Discuss on Twitter

e-lang citizen team

Teacher Sheet

Tasks

Your students will be given the following task.

> You want to explore and discuss a current topic on an issue that means a lot to you and that may or may not be controversial (climate change, poverty, food security, social inequity, mental health, cancel culture…).
>
> On Twitter, you will (1) search for bloggers (Twitter accounts) who discuss topics that interest you, (2) select accounts to follow, (3) read, and produce content as per the affordances of Twitter (4) curate and share content with your peers.

Website

https://twitter.com/

Available in all languages.

In order to participate as a contributor, students will need to create an account. Anyone can read tweets without having an account as long as the account is open to the public. Once an account has been created, participants may choose to have an open or private account. Discussions regarding the pros and cons about open and/or private accounts will be an important step in the overall task.

Further reading on using Twitter in education and/or language learning contexts:

- How to use Twitter: https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter#tweets
- How to participate in public conversations via Twitter: https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/twitter-rules
- A glossary to better understand the various functionalities of Twitter: https://help.twitter.com/en/resources/glossary
- Article that discusses why signs form an important part of the language when interacting in social media contexts: https://theconversation.com/why-emojis-and-hashtags-should-be-part-of-language-learning-1

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- A booklet published by UNESCO on how to teach with Twitter: https://about.twitter.com/content/dam/about-twitter/en/tfg/download/teaching-learning-with-twitter-unesco.pdf

CEFR level - For B1 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacies

Dimensions	Possible specific objectives With this task students …
➤ Technology literacy	Develop specific skills relating to reading and producing content in social media tools. Learn to follow/unfollow accounts, block or mute followers, accept followers, etc Learn how to play within the constraints of Twitter in order to create a meaningful message (hashtags, emoticons, threads, …).
➤ Critical behaviour	Learn to analyse content through reading. Learn to reflect on the power of language that is produced publicly.
➤ Ethical and responsible behaviour	Understand the specific rules and regulations of using Twitter in a responsible manner. Understand how language is used to influence readers, and the impact that producing content in social media tools may have on readers. Produce content in a way that does not transgress ethical and professional practices.
➤ Safe behaviour	Know how to protect your identity and privacy Learn how to avoid and/or handle offensive behaviour.

Main language activities

Reading: curating content, selecting specific topics, analysing content

Writing: producing content (new tweet, quote tweet or answer)

Interacting: liking, retweeting, answering, quote retweeting

Plurilingual/Intercultural aspects

Participating in social media discourse will allow learners to:

- be exposed to multiple and new points of views and values (individual and/or collective);
- understand how cultural dimensions may affect our interpretation of what we read and write.

Reading and tweeting in one or more languages to compare how point of views might be expressed differently. If using a translation tool to read or produce content, participants can engage on a critical analysis of the tool (for those at a higher language competency level).

Possible steps

- Discuss the use of social media apps and assess who has experience with Twitter
- Explain why Twitter was chosen for this task
- Assist learners in setting up or reviewing their account, putting emphasis on the rules and regulations as well as important ethical behaviour.
- Engage in a discussion with learners to help the group decide on topics that interest them on Twitter. These topics may be directly related to themes studied in class (e.g., cooking, travelling) if the objective of the activity is more on language development.
- Start tweeting with your students on a regular basis
- Reflect on their practices encouraging learners to assess their presence, the power of their interactions, the influences that the task may have on their language development, their cultural perceptions or values

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Student Sheet

Task

> You want to explore and discuss a current topic on an issue that means a lot to you and that may or may not be controversial (climate change, poverty, food security, social inequity, mental health, cancel culture…).
>
> On Twitter, you will (1) search for bloggers who discuss topics that interest you, (2) select accounts to follow, (3) read, and produce content as per the functionalities of Twitter (4) curate and share content with your peers.

Site

https://twitter.com/

Available in all languages.

In order to participate as a contributor, you will need to create an account. Anyone can read tweets without having an account as long as the account is open to the public. Once creating an account, you may choose to have an open or private account. Make sure to reflect on the pros and cons about open and/or private accounts.

Take the time to read the rules and regulations on using Twitter to discuss topics:

- How to use Twitter: https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter#tweets
- How to participate in public conversations via Twitter: https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/twitter-rules
- A glossary to better understand the various functionalities of Twitter: https://help.twitter.com/en/resources/glossary

CEFR level - For B1 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacies

While completing this task, you will:

- learn about the various functionalities of Twitter
- learn how to participate in a safe and healthy way
- learn how to deal with disruptive behaviour
- reflect on why you may/may not become an active participant in social media
- learn how to be creative within the technical constraints of Twitter
- reflect (critically) on the content produced in Twitter (points of views, values, facts, …)
- reflect on the use of an automatic translator to help you produce more accurate content

Inclusive dimensions (plurilingual / intercultural)

Reflect on the following aspects:

- When discussing your particular topic, did you notice different point of views related to particular contexts (participants from other countries, speaking other languages, …)?
- How are multiple views expressed in relation to the topic and the author(s) of the account? (e.g., discourse, hashtags, emoticons, gifs)
- Are points of views and values expressed in specific ways (polarizing views, culturally motivated content, ..)?
- Are you surprised by some of the ways in which ideas are expressed? Why?

Hints

Remember that you are discussing in an open space

Take the time to read the rules and regulations of Twitter (see *Rules and Policies*: https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies) and to understand how to protect yourself (See *A safer Twitter*: https://help.twitter.com/en/resources/a-safer-twitter).

Work on the language-related aspects

When reading tweets in the language(s) that you are studying, pay particular attention to words and their context. Do you notice words or other forms of expression (emoticons, GIFs, hashtags, …) that are often used to express an opinion, make a statement, or to answer someone else's tweet?

Depending on your level of competencies, you may want to use an automatic translator (such as DeepL: https://www.deepl.com/translator) before posting a tweet or to help you understand a complex message. The more you produce and interact on the platform, the less you will need to depend on external tools. When microblogging, language accuracy does not need to be perfect, it is the power of the message that is more important. How do you produce good short messages?

When tweeting from your mobile device, remember to add languages to your keyboard settings so that when you produce content, the device will guide you in editing your language.

For you to think about

Once you have completed the task, you could reflect on the following:

- Did you notice a change in the way you participated in Twitter (more/less producing over time; more/less interacting over time; regular/irregular participation; …)? If so, how can you explain these changes?
- How did you set up your account (private, public)? Would you change it now?
- Did you have to mute or block accounts? Did you notice disruptive behaviour or language? How did you react?
- Did you use tools to help you with the language aspect? Did you notice a decreasing or increasing dependency to these tools over time?
- If you use other social media tools on a regular basis, how would you assess the efficacy of Twitter for the task in which you were involved? Would you prefer another platform? Which one and why?
- Are you planning to continue to tweet? Why or why not? In which language(s)?