

Hashtags in the #Classroom



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Hashtag (n.): The “#” symbol used to mark keywords in a tweet

To the unfamiliar, the hashtags littering social media posts are annoying and make messages hard to read. Those tiny symbols, however, hold great power that, if harnessed correctly, can open lines of communication, create a community, or offer insight into the tone and perspective of the tweet.

Gather Information

With thousands of users tweeting every second, hashtags have become the best way to locate specific information in the crowded world of social media. Hashtags make it possible to sort and navigate tweets in a manageable amount of time. Clicking on or searching for a hashtag will isolate all tweets containing that hashtag into a “channel” for you to read.

Whether you need ideas for different ways to teach probability or you want to know the latest news on a current event, hashtags enable you to quickly and easily locate information on a specific topic. You can also contribute to any conversation by simply inserting a few strategic hashtags into your 140-character tweet.

Although the hashtag gained prominence in Twitter, it is now also used across social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. Some hashtags are more generic keywords (#ipad); others are acronyms or abbreviations understood only within a specific community. Some are used only temporarily, like in conjunction with a special event or holiday (#TCEAtots); others reflect trends and are constantly being used. To get the hang of it, find a well-known expert in your field, use the same hashtags as he or she does, and it won’t be long before you’re #intheknow.

FOLLOW OUR CONVERSATION:

#edapp
#txeduchat
#mlearning
#txed

Convey Voice

Since its inception in 2006, Twitter’s hashtags have helped the now more than 200 million users communicate with the world. Along the way, hashtags have managed to evolve into a language of their own. Hashtags are often used as a layer of creative expression, giving tone and context to a tweet. In the case of younger tweeters, these frequently convey humor and/or irony (#firstworldproblems).

Start Your Own

Hashtags are organic - made for the people, by the people. Some appear in conjunction with major events (#prayforboston), others develop alongside social movements (#100happydays), and many are random and #jff (just for fun). Choose a hashtag to collect relevant information for your class (#ictclass) or create a hashtag for a particular project within your class (#art4me). It might just spread to the rest of your school, your community, or even go viral.

Helpful Tips

#hashtagshouldnotbesentencesorverylengthyatall - Besides being horribly unreadable, this sort of hashtag is not likely to yield many results when searched.

#don’t #use #too #many hashtags in #one sentence - Hashtags lose their impact when they are jumbled together; use only one or two hashtags for optimal results.

#beyourself - Hashtags can add whimsy, irony, and depth to your tweets; so be creative and use them to make your messages both more searchable and more impactful.