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50 Ways to Use Twitter in the Classroom

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Many critics of [Twitter](#) believe that the 140-character microblog offered by the ubiquitous social network can do little for the [education industry](#). They are wrong.

K-12 teachers have taken advantage of [Twitter](#)'s format to keep their classes engaged and up-to-date on the latest technologies. The following projects provide you and your students with 50 ways to [Twitter in the classroom](#) to create important and lasting lessons.

1. Tweet about upcoming due dates or assignments.

One of the simplest ways that teachers can use [Twitter in the classroom](#) involves setting up a feed dedicated exclusively to due dates, tests or quizzes.

2. Provide the class with a running news feed.

Subscribe to different mainstream and independent news feeds with different biases as a way to compare and contrast how different perspectives interpret current events and issues.

3. Use Twitter in the classroom to create a career list.

Set up an interesting assignment requesting that students set up [Twitter for education](#) lists following feeds relevant to their career goals and keep a daily journal on any trends that crop up along the way.

4. Track memes.

As inane as [Justin Bieber](#)'s popularity is, at least an educational opportunity lurks around the corner. Instructors concerned with communication and sociology issues can easily find a number of different lessons on ideas engaging [Twitter for teachers](#) and fads spread throughout different media sources.

5. Coordinate assignments.

Rather than keeping up with an e-mail train, students can use Twitter to collaborate on different projects and keep a quick reference on any changes.

6. Track a hash tag.

More ambitious educators may want to incorporate Twitter in lessons that track hash tags for another interesting lesson in how trends spread and the various ways in which people use social media to communicate ideas.

7. Connect with the community.

Partner up with local government or charitable organizations and use [education Twitter](#) to reach a broad audience discussing the latest cultural or educational events in the area and encourage others in the community to attend.

8. Follow the issues.

Bring a little [technology](#) into debates by asking the class which issues they would like to follow. Subscribe to relevant hash tags and accounts from all perspectives and compile an updated resource cobbling together as much research as possible.

9. Write a story or poem.

Many writers and poets have experimented with Twitter's 140-character format to bring new, serialized works in small chunks to attention-divided audiences. Some educators may like the idea of asking their students to apply their creative writing skills to a restrictive social media outlet.

10. Live tweet field trips.

Sick kids or paranoid parents may like the idea of following along with class field trips on Twitter, and smart phone-enabled teachers can keep them engaged with pictures and descriptions of the lessons learned.

11. Ask questions.

Monica Rankin at University of Texas-Dallas uses Twitter as a way for her students to [keep a running stream of questions going during lectures](#) – an application that works in any computer-enabled K-12 classroom.

12. Set up a foreign language news stream.

Keep foreign language students informed of current events from relevant nations while simultaneously challenging them to use their translation skills by keeping a specific news feed.

13. Role play.

Computer-savvy teachers can keep history lessons engaging for children by asking them to tweet ideas and quotes from their favorite figures. Alternately, they can also pretend to be famous fictional characters as well.

14. Take and share notes.

Classrooms with enough resources can allow students to tweet their own notes during lessons and share with their peers – perhaps even printing them out for home use if they do not have internet access.



15. Sync with a blog.

Wordpress and other free blogging websites sync with Twitter, posting notices of new entries. Educators who require students to keep their own blogs may want to follow updates using Twitter rather than having to click through bookmarks for each one.

16. Chat with industry professionals.

Older high school students who need to explore their career options before spiriting away to college benefit from real-world discussions with professionals in paths they're considering. Twitter helps them connect with primary sources and facilitates

educational communication.

17. Connect classrooms.

Teachers and students from around the world can collaborate on projects using Twitter as a communication tool that simultaneously educates students in different classroom and cultural protocols.

18. Facilitate research.

Typing keywords into Twitter's search engine yields every microblog entry on the subject, providing an excellent way for students to research ideas, opinions and movements as they happen.

19. Engage parents.

Parents of K-12 students interested in daily classroom activities can follow teacher tweets discussing some of the lessons learned and any progress on projects with one quick and handy trip to a dedicated Twitter feed.

20. Become politically active.

Any teachers responsible for educating kids in politics or government may like the idea of encouraging their students to use Twitter as a forum to make society aware of issues that affect them by retweeting relevant events, news stories, blog posts and other media revolving around a chosen theme.

21. Track the government.

Numerous local and national government organizations maintain their own Twitter feeds, and educators working within any of their related subjects may like the idea of compiling them all into 1 convenient space for a quick reference.

22. Write reviews.

Any media studies classes – including literature – can use the Twitter format to write microreviews of the different movies, books and music devoured.

23. Post sample questions.

Save paper by using Twitter to post up sample questions for upcoming exams for students to research and consider without ever having to put down their computers.

24. Post supplementary materials.

Retweet articles, news stories, opinions and other interesting tidbits relevant to a specific class as an excellent, convenient supplement to classroom lectures.

25. Facilitate discussions.

Take supplementary material postings one step further by requiring students to post their own succinct responses to the main theses and open up intelligent discussions with one another.

26. Play the stock market game.

High school economics teachers frequently use stock market games as a real-world project involving the fundamentals of investing. Students can use Twitter to follow the businesses, markets and analysts that help them make wise choices with their (fake) money.

27. Live tweet a book or a movie.

Ask students to use the microblog format to record their initial reactions and responses to movies and books as they indulge in them for class. It certainly makes for an excellent lesson in how perceptions change over time as more information and perspectives become available.

28. Make recommendations.

Benefitting both students and their parents, teachers may like the idea of using Twitter to discuss films and documentaries or books to check out at home – preferably as a family. Doing so especially benefits younger students, as they typically perform better in high school and college if their parents are involved in their lives and educations.

29. Plan field trips.

Encourage parental engagement by asking them to voice their opinions on where to go and where to avoid when it comes to planning field trips. While it is impossible to please everyone, moms and dads will appreciate the transparency and ability to

connect more with what their children are doing and learning in school.



30. Design a background.

Art teachers curious about how Twitter can benefit their classes may like the idea of asking students to design their own creative backgrounds for friends and family – either digitally or using traditional media scanned into a computer

31. Compare religions.

Because so many religious figures and institutions use Twitter to discuss their beliefs and teachings, it stands as an awesome resource for liberal arts educators to compare and contrast the various faiths that have shaped humanity since its inception.

32. Post syllabus changes.

E-mail inboxes often filter out important messages as junk and students lose papers or miss class for various reasons, meaning that some of them may miss out on important announcements regarding any changes to the syllabus. Twitter keeps a permanent record of any new bits of information so nobody has any excuse for missing out.

33. Take a poll.

Teachers who enjoy polling their students on what activities to do or their opinions on current events may want to keep a running tab of results they find when working in conjunction with SurveyMonkey or another similar site.

34. Hook up with Google Earth.

Numerous educators have found creative ways to blend Twitter and Google Earth together for human and physical geography lessons where they use the former's "location" feature to learn all about new places on the globe.

35. Teach probability.

One immensely creative teacher discovered a way to introduce his students to the basics of probability, by asking a broad question and charting the answers he received through @ replies.

36. Go on a scavenger hunt.

Narrow the old, reliable internet scavenger hunt to cover only Twitter, varying the degree of difficulty depending on the age range of the students. Much older kids may appreciate the added challenge of deciphering riddles that pull from their lessons.

37. Get a little bit postmodern.

Another way English teachers can stimulate their students with Twitter involves having them compile and edit coherent stories based on pre-existing tweets by other people.

38. Channel that inner Lois Lane.

Send journalism students out into the world of microblogging and assign them to poll fellow students or ask questions of experts for use in assignments on trends, opinions and current events and research.

39. Track weather patterns.

Set up a class Twitter feed that discusses the weather in different areas, charting the findings on Google Maps or Google Earth and making note of the patterns that crop up along the way.

40. Create a character.

Creative writing or English students of all ages can participate in making up a story character of their very own, with each individual contributing a sentence or 2 towards a personality or back story. Teachers can then ask them to write their own stories based on this collectively created literary figure.

41. Create a progressive poem.

Similar to the collaborative character mentioned above, students can also compile their own poetry where everyone contributes one line that flows with the one written before.

42. Play word games.

Post a daily challenge asking kids to unscramble anagrams, contribute synonyms or antonyms or give a definition for any vocabulary or spelling words as another way of getting them [more involved in their language lessons](#).

43. Post math puzzles.

Math, chemistry or physics teachers need not feel left out from playing games and posting teasers on Twitter. Like their literate contemporaries, they can microblog a daily problem for students to solve and tweet back the answer.

44. Post videos.

Educators with access to digital video cameras may like the idea of [using Twiddeo](#) to post in-class skits, walkthroughs of field trips, clips of their travel exploits and anything else relevant to their students' lessons.

45. Create an online art gallery.

Kids studying art and the humanities can curate their own shows based around creators, movements, regions, time periods or thematic elements that they enjoy, using Twitter as a way to show the world what they think belongs in a specific exhibit.

46. Play with TweetStats.

TweetStats allows users to input a specific account name and look at a bar graph of the microblog's activity. Students can search for tweets in their school or town and [gather data](#) on how and when their neighbors use Twitter.

47. Network with other educators.

Beyond using it for lessons, teachers who Twitter have at their disposal a vast network of like-minded professionals with whom they can trade ideas and insights regarding social networking in the classroom and other topics.

48. Direct message students and parents.

Because e-mail filtering frequently ships important messages off to the trash can, some educators may prefer talking privately with kids and their parents via the direct message feature on Twitter instead.

49. Join #educhat

One of the best ways to connect with other teachers and keep up with the latest trends and philosophies regarding education by [subscribing to the #educhat hash tag](#) and participating in the community.

50. Summarize.

At the conclusion of each lecture, ask students to type a 140-character or less summary of what they have learned and perhaps pose any questions to be considered in the next class.

Using Twitter in the classroom is limited only by an educator's imagination. Though many believe its limitations prevent valuable applications to an academic setting, teachers in the know have learned that **using Twitter in education** can establish a nurturing classroom for students of all ages.

Do you know how to use twitter in the classroom? Share in the comments section!

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