

# Language for ...

## social media

### 1 Warmer



**social media:** websites and applications which people use to create and/or share messages, ideas, images, videos, etc as part of an online community.

- a. Work with a classmate. You have 30 seconds to name social media websites and applications. How many can you name?

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- b. Discuss the questions below with your classmate.

- Do you use any social networks? Explain.
- Why do you think social networks are so popular?
- Do you notice any differences between how younger and older people use social media?

- c. The table below shows information for six of the world's top social media websites. Can you guess the website from its description?

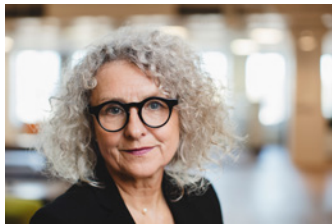
Twitter / Facebook / QZone / LinkedIn / Instagram / VKontakte

Name of website:	Country of origin	What can you do?	Approx. users
a. _____	USA	Share your photos and videos	800 million
b. _____	USA	Express your ideas, write to friends, share photos and videos	2.2 billion
c. _____	Russia	Write to friends, share photos and videos, play games	97 million
d. _____	USA	Look for job opportunities, promote your professional skills	106 million
e. _____	China	Write blogs, send photos, listen to music, watch videos	563 million
f. _____	USA	Express your ideas in short sentences (280 characters max)	336 million

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### 2 Text

a. Read the four texts. Which of the people express generally positive ideas about social media?



**Donna:** I work for a medical charity called Healthy Hearts and we really rely on social media. To promote an event, we usually **post** an ad and then people **share** it. We always ask our followers to use the hashtag #healthyhearts so that we can get more attention and maybe even **trend** in our local region. If people need more information about an event, they can **DM** us and we try to respond as quickly as possible.

**Maya:** I remember when Facebook first began, it seemed more personal. I didn't **friend** many people, just close contacts. When I used to log in, my newsfeed was full of cool photos and funny status updates from my friends and family. These days, social media is very different. It's full of celebrities and brands who want you to **follow** their pages. They're constantly posting clickbait, hoping that their videos or photos will get millions of likes and **go viral**. I feel like social media has lost its personal touch.



**Jeff:** I once interacted with Chelsea Clinton on Twitter! After listening to a speech that she gave at my university, I wrote a tweet saying how much I had enjoyed it. I included her handle in the tweet (@chelseaclinton) and, much to my surprise, she **retweeted** me! It was amazing! My tweet got hundreds of likes and it started a really long thread of comments where other users gave their opinions on the speech.

**Phil:** I'm a hairdresser and I use Instagram to promote my work. About a year ago, I got a new follower called Simon. And he started **trolling** me! He kept posting photos of dogs with funny hairstyles and then **tagging** me in the photos. It was so cruel! I had to **block** him and report him to the site administrator.



b. Answer the questions about each respondent.

- Why does Donna want people to write #healthyhearts on their social media?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In Maya's opinion, what is the main way that social media has changed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What happened to Jeff after he mentioned Chelsea Clinton on Twitter?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How did Phil solve his problem with Simon?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Language in use

- a. Read the four texts in the previous exercise again. Match the seven underlined nouns in the texts to their definitions below. Number 1 is completed as an example.

Nouns from the text	Definition
1. a hashtag (text: <b>Donna</b> )	( <b>3</b> ) A sentence that a person writes publicly on Facebook (this sentence is not a response to a different person).
2. a newsfeed (text: <b>Maya</b> )	( ) An eye-catching or shocking headline/photo/video with the objective of attracting people to click on a link.
3. a status update (text: <b>Maya</b> )	( ) Usually the initial page that you see on a social network, showing you videos, photos, etc from the people who you follow.
4. clickbait (text: <b>Maya</b> )	( ) A person's name on Twitter, which comes after an @ sign (e.g. @chelseaclinton). Using this allows you to publicly mention a person.
5. a like (text: <b>Maya</b> )	( ) A word or phrase that comes after a # sign to identify a certain topic on social media.
6. a handle (text: <b>Jeff</b> )	( ) A sequence of comments which appear below an initial comment or post. These comments are reactions to the initial post.
7. a thread (text: <b>Jeff</b> )	( ) An action in which a person reacts to an item on social media by clicking an icon to show that they like this item.

- b. For each of the ten sentences below, rewrite the sentence using one of the verbs in bold from the four passages in the text exercise. For some sentences, you will need to write the verb in the past (in these cases, all the verbs are regular). There is one verb you don't need.

Example: 'I hate that photo of me! Don't publicly insert my name if you put it on Facebook!'

= 'I hate that photo of me! Don't **TAG** me if you put it on Facebook.'

(the verb 'tag' is in Phil's text)

- Selena Gomez has over 100 million followers on Instagram.  
= More than 100 million people \_\_\_\_\_ Selena Gomez on Instagram.
- My old classmate added me as a friend on Facebook.  
= My old classmate \_\_\_\_\_ me on Facebook.
- An anonymous person repeatedly wrote horrible comments about my photos on Instagram.  
= Somebody \_\_\_\_\_ me on Instagram.

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4. Funny videos of little babies laughing often become extremely popular online.  
= Funny videos of little babies laughing often \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Tim read an interesting article and clicked a button so that his friends could read the same article.  
= Tim \_\_\_\_\_ an interesting article for his friends to read.
6. Yesterday, a lot of people spoke about Christmas shopping on social media.  
= Yesterday, the phrase 'Christmas shopping' \_\_\_\_\_ on social media.
7. A stranger kept sending me messages on LinkedIn so I instructed the website not to allow him to send me any more messages.  
= A stranger kept sending me messages on LinkedIn so I \_\_\_\_\_ him.
8. Jane added a new photo to her Instagram.  
= Jane \_\_\_\_\_ a new photo on her Instagram
9. I don't want to publicly ask Harold about his exam results, so I'll write to him directly.  
= I'll \_\_\_\_\_ Harold to ask about his exam results.
10. A lot of people clicked a button to show the politician's tweet to their friends.  
= A lot of people \_\_\_\_\_ the politician's tweet.

**c. Look at the words and phrases in bold and circle the correct option to complete the sentences.**

1. The school in Townsville promoted the summer concert using the **hashtag/handle** #townsvilleconcert.
2. Yesterday, Martin shared a photo of his new painting and it already has hundreds of **threads/likes**.
3. During the last X-Factor, I **followed/friended** all the contestants on Instagram.
4. Hi everybody. Can't wait to see you at the party this Saturday! Please **DM/follow** me if you have any questions about how to get to my house.
5. Sorry, Chris. I don't think we're friends on Facebook so I couldn't **share/tag** you in the photos from the festival.
6. Every year, as soon as Halloween finishes, the word 'Christmas' starts to **trend/retweet** on social media.
7. Anna first heard about the Paris marathon when she saw a video about it on her Facebook **status update / newsfeed**.
8. Public figures like politicians and journalists often get **trolled/blocked** on social media by people who don't agree with their ideas.

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### 4 Communication



**a. Discuss the questions below with your classmate.**

- Do you know any stories about people who had lost contact but got back in touch because of social media?
- Are there any people who you would never friend on social media? Explain. (For example, your parents, your children, your partner, your ex, your teacher, your boss, etc.)
- Do you follow any famous people on social media? If so, describe their style of interaction.
- Are there any people on social media (famous or personal contacts) whose style of interaction you find irritating? Explain.
- What type of information would you be comfortable putting on a public profile on social media? (For example, date of birth, job, telephone number, interests, home address, etc.)
- According to the World Health Organisation, internet addiction is a 'significant public health concern'. How can social media have an addictive element?

**b. Social media is a context where people use a lot of slang. For example, imagine your friend sends you a link to a video on YouTube and includes this message:**

This totally made me LOL. But really NSFW, so be careful!

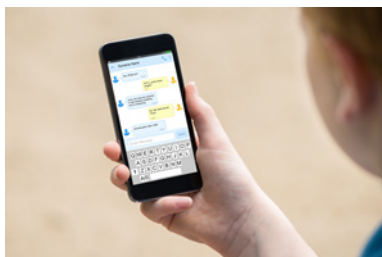
**Circle the correct answer to each the following questions.**

- What type of video is it? *sports/funny/interesting*
- Where would be the best place to watch the video? *at work / at home / on the bus*

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- c. With your classmate, read the following four short social media chats. They each contain slang words. In pairs, discuss the question after each chat.



Jess: Did you see Beyoncé's performance at Coachella?

Tim: OMG, she slayed it.

Jess: IDK, I found parts a bit basic.

1. Do Jess and Tim agree about Beyoncé's performance?

Clare: What do you think of Justin Bieber's enormous new tattoo?

Alex: I'm a bit shook, TBH.

Clare: He used to be a total bae but RN he's definitely not.

2. Do Clare and Alex like Justin Bieber's new tattoo?

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Nina: Are you coming to lunch with the girls tomorrow?

Maggie: I have to go to the dentist! I've got total FOMO!

Nina: Oh, come on. Can't you cancel the dentist?

Maggie: LOL. YOLO!

3. *Is Maggie considering cancelling her dentist appointment?*

Emma: What do you think of Meghan Markle?

Terry: I think she seems pretty woke if you read some of her interviews.

Emma: I know, right? Goals!

4. *Do Emma and Terry have a positive opinion of Meghan Markle?*

d. Now your teacher will provide you with a list of meanings for the above slang words. How many of the questions did you guess correctly?

### Red Words

like (noun)\*

thread\*\*

follow\*\*\*

share\*\*\*

block\*\*

post (verb)\*\*

basic\*\*\*