How to Create and Use a Twitter Account

Many of your students already have a twitter account and use it regularly, so it’s a good place to engage them. This tutorial will set you up with an account, explain how to use it, and give suggestions for bringing twitter into your class.

1. Go to www.twitter.com and click “Sign up.”

2. Enter your name, email, a new password, and a username, then click “Sign up.” The next screen will ask for your phone number – just click the tiny “Skip” at the bottom.
3. Now Twitter will guide you through a few steps of set-up.
   a. On the first screen, click “Let’s Go!”
   b. On the next, click each topic that might be related to one of your classes, then click “Continue.”
   c. On the next screen, Twitter will give you some suggestions of who to follow. Uncheck any that you are not interested in, and then click “Continue.”
   d. The next screen asks you to put in a profile photo. It’s a good idea to go ahead and do this so that your account looks real. Then click “Continue.”
   e. Now Twitter will invite you to add people you know through your email address book. Just click the pale grey “Skip this step” link at the bottom.
4. You’ll be taken to your twitter homepage. At the top will be a message bar asking you to verify your email. Open your email in a new tab.

5. Open the email from twitter (check your spam folder if you can't find it) and click on the “Confirm now” button.

6. Now your account is set up and you are ready to learn how to use the features!

   a. Hashtags are words or phrases beginning with a pound sign (#) that give the topic of the tweet. They’re used to organize tweets so that someone can easily find all tweets on #kennesawstate, for instance. If you’re making a hashtag that is more than one word, do not use spaces or punctuation. #kennesaw #state is not a good way to tag the university because it will give you tweets about Kennesaw city and about all kinds of states. KSU is also the acronym for Kansas State University, so it’s best to use #kennesawstate.

   b. Mentions are tweets sent publically to a specific person. Use the @ symbol attached closely to the username, like this: @kennesawstate.

   c. Direct messages are tweets sent privately – you can only send these to people who follow you. You send these by typing “d “ before their username, like this “d @kennesawstate.” Make sure there is just one space between ‘d’ and ‘@.’
d. Retweets are a re-post of someone else’s tweet. When you look through the tweets of other people, you can press the “retweet” button at the bottom of their tweet (it turns green when you hover over it). When you click it you will get a pop-up to confirm: click the blue “Retweet” button.

7. Good ideas for making your twitter worth following:
   a. Anytime you can sum up a lesson in 140 characters, tweet it.
   b. Use your twitter to comment on current events.
   c. Use hashtags relevant to who, where, and what: #sociology #kennesawstate #racism
   d. Hashtag every tweet, but keep it simple: try not to use more than three hashtags per tweet.

8. Use the Trends feature to join active conversations. You’ll find it on your twitter homepage on the left side. In this example, using the hashtag #Emmy will get you involved in some rapid-fire conversations about Emmy nominations.
Examples of how to integrate Twitter into your course:

First, assign a unique hashtag so that you can read through responses easily (for instance #soci2250fall15). Give participation points based on number of thoughtful responses.

1) Assign the students to do presentations in pairs, where one student talks and the other tweets relevant points as they go.
2) Allow use of phones/laptops in class if they set a sign on their desk with their username, so that they can tweet thoughts and responses during class. (keep track of the usernames so that you can withdraw this privilege from anyone who does not make a tweet during class despite having their technology out).
3) Assign students to check the trends weekly and make at least three tweets that connect the trend to the coursework. (this is easy for Sociology or Psychology, but might not work for other disciplines)
4) Post your own tweet weekly explaining how a trend connects to the coursework, and have students post replies to you and other students there.
5) Assign students to tweet three main points in the readings each week.
6) Assign students to post a link each week that is relevant to the coursework, with a brief explanation of the connection.
7) Assign students to summarize a story (ENGL) or create a headline (COMM) each week, or to converse in a foreign language with native speakers (FL).
8) Assign students to follow a number of politicians and retweet them with comments each week.
9) Assign students to follow major figures in the topic of the course, and retweet them with comments each week.
10) Tweet reminders about due dates or tips about assignments.
11) Assign students to “live tweet” one of the media assignments for class (such as a reading or movie): tweet their reactions as they read or watch.

Lastly, you can embed your class twitter feed to D2L using a widget.

1. Log in to twitter if you aren’t already and go to the home page.
2. Click on your small icon at the top next to the blue feather. You’ll see a drop-down box appear – click on “Settings.”
3. Click on “Widgets” and then “Create new.”

4. Click on Search (1), then put in your unique hashtag that you created for the class (2), then uncheck “Auto-expand photos” (3) and click “Create widget” (4). If you have not yet tweeted in this hashtag, it will say “Hmm, an empty timeline. That’s weird.” Don’t worry, this will change as soon as you tweet using this hashtag. It just means that your chosen hashtag is truly unique and no one else has used it before.
5. Now a box will appear at the bottom of the page with embed text, already highlighted. Copy this.

6. Open D2L in a new tab, click on “Edit Course” and then on “Widgets.”

7. Click “Create widget.”

8. Type in a name for your widget and click “Content” (it will autosave the name).
9. Click on the “Add Stuff” button at the top left corner of the contents box (1), then click “Enter Embed Code” (2), then paste your code into the box (3) and click “Next” (4).

10. You’ll be shown a preview but it won’t look like much – don’t worry, it will look very different on the homepage. Click “Insert.”

11. Click “Save and Close.” You’ll be taken back to the widgets page.
12. Click “Course home.”

13. Scroll to the bottom and click the tiny pencil.

14. Scroll down until you see the building blocks area, and click “Add Widgets” on the column where you want to add your twitter feed.

15. Find the widget you just made, check the box next to it, and click “Add.”

16. Click “Save and Close.”
17. Now you will be taken to your course homepage, where you can see a timeline of tweets! You can also tweet right from your homepage – just click where it says “Tweet #youruniquehashtag” and you’ll get a pop-up in which to compose your tweet.

18. As you compose your tweet, the number of characters will count down to zero. Don’t go into the negative or it will break your tweet into two separate posts.

19. Once your timeline has tweets, you and your students will be able to reply to each others’ tweets right from your course homepage! Have fun tweeting!

For more suggestions on how to get the most out of twitter as an educator, see this article on Edudemic: http://www.edudemic.com/the-ultimate-twitter-guidebook/