

Tweeting

A tweet is a 140-character public statement. In the classroom, it can be a model for a short response to reading. Tweeting gives all students a space to respond to reading, and a limit for their response. Students can count characters or simply limit their response to one or two sentences.

In one instance, *The Book with No Pictures* by B. J. Novak was read aloud to a group of children. As the students laughed along with the pages, Monica snapped a picture and posted it to Twitter. She included the author's Twitter handle in the tweet as a virtual shout-out to the author. (Doing so also helps Monica's online followers to easily locate more information about his work.) A few days later, Monica's phone lit up with a notification. B. J. Novak had replied to the tweet! The next week, Monica was able to share the reply from author B. J. Novak with the group of children, who were thrilled!

The idea of tweeting to authors is not a novel concept. Teachers around the world use Twitter to connect with their students' favorite authors. Although one may not initially think of a children's author as a reading partner, these relationships can be critical to student success. Authors often respond to tweets, Skype with classrooms, and answer emails. Whether a favorite author chooses to answer becomes less important when teachers are focused on building the capacity of readers to understand channels of communication and the possibilities that abound.



Activity: Tweeting the Read Aloud

Goal:

- Students will use Twitter to respond to an event, a television show, or an article they've read.

Preparation:

- The way you implement this activity will vary depending on grade level and classroom culture. Set up your own class Twitter account, and tweet student thinking to provide an authentic audience.
- Choose a book to share with students and a prompt you would like to discuss when you finish reading the book. The prompt could be as simple as *Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?* or as specific as *How does this book connect to another text we've explored this year?*

Steps for Success:

1. Distribute an index card, or ask students to open a digital exit slip on their devices.
2. Explain to students that their responses should be short and powerful. You may show them an example of a Twitter feed from a news organization, an author, or a notable figure.
3. Have students complete their responses, and provide time for them to share with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. You may decide to take a few student responses and post them to a class Twitter feed.
4. If you post these short responses on Twitter, tag the author of the text you read. You can find the Twitter handle for this person by typing his or her name in Twitter's search bar or visiting his or her website.

Option: If your younger students respond to reading with illustrations, snap pictures of their illustrations and post them on your class Twitter feed. Make sure to share this authentic audience with students and celebrate how the world can now view their work.



EdTech Spotlight

Eight Ways to Get Every Student Tweeting

There are lots of ways to incorporate this social media platform into your classroom. Older students may have their own Twitter account and post reflections to class discussions online. Younger students can participate in Twitter-inspired activities or contribute ideas to their class Twitter feed. Here are eight ways to get every student tweeting:

1. Introduce hashtags as a way to categorize learning. Create hashtags with your class that go along with an activity like categorizing books by genres or strategies to solve a math problem.
2. Ask students to tweet their big takeaways from the day's lesson at the end of class. Some students may post their Twitter-inspired exit slip on a class board, while others may head straight to Twitter and include your class hashtag on their post.
3. Tweet your students' work, including creations posted online or snapshots of student projects. Remember to make sure you have permission to share student work and images online.
4. Ask students to write a paper/pencil synopsis of a book, or identify a key argument in a text using only 140 characters. You may choose to share their writing on your class Twitter feed.
5. Ask students to create a tweetable image using Spark Post. Students can use this creation tool to capture a favorite quote or a lingering question about a topic.
6. Next time your students attend an assembly or watch a video in class, set up a backchannel. Similar to the tweeting that takes place during a live sporting event or television show, comments can be in real time.
7. Have students create a make-believe Twitter profile for a character from a book or a figure from history. Students can simulate a conversation between two characters in classic literature or one between a past president and a contemporary figure.
8. Hashtags are often used to spark a conversation. Choose a relevant hashtag like #HerStoryCampaign, and have students generate tweets you can post to a class account.