



Twitter Terminology Explained: A 101 Guide for the New Twitter User

- **280:** The maximum amount of characters permitted per tweet on Twitter.
- **Handle:** Your username (@username). Handles ideally should be short so as not to take up too many characters per tweet, be easy to read and also convey an identity consistent with the user's goals.
- **Follower(s):** Following refers to users you choose to follow on Twitter, meaning you have selected to follow the content they post and re-post on Twitter. Users are also able to follow your account and are shown as followers of you. A list of who follows you (followers) and whom you follow (following) is located on each Twitter profile and is public. The more followers you have, the more people see your tweets. The more users you follow, the more frequently updated your news feed is with new content. Some users follow each account that follows them, others are more selective. As you build your Twitter presence, think about how you would like to use the platform and determine who you follow accordingly (i.e., news outlets, public figures, colleagues, issue experts, etc.).
- **Hashtag (#):** Hashtags categorize content on Twitter by denoting a topic of conversation. Hashtags also allow you to participate in a larger linked discussion (e.g., #putkids1st, #tweetiatrician). By clicking on a hashtag, you can see all tweets that include the hashtag, even from people you don't follow. Using hashtags on your tweets will insert your posts into topical conversations with other users who may not otherwise encounter your content.
- **Retweet (RT):** Re-sharing or giving credit to someone else's tweet.
- **Modified tweet (MT):** Placed before a retweet when users modify the message (e.g., shortening a tweet).
- **Mention (@):** A way to reference another user by his username in a tweet (e.g., @username). Users are notified when mentioned.
- **Reply:** A tweet that replies to another user's tweet, usually posted by clicking the "reply" button next to the tweet. Always begins with @username.

Note: When you begin a tweet with @username, only users who follow both of you will see the tweet. However, if you place a period in front of the username in this instance (.@username), then all of your followers will see it.

- **Direct message (DM):** Private tweets between the sender and recipient. You can only DM a user who is following you, and you can only receive DMs from users you follow.
- **Favorite:** Most commonly used when users like a tweet, represented by a small star icon next to a tweet. Favorites allow users to keep certain posts easily accessible for later review, and each user's collection of favorite tweets is publically viewable by other users on Twitter. Unlike an RT, favoriting a post does not automatically share it with a larger audience, it is just appended to the user's profile who favorited it.
- **Live tweet:** An ongoing posting of tweets during a live event, such as a lecture or conference. Hashtags are typically used to organize the tweets from a specific event during a moment in time.
- **Twitter chat:** An online discussion about a certain topic held on Twitter. Twitter chats tend to have a designated hashtag to follow/use in the conversation.
- **HT or h/t (Hat tip):** An acknowledgement of the user who originally shared the content of a tweet (e.g., an article or video).
- **ICYMI (In case you missed it):** Typically placed in front of tweets about items that may still be relevant but not late-breaking.
- **Throw Back Thursday (#tbt):** A common hashtag used on Thursday to indicate a memory, old photo or idea.
- **Follow Friday (#FF):** On Fridays, Twitter users often use this hashtag to suggest who others should follow.
- **Trends:** "Trending" topics are those popular across Twitter at any given time. They can be filtered by region, country or worldwide, and appear on some Twitter apps and twitter.com.