

HOW TO TWEET

Lesson Objective

In this lesson, you will learn some helpful tips about using the microblog platform, *Twitter*. You'll practise tweeting on paper before you tweet online. You'll also learn some useful abbreviations.

Did you know...

The word "tweet" is the sound a bird makes in English. Another word that means the same thing is "chirp." A louder bird sound is "squawk." If someone asks you to stop chirping or squawking, they want you to stop talking or complaining. If they ask you to stop tweeting, they want you to get off Twitter!

Warm-Up

A. What Is Twitter?

Twitter is a microblog. Micro means small. On Twitter, you only have space to write a few sentences at a time.

Why do teachers think Twitter is a useful social media network for language learners? Write about this topic for five minutes. Then share your ideas with your classmates.

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match these words to their correct definitions.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| ___ 1. microblog | a) a letter, space, or symbol |
| ___ 2. abbreviation | b) a stream of updates that a user chooses to see |
| ___ 3. social media | c) informal language used by a certain group or in a certain industry |
| ___ 4. tricky | d) a short form of a word |
| ___ 5. character | e) a small web log |
| ___ 6. hashtag | f) online social networks for sharing information and updates |
| ___ 7. handle | g) a private message that the public can't see |
| ___ 8. retweet | h) a username |
| ___ 9. direct message | i) a keyword, identified with a # |
| ___ 10. public | j) the general population |
| ___ 11. feed | k) to share another person's Tweet with your followers |
| ___ 12. lingo | l) a bit difficult |

Introduction to Twitter

A. Characters

The tricky thing about Twitter is that you don't have a lot of space to type. Each Tweet can only be 140 characters. A character is a letter, number, symbol, space, or punctuation mark.

Task 1

Write a Tweet about the following topics. Count your characters.

1. Weather

2. School

3. Food

B. #Hashtags

A hashtag is a keyword. Use the # sign (number key, pound key, hash key, hashtag) before the subject or keyword in your Tweet. This helps people find your content. It also allows you to join or start a Twitter chat on a specific topic.

Task 2

List some hashtags that you think you would be interested in following or using on Twitter. Don't forget to include # (the hashtag symbol).

#FF

#FF means Follow Friday. On Fridays, use this tag to recommend other Twitter accounts or to find good accounts to follow.

BTW...

There are no hashtag rules on Twitter. You can be as creative or practical as you want. You can use more than one hashtag per Tweet.

#creativityrules #hashtagsrfun

Introduction to Twitter cont.

C. Reply ↩

In addition to writing your own Tweet, you can reply to another user's Tweet by clicking on the arrow that curves to the left (↩). For a reply, you do not need to add the user's Twitter handle (@ESLlibrary). Twitter will do this automatically.

Task 3

Write replies to the Tweets you wrote in Task 1. Imagine you are a different Twitter user.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. Retweet ↻

On Twitter, it's also common to retweet (RT) what another user has already said. Simply click the Retweet button. It has two arrows (↻). You can retweet with a short comment or without a comment. Twitter will ask you which option you choose.

Note:

If you see MT, that means *modified Tweet*. Someone copied the Tweet, but changed a few words.

E. Direct Message

On your Twitter account page, you have an inbox. This is for direct messages (just like email). Once in a while, you may want to tweet something privately to a certain person. In those rare cases, send a DM to a specific Twitter handle.

Task 4

In your opinion, what should not be tweeted publicly? Give at least three examples. Then discuss your answers with a classmate.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Note:

You can only send a DM to a person who follows you on Twitter.

Useful Abbreviations

Here are some useful abbreviations that you can use on Twitter and in chats.
Match the abbreviation to the word.

- | | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|----|----------------|
| _____ | 1. | w/ | a) | please |
| _____ | 2. | b/c | b) | students |
| _____ | 3. | sts | c) | because |
| _____ | 4. | BTW | d) | Facebook |
| _____ | 5. | IOT | e) | to, too |
| _____ | 6. | MT | f) | by the way |
| _____ | 7. | RT | g) | with |
| _____ | 8. | pls | h) | no problem |
| _____ | 9. | DM | i) | laugh out loud |
| _____ | 10. | FB | j) | in order to |
| _____ | 11. | YT | k) | modified Tweet |
| _____ | 12. | LOL | l) | direct message |
| _____ | 13. | 2 | m) | YouTube |
| _____ | 14. | 4 | n) | question |
| _____ | 15. | B4 | o) | retweet |
| _____ | 16. | NP | p) | for |
| _____ | 17. | Q | q) | before |

Other Tricks

FOR REDUCING YOUR CHARACTERS ON TWITTER

- drop a vowel or two in a long word (dwntwn)
- drop subject pronouns (I had fun = Had fun)
- remove unnecessary adjectives
- use single letters or numbers for words (u, 2, 1, 4, b, c)
- use & or + for "and"
- use @ for "at"
- drop end punctuation
- use a link shortener

Twitter Lingo

When you want to see the Tweets from a Twitter user, go to their page and choose **Follow**. This will put their Tweets in your **Twitter feed**.

The people who follow your Tweets are called your **Followers**. The more you have, the better!

If you see the word **Following** on a user's page, that means that you already follow this person on Twitter.

To stop seeing someone's Tweets in your feed, go to their page and click **Following**. This word will change to **Unfollow** if you click on it.

Sample Tweets

Read the sample Tweets. Discuss the main purpose of each Tweet. Which ones are Tweets and which ones are replies? Which are written to the public and which are meant for a specific user(s)?

1. Check out our NEW photo app and tweet us what you think! www.fotofotome.com #tech #photography
2. @fotofoto Looks good. I will try it out at my wedding. #gettinghitched
3. I learned a new #English expression: knock the wind out of my sails #idioms
4. @EnglishNewbie Cool! What does it mean? #idioms #vocabulary
5. Had a fun night w/ my graduating class @nelly123 @wilson89 @chattycathy @mustangguy77 photo. twitter3345.com
6. "Mama always said life was like a box of chocolates." #moviequote #ForrestGump
7. First day of summer! Now that's something to celebrate @sistaTina2

Comprehension Questions

What have you learned so far?

Answer and discuss these questions in pairs or as a class.

1. What is a microblog?
2. Why is it useful to use hashtags on Twitter?
3. What are some useful abbreviations to use on Twitter?
4. What do you do if you like someone's Tweet and want others to see it?
5. What action should you take if you don't like someone's Tweets?

Twitter Lingo Review

Complete the sentence with the correct Twitter lingo that you learned in this lesson.

1. There is a new band I like. I am going to _____ them on Twitter.
2. I _____ the quote you posted on Twitter. It's a great quote.
3. Send me a _____ on Twitter with your phone number. I'll call you about the pricing.
4. What is your Twitter _____? Mine is @dianagirl77.
5. I never see your Tweets in my Twitter _____.
Maybe I'm not _____ you.

Twitter Practice

Before you get started, you need to choose a Twitter handle. Choose three possible handles for your account, and then use Twitter's search box to check to see if these are already taken.

@ _____ @ _____ @ _____

A. Tweeting

Before you start tweeting, let's practise! Get out a piece of paper or a notebook. Rewrite the following Tweets to make them as short as possible. Add a hashtag or two.

1. When I went to my neighbour's party this weekend in San Francisco, I lost my dog. She ran away when someone opened the door! I am heartbroken. I miss my dog! twitpic77.com
2. Does anyone know of a good dentist in the Manhattan area? I have a sore tooth. I think I must have a cavity. Please respond as soon as possible. This is the most pain I have ever experienced.
3. I would like to say congratulations to our relay running team @wildrunners. This weekend we came in first overall for runners aged 17-25. Sammy deserves a lot of the credit for being a great coach. We raised over one thousand dollars for charity.

B. Replying

Now exchange your paper with a classmate. Write a short reply for each Tweet.

Twitter Checklist

BEFORE PUBLISHING YOUR TWEET

- Did I fit the whole Tweet in the status update box?
- Did I use concise language?
- Did I include a hashtag(s)?
- Did I address a Twitter handle (if necessary)?
- Did I reply to the correct Twitter handle (if necessary)?
- Do I want this to be public?
- Did I attach an image (if necessary)?
- Did I proofread my work before publishing?