

## LESSON PLAN 44: 10 WAYS TO USE TWITTER IN YOUR CLASS

**Objective:** Use the micro-blogging service to assist teaching and learning

**Age range:** 8-18



### WHAT IS TWITTER?

This is a free service that allows users to send and receive text messages – known as ‘tweets’. It’s a bit like SMS for the Internet and commonly known as micro-blogging. Messages can be up to 140 characters in length. When sent, not only are they instantly posted on your profile page but they’re also sent to anyone subscribing to your profile – these people are known as ‘followers’.

Twitter has become an incredibly popular medium for instant communication, with millions of twitterers worldwide. As many teachers and students already use the service, we thought we’d look at some ways you may like to incorporate ‘tweeting’ into your classroom.

### YOU WILL NEED

Twitter account(s). Internet access.

### DEVELOPING SKILLS

General technology use, communication, innovation, collaboration, research, language, literacy.

### METHODS

- 1. Direct communication** – It might seem obvious but teachers and students can send each other instant messages through direct tweets (without the need to exchange more personal cellphone numbers or email addresses).
- 2. Inform parents/care givers** – Set up a classroom Twitter account where you post information about class/school activities. Invite parents to ‘follow’ you. They might even tweet back now and again!
- 3. Collate classroom views** – Set up a Twitter account on a particular issue or question and ask students to post their thoughts.
- 4. Collaborate on assignments** – When working together on projects, set up a group to discuss ideas using a site like Tweetworks ([www.tweetworks.com](http://www.tweetworks.com)). To keep it private simply check the ‘Hide group’s posts from public timeline’ box when creating a group.



- 5. Practise a foreign language** – if you teach a language you may be able to find native speakers on Twitter and encourage students to tweet in their language.
- 6. Keep up with news and views** – Many media organisations now provide news and current events update via Twitter. Just sign up to follow your news source of choice. In a similar vein, you can keep up with issues/people that interest you by signing up to follow the tweets of politicians, business leaders, teachers, scientists, professors or other relevant figures. Of course, you can also follow the latest news from *INTERFACE* at <http://twitter.com/Interfacemag>
- 7. Reminders and announcements** – Use Social Oomph ([www.socialoomph.com](http://www.socialoomph.com)) to write tweets that you can schedule for posting in the future – so, perhaps things like essays reminders, rehearsals, events, etc.
- 8. Writing in brief** – To encourage brevity and focused thinking, ask students to write summaries, ideas and even short stories as tweets (up to 140 characters!). Or play ‘pass it on’, where one student writes part of a story as a tweet, then another writes the next part, and so on. Historical Tweets ([www.historicaltweets.com](http://www.historicaltweets.com)) explores how famous people might summaries their ideas/experiences as tweets.
- 9. Tweet-sized information** – You could set up a Twitter account that provides dedicated information on a specific project or subject. Students can then access it for advice and inspiration.
- 10. Tweet with other teachers** – Communicate, network and share ideas with your peers and other like-minded people. Twitter4Teachers (<http://twitter4teachers.pbworks.com/>) is a wiki that helps teachers find others on Twitter in their subject area. ▲

### THE TWITTER EXPERIMENT

See how a history professor in the US uses Twitter with her students. <http://ow.ly/wjRz>

