Getting to grips with Twitter in 1, 2, 3…

If you're new to Twitter, it can seem a bit daunting. But getting to grips with the basics is as easy as 1, 2, 3…

3 things about what it is
1. A way of posting quick messages ('tweets') about what you're doing
2. 'Tweets' are super-short – up to 140 characters
3. Twitter is about getting followers - you 'follow' people to see their tweets, and people who follow you can see yours

3 things you can use Twitter for
Twitter is an 'online social networking tool'. In English, this means you can use it to:
1. Broadcasting – tell your followers about what you've been doing and about upcoming events
2. Sharing and networking – share messages, photos, links to things you think your followers might find interesting, helpful or funny
3. Keeping up to date – most venues and organisations will have their own Twitter account, so you can use your Twitter as a noticeboard to keep track of what's on at your local theatre, community centre, etc.

3 groups of people you can follow on Twitter
It's really up to you, here are a few options:
1. You can use it as a purely social tool and follow only friends and family
2. Or you can follow people or organisations relating to your interests, hobbies and day-to-day living, e.g. charities, community groups, the National Trust, the Council, energy companies…
3. If you're working or volunteering, it's a great way of networking

Some people like to follow local or national news channels, e.g. BBC, as a way of keeping on with what's going on in the world. Or for light relief, you could follow celebrities!

3 things about where and when can you use Twitter
1. On your laptop, tablet or mobile
2. You can tweet 24/7, though some people recommend lunchtimes and early evenings are best as this tends to be when people nip online. You can even schedule tweets in advance using tools like Tweetdeck
3. People often tweet during events, e.g. conferences, social gatherings– this can give a great feel for what's going on moment by moment

3 things to do to set up a Twitter account
Registering with Twitter is quick and free. All you need is an email account.
1. At www.twitter.com, fill in your email

2. Choose a Twitter username. This will appear as @janesmith. This is the name by which you will be referred to on Twitter, e.g.
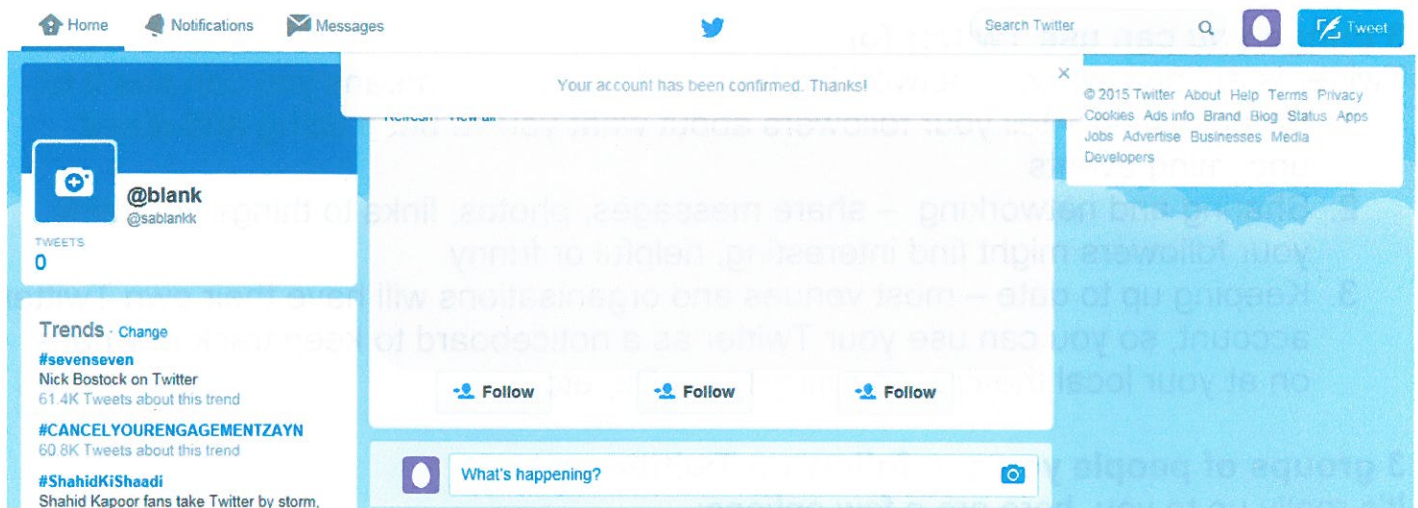
  Had lovely time with @janesmith at the beach today.
3. Choose a strong password

Sign in to your email account to click on the Twitter verification email.

3 things to help you orient yourself on your Twitter account
You will land on your **homepage** or **timeline**– this is where you see all the tweets from people you are following. It's a bit like a Facebook newsfeed. At the moment, yours will be blank because you aren't following anyone yet. Things to look out for:

1. On the Twitter toolbar, top right hand corner:
   - **The Search** box: type here people, organisations or topics you want to follow
   - **Where to tweet**: to start tweeting your followers, click on the blue 'Tweet' button, or type in the 'What's happening?' box below

2. **Profile photo,** top right hand corner (currently has a purple 'egg' in it):
   Click on your profile photo to:
   - **Complete your profile.** Click on 'View profile' then click on the camera image to upload a photo of yourself and add a short biography. You can write what you like, but remember, anyone on the Internet could read this
   - **Change your account settings** e.g. change the background design, change your account password, control your privacy settings
   - **'Log out'** of Twitter

3. Top left hand corner:
   - The **notifications (or 'Mentions' or 'Connect' or @ tab)** shows replies to your tweets, and tweets where you have been mentioned
   - **Direct messages** envelope. Click this to send private messages

3 tips about following people

To receive tweets, you need to 'follow' people.

Type their username (or just their first and last name) in the search box. Click on their profile photo or username to take a closer look.

1. Have a look at their last few tweets
2. Have a look at how many people, and who, they are following
3. If you like the look of them, click on the 'follow' button. Their status will change to 'following'

Have a go:

- Find and 'follow' three people on Twitter. You can follow me if you like: @bette_noire
  Their tweets will start to appear on your homepage.
- Get some followers of your own!
  Follow somebody in your group.

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3 ways of finding more people/organisations to follow

1. Search by typing their name in the search box
2. Click on the profile of someone you already follow. Click 'following' to see who *they* follow
3. Follow new people who follow you. You'll get a notification each time a new person follows you (and possibly an email)

You don't need the other person's permission to follow them, though they can block you if they want.

You can 'unfollow' someone by clicking on your 'Following' button and clicking the 'Following' button next to the person you don't want to receive tweets from.

3 ways of communicating on Twitter

1. A tweet for all of your followers to read: simply type in the 'What's happening?' box

Bette Noire @bette_noire · now
My garden loves the rain, even if we don't.

View photo

2. A tweet directed at a specific person, or replying to a person, starts with @username. This is also known as an '@reply'

Bette Noire @bette_noire · 12s
@JuliaRKendal I've been inspired by your great photos!

Or, you can reply by just clicking on the 'reply' button below their tweet. Although this is directed at one person, anyone who follows both you AND the person will see these tweets in their homepage, too.

3. You can send a private message to someone by clicking on the Direct Message envelope in the top toolbar. You can only 'DM' people who follow you.

Have a go:
- Tweet an update about what you are doing. Check in your group – this tweet will appear on your followers' homepages
- Reply to one of your follower's tweets
- Send someone a Direct Message.

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3 other things you can do with a tweet (left to right)

1. Click the arrow to reply quickly to a tweet
2. Click the circular arrows to 'retweet', or share the tweet with your followers.
- You can also retweet by putting 'via @username' at the end of the tweet to show it came from them, e.g.
  What do you call a dog with no nose? via @janesmith
- Or by copying the tweet and putting 'RT @username' at the start, e.g.
  RT@janesmith what do you call a dog with no nose?
3. Click the star to 'favourite' the tweet, or show you like it.

3 things to check each time you go on Twitter:

1. Check if someone replied to one of your tweets, or has mentioned you in a tweet, by clicking on Notifications. Or, you can click on your username in the left hand column of your homepage
2. Check if anyone has sent you a Direct message by looking for a number in the message envelope
3. Check what's 'trending' or popular on Twitter now in the left hand column

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Have a go:
- Retweet a tweet to your followers, then favourite a tweet

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3 ways of getting more followers
1. Share interesting content
2. Share photos by clicking on the photo icon. Tweets with photos get more retweets or favourites
3. Retweet or favourite someone new – they might follow you back!

You can also share links to websites – just copy and paste the address into your tweet.

3 things about hashtags
You might see some tweets with a hashtag or # sign in front of them. This is a way of labelling tweets by topic. For example, people interested in baking might include #baking in their tweets.

Clicking on the hashtag will show you all the tweets that use that hashtag.
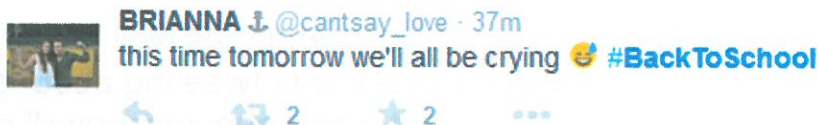

Have a go:
- Type #gardening in the Twitter search box
- You'll see latest updates – tweets, photos and videos – from people interested in gardening

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You could use hashtags to:

1. Participate in a larger, linked discussion on Twitter. For example, #CuriousFact started in response to the play 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time'. Soon people started tweeting all kinds of 'curious facts', e.g.

> **Ecological Lighting** @sinergized · Jun 29
> **#CuriousFact** Kangaroos are left handed. ow.ly/OPFgK

Another user invented the hashtag #BackToSchool to link discussions about going back to school after the Christmas break. As you can see, there were conflicting views about the prospect!

> **BRIANNA** @cantsay_love · 37m
> this time tomorrow we'll all be crying 😄 **#BackToSchool**
> ↩   ♻ 2   ★ 2   ···

> **creative dimensions** @createdimension · 45m
> **#backtoschool** tomorrow! Making plans for course Textile Arts Therapy I'll be running in Oct w Lynne Souter-Anderson - more info coming soon!

2. Tell people about an event. Say your knitting group is holding a party on 22 Oct. You could promote the event by including #knittingparty2210 in your tweets.

   Encourage people attending the party to use the hashtag, so it creates a buzz about the event.

   Meeting some great people at #janesknittingparty.

Thanks to @janesmith I have mastered purl. #janesknittingparty

3. Promote a 'tweetchat'. This is where a group of people agree a time and date in advance to go on Twitter and discuss a topic. E.g.

   Don't forget 9pm tonight, all you lovers of good jam #jamtasterschat

   Encourage people to use the hashtag during the 'chat' so their tweets can be easily identified, e.g.

   I love the new plum and gooseberry, how about you? #jamtasterschat

   Anyone wanting to join the chat could simply search on the #jamtasterschat hashtag.

3 tips on creating a good # for your event or tweetchat:

1. When you've made up a #title for your event, check that # doesn't already exist, by searching for it on Twitter
2. Don't use any hyphens (dashes, e.g. -) in the name.
3. Try not to use an acronym that doesn't mean anything, e.g. #elz90

And finally...

3 DON'Ts for Twitter

1. Don't tweet anything you wouldn't want anyone else to see, e.g. your personal details, when you're going on holiday, your bank account details. Although you are tweeting only to your followers, you can't stop them from retweeting one of your tweets to *their* followers. And a stranger looking up your homepage could see all your tweets. You can 'protect' your tweets so they aren't available publicly, but this isn't foolproof. If you want to keep something private, send it in a Direct Message.
2. If someone follows you – check them out first, before you follow them!
3. Be wary of giving your location away in your tweets. Check your Settings> Security and Privacy

3 DOs for Twitter

1. Twitter works best as a conversation – so do interact, as well as tell people about things. An example: @nursewithglasses was tweeting about going back to her old school. I commented on her tweet – and she 'favourited' mine:

   ⭐ **Nursewithglasses** favorited your Tweet   Nov 26
   Nov 26: @nurse_w_glasses great stuff. Brace yourself for some
   memories -it's the smell that always gets me

2. Do use your Twitter for customer service enquiries – you will usually get a quick response!
3. Do have fun and experiment! Pick out users whose tweets you enjoy, and copy how they do it.