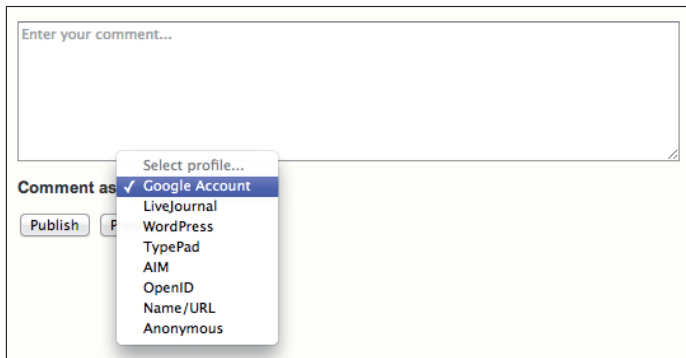
Website

Confirm you are NOT a spammer

commentluv[®]

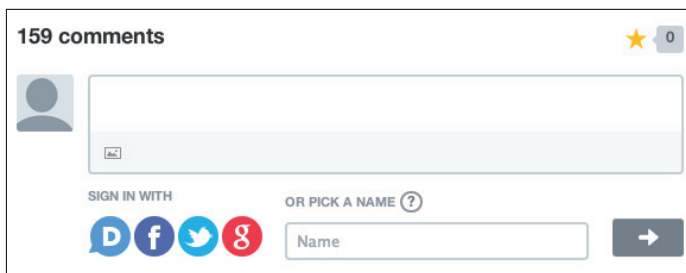
Leave an email address

Simply comment, and leave an email address and name. The name will be published, but the email address is hidden - use a nickname if you like. There may be a box for a website/blog URL but this is optional - bloggers can leave a website address and if **CommentLuv** is enabled the comment will appear with a clickable link to their latest blog post.



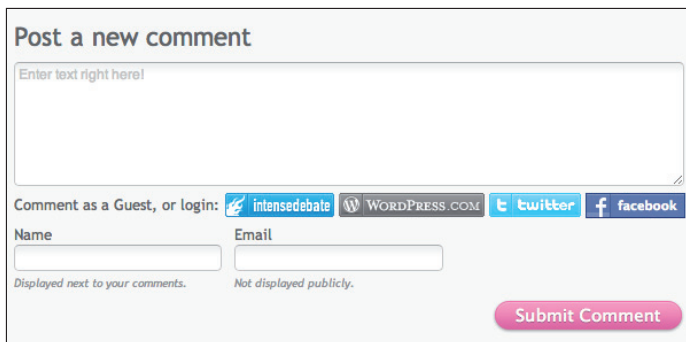
Blogger comments (used on Blogger or Blogspot blogs)

Choose from a drop down menu - the best option is to use a Google identity. It's possible to post anonymously. Don't leave your email address in the comment box, as it may be picked up by spammers!



Disqus comments

To comment, register with Disqus, or log in with Facebook, Twitter or Google+. It's possible to post as a guest. If you have trouble using Disqus in Internet Explorer, try the solutions on the Disqus Help page at <http://help.disqus.com/>



IntenseDebate comments

IntenseDebate is similar to Disqus. Register with a name and email address, or log in with IntenseDebate, Wordpress, Facebook or Twitter. Or simply leave a name and email address.

Prize promotions on blogs

To raise brand awareness, PR companies love to give bloggers free things for review, and will usually provide an extra product as a competition prize. Bloggers love to host giveaways as they bring traffic to their site, and they occasionally get paid to host them too.

Compared to online prize draws and easy-to-enter Twitter and Facebook comps, blog giveaways have very low entry numbers and are therefore easier to win. In the UK, the majority of blog competitions are hosted on 'mummy blogs' so the prizes are family-orientated – an advantage of these specialist prizes is the low entry numbers.

Most bloggers will use an app called Rafflecopter to host their giveaway - see the next page for a detailed explanation of how Rafflecopter works.

Notifying winners

If it's a Rafflecopter giveaway (see next page), the winner will be contacted by email. For other giveaways, the winner might be contacted by email, a Twitter mention or Direct Message. On rare occasions, the winner may be announced on the blog and expected to contact the blogger directly.

If you're lucky enough to win a prize, be patient – most bloggers have busy family lives so they might not be able to get back to you immediately. The prize is usually sent by a PR company and may take a while to arrive – when it does turn up, it's a nice gesture to tweet or email the blogger to let them know you've received it safely.

How to find Blog comps

- Search at www.twitter.com/search using combinations of the words win, blog, competition and giveaway – but watch out as some aren't open to UK readers!
- There are monthly Blog Giveaway Linkys on Di's SuperLucky blog, at <http://bit.ly/SuperLuckyLinky> – a linky is a list that bloggers can add their giveaways to, so it's always growing.
- Search at www.theprizefinder.com for 'Blog' or 'Rafflecopter'
- Search Google - try 'Blog giveaway' or 'Rafflecopter win' and restrict to UK sites in the last month.

Rafflecopter

A few years ago, **Rafflecopter** was used exclusively for blog giveaways. Now though, it's one of the few FREE options for companies to run a compliant prize draw on Facebook, which is why there are many more Rafflecopter 'widgets' around than there used to be.

The range of entry tasks, although sometimes bewildering, offers bloggers and promoters flexibility in gaining new followers and fans - and there are options for them to pay a fee to upgrade their promotion to add extras like refer-a-friend (where up to ten bonus entries can be earned by your friends entering via your unique shared link). When the giveaway has ended, Rafflecopter chooses a random winner from all entries, and the winner's entries are validated by the promoter before they are contacted and announced.

You will usually find Rafflecopter widgets 'embedded' in (or linked from) a blog post - although you can also find them as Facebook 'Tabs' or 'Apps' and embedded on websites.

The main issue with Rafflecopter is that it's confusing and there are usually no detailed instructions. The most common reasons for people avoiding Rafflecopter giveaways are because they think they need to complete all the entries, be registered on Facebook and Twitter and think there are so many entries that they're not worth doing.

With most Rafflecopter giveaways, just completing a single task **will** get your name in the draw. You can log in with an **email address** if you don't use Facebook. And the **huge entry numbers** are because most giveaways have 10+ entries per person. Actually, Rafflecopter giveaways get far less entries than most website competitions and draws!

Before you start entering Rafflecopter giveaways, consider creating a Google/gmail account - then it's easy to comment on blogs, YouTube and Google+. To do this, go to <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>.

Types of Rafflecopter giveaway

There are three types of Rafflecopter giveaway (shown below) - most will have multiple tasks, and either:

1. ***There are one or more mandatory tasks, which when completed will reveal one or more optional tasks***

2. ***All tasks are optional - do as many as you like***

3. ***All tasks are mandatory - you must do all of them***

The most common type of Rafflecopter giveaway is number 1 - this has one or two mandatory entries which, if completed, will unlock other optional entries. Rafflecopter entry methods, or tasks, are weighted by the promoter - so for example a tweet might get you 1 entry into the draw, but if you write a blog post with a link to the giveaway, you get 20 entries. Some bloggers will list a LOT of tasks, but just do the ones you want to, and each one will get you the corresponding number of entries in the draw.

For numbers 2 and 3, the widget will have all available options showing, with no 'unlockable' tasks. In most cases, all tasks will be optional - but some promoters MAY make them all mandatory. You'll have to check the terms and conditions or the accompanying text to work out whether they're mandatory or optional, as the widgets themselves look the same. Even if there are three mandatory tasks, and the entrant only completes one, that will still appear on the spreadsheet of entries, and it's up to the promoter to moderate and exclude that entry from the draw. I mentioned this to Rafflecopter, who are currently looking into ways to make mandatory and optional entry methods clearer on the widget to avoid confusion.

An example Rafflecopter giveaway

I'm going to use one of the giveaways at www.chelseamamma.co.uk as an example to talk through the Rafflecopter entry process.

**** GIVEAWAY! ****

ENDS IN
05:09
days hours

1252
total entries

0/17
entries earned

Batman T-Shirt (newborn - 2-3 year sizes only)

ENTER TO WIN LOG IN

Log in to enter this giveaway.

Log in w/ Facebook

or

Use Your Email

Terms and Conditions

powered by Rafflecopter

Here's the Rafflecopter 'widget' on the blog - this is what you'll see if you're NOT logged in to Facebook. If you can't see the widget, refresh the page and be patient. At the bottom, you can click 'Terms and Conditions' to see more information - you should also read the instructions within the blog post to check what you need to do. On the widget you can also see the prize, how long is left and the total number of entries (NOT entrants!), as well as how many entries you can earn. You won't see the required tasks until you've logged in.

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/dialog/oauth?display=popup&domain...

facebook DJ Coke

Rafflecopter would like to access your public profile, friend list and email address.

Privacy Policy Cancel Okay

You have two options for logging in:

Log in via Facebook - choose this option and a pop-up will ask for permission to access Facebook details. Rafflecopter needs to access email addresses via Facebook in order to contact winners.

**** GIVEAWAY! ****

ENDS IN
05:09
days hours

1252
total entries

0/17
entries earned

Batman T-Shirt (newborn - 2-3 year sizes only)

ENTER TO WIN LOG IN

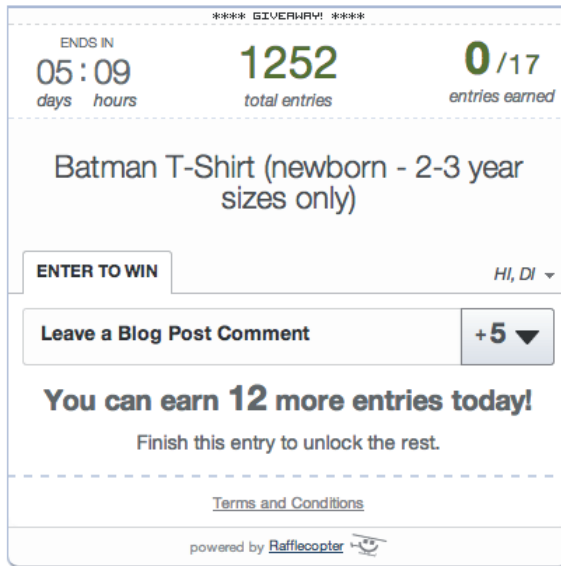
Log In with Your Email Address

What's your name?

What's your email address?

Cancel Log In

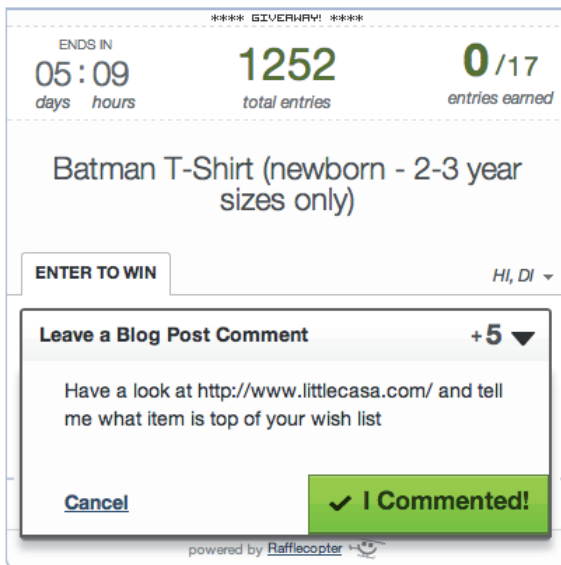
Use your email - leave a name and email address. Your email address is PRIVATE and is only shared with the promoter, not published anywhere.



ChelseaMamma has just set a single mandatory task - when completed, that will unlock more tasks. The total number of available entries is shown at the top of the widget - in this case, you can get 17 entries in total if you do all mandatory AND optional tasks.

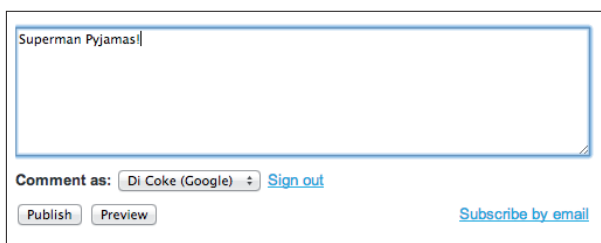
Leaving a blog comment

If the widget is on a blog, this is likely to be the first task - and is usually mandatory. Many entrants forget to leave a blog comment, or don't follow the instructions. Leave the blog comment first, THEN click **I commented**. Leave it until after doing the other tasks, and you might forget to do it... you'd be amazed how many people fall at the first hurdle!



Click on the down arrow in the widget to see what the blog comment needs to be about. If necessary, visit an external site to find the answer or choose a product. Promoters need to manually make a clickable link within the widget, and not every blogger does it - copy and paste the URL if it's not an active link.

Then leave a comment - blogs have different commenting methods, and you may need to scroll right to the bottom of the page to find the comment box. See page 2 for examples.



In this example, the comment is made with a Google profile.

The mandatory task is completed - you have 5 entries into the draw, but can also do the optional tasks which are now unlocked.

**** GIVEAWAY! ****

ENDS IN
05:09
days hours

1257
total entries

5/17
entries earned

Batman T-Shirt (newborn - 2-3 year sizes only)

ENTER TO WIN Hi, Di

Leave a Blog Post Comment ✓ DONE

Follow @littlecasashop on Twitter +5

If you already follow us on Twitter, you're entitled to a free entry. If not, you can do it here:

[Follow @littlecasashop](#)

What's your Twitter username?

[Cancel](#) [✓ I Follow on Twitter!](#)

Follow on Twitter

This is straightforward - click Follow, you will get a Twitter pop up window prompting you to log in. Click to Follow the relevant account, and leave your Twitter name in the box on the widget. If you already follow that user, the button won't be clickable - so simply leave your Twitter name. If you're new to Twitter, read our guide at <http://bit.ly/CompGuideTwitter>

**** GIVEAWAY! ****

ENDS IN
05:09
days hours

1262
total entries

10/17
entries earned

Batman T-Shirt (newborn - 2-3 year sizes only)


ENTER TO WIN Hi, Di

Leave a Blog Post Comment ✓ DONE

Follow @littlecasashop on Twitter ✓ DONE

Easy entry for all LittleCasaShop fans on Facebook +5

If you're a fan on Facebook, you are entitled to a free entry. If not, you can become one here:

 **Little Casa**
[Like](#) 213

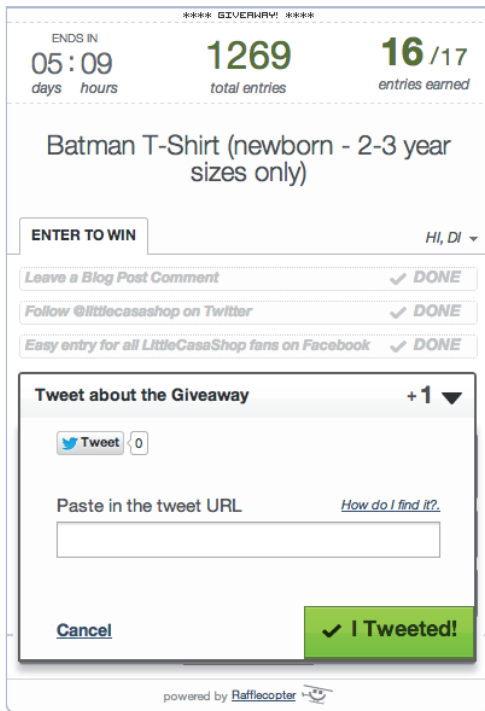
What's your Facebook name?

Only if different than the one you logged in with

[Cancel](#) [✓ I'm a Fan!](#)

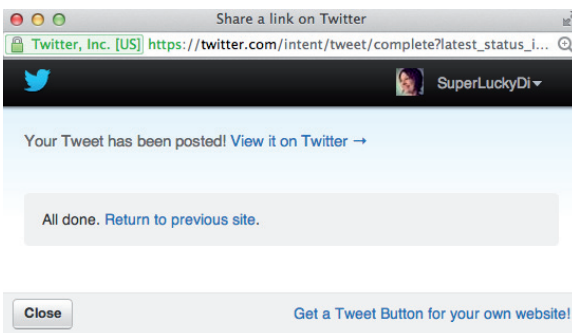
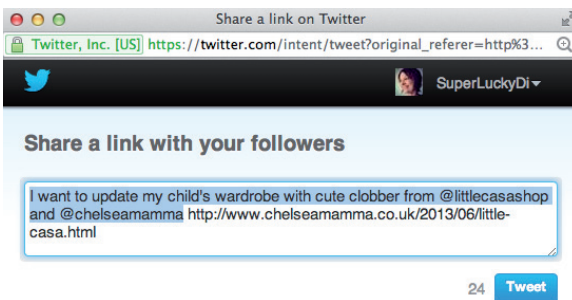
Like on Facebook

This is also straightforward - click Like, and leave your Facebook name in the box. If you already Like the page, you won't be able to click the Like button - so simply leave your name. If you're new to Facebook, read our guide at <http://bit.ly/CompGuideFacebook>

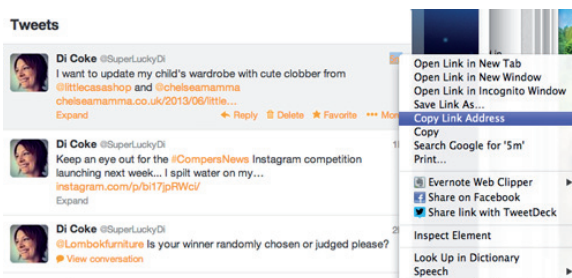


Tweet

Click Tweet and a pop-up window appears with the tweet text automatically in there.



After sending, a pop up will say 'View it on Twitter' - click this to open up a new window with the tweet in. Copy the long URL from the browser address bar - and paste into the Rafflecopter widget. Click 'I Tweeted'.



If the pop up disappears before you've had chance to view the link, you can also find the URL by right-clicking on the 'timestamp' to the right of the tweet on a Twitter profile page, and choosing 'copy link address'.

After tweeting, you may see **Do this tomorrow for more entries** - the promoter can choose to add a daily tweet option. If you want to increase your chance of winning, simply add the URL of the giveaway to your daily bookmarks list and tweet daily for bonus entries. Only do this if you don't mind annoying your Twitter followers - and it's a prize you'd really like.

17/17 entries have been completed in this example giveaway. However, if you come back to tweet tomorrow the widget will show 16/17 - this is a way of Rafflecopter showing that you can do a daily tweet. Don't worry - no entries have been lost and your accumulated daily tweets will still be registered on the spreadsheet of entries; it's just the way the widget works!

Leaving a blog comment, Following on Twitter, Liking on Facebook and Tweeting are the most common Rafflecopter entry tasks. Here are some of the others you might encounter:

Answer a question

Answer a question in the Rafflecopter widget, rather than as a comment. This is useful if promoters don't want entrants copying the previous answers in the comment thread.

Join a mailing list

The promoter will give instructions to do this - it might involve completing the **Subscribe** box on the blog home page - sometimes (eg. with Feedburner or Mailchimp lists) you'll have to click a confirmation email to ensure you're added to the list - make sure you do it! A simpler method is to leave an email address in the Rafflecopter widget, which the promoter will add manually to their database.

Follow on Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video app for phones and tablets. To complete this task, you'll need to be registered with Instagram and then click **Follow** on the link provided by the promoter (eg. <http://instagram.com/superluckydi>) - OR search for the username within the Instagram app and then Follow. Leave an Instagram username in the Rafflecopter widget, to validate your entry. If you're new to Instagram, read our guide at <http://bit.ly/CompGuideInstagram>

Follow on Pinterest

The promoter should provide a link here to their Pinterest profile. Make sure you're registered with Pinterest (you can log in with Facebook) and click **Follow All**. Leave a Pinterest username in the Rafflecopter widget, to validate your entry. If you're new to Pinterest, read our guide at <http://bit.ly/CompGuidePinterest>

Follow on Google+

The promoter should provide a link here to their Google+ page. Make sure you're signed in with Google and choose **Follow**. Leave a Google+ username in the Rafflecopter widget, to validate your entry. Some promoters might request a +1, in which case click that button too.

Subscribe on YouTube

The promoter should provide a link here to their YouTube page. Make sure you're signed in (with Google) and choose **Subscribe**. Leave a YouTube username or Google email address in the Rafflecopter widget, to validate your entry.

Follow on Networked Blogs

Networked Blogs is a Facebook App for following blogs. To complete this task, you'll need to be registered with Networked Blogs and then click **Follow** on the link provided by the promoter. Leave your Facebook username in the Rafflecopter widget, to validate your entry.

Follow on Bloglovin'

Bloglovin' is a way of following blogs, and getting their content delivered via email. To complete this task, you'll need to be registered with Bloglovin' and then click **Follow** on the link provided by the promoter. Leave a Bloglovin' username in the Rafflecopter widget, to validate your entry.

Comment on any of my other blog posts

This is a favourite with bloggers, so they get traffic to other posts on their blog. You'll need to go to another post and leave a comment, then copy the URL of that post and leave it in the Rafflecopter widget.

Pin this post on Pinterest

For this task, there will usually be a **Pin it** button on the post (see the graphic at the top of this page as an example) which you can click to share on Pinterest. You'll need to leave your Pinterest name to validate your entry.

Share the post on Facebook

This is actually a breach of Facebook Terms, but some promoters still request it. First, either click a Facebook share button on the competition page, or manually copy the URL and then post it on your own timeline. To find the link to a shared post, right click on the 'timestamp' underneath it on your timeline and choose **copy link address** - then paste this into the Rafflecopter widget.

There are plenty of other options - the promoter can customise the widget to add anything they like! If there are tasks you're not sure about, just give them a miss.

Choosing the winner and moderating entries

When the giveaway has ended, the promoter logs in at www.rafflecopter.com and clicks to generate a random winner. The winning entry will be a single task - for example, it could be a tweet or a Facebook page like. The promoter should check that specific winning task was done correctly - but should also check **all** the other tasks completed by that person. For example, the winning entry might be a tweet, but if the entrant didn't also leave a mandatory blog comment, they wouldn't be eligible to win. Some promoters do moderate **all** entries - but this is very time consuming, so most will just check the validity of entries from the winner.

If the winner **didn't** enter correctly, the promoter should delete their incorrect entries from the spreadsheet, then click again to choose a new winner and do the same checks. When a winning entry has been validated, the promoter clicks to send an email (if you used Facebook log in, this will go to your Facebook-registered address) and can choose to display the winner's name on the Rafflecopter widget - this will usually be done **after** the winner has responded to the winning email (for example, if the winner replies to the winning email and the promoter realises they live in an ineligible country, a new winner should be drawn).

Rafflecopter tips

- Sometimes if there's an issue with the main Rafflecopter site, all the widgets disappear! Try refreshing the page - if that doesn't fix it, check the Rafflecopter Twitter feed or Facebook page to see if there's a problem.
- If you have problems with Facebook log in, you could try removing the app from your App Center and then trying again.
- The support team are always very helpful and quick to respond - you can contact them at support@rafflecopter.com
- There's lots of tips and advice at <http://blog.rafflecopter.com/>