

# Twitter for Teachers

By Joel Heffner

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**Chapter 1: Twitter Basics**  
**Chapter 2: How Can Teachers Use Twitter?**  
**Chapter 3: Provide Updates**  
**Chapter 4: Exchange Ideas**  
**Chapter 5: Review**  
**Chapter 6: Trivia**  
**Chapter 7: Teacher Network**  
**Chapter 8: Tips for Using Twitter**  
**Chapter 9: Twitter Glossary**  
**Who's Joel Heffner?**

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## Chapter 1: Twitter Basics

Twitter is an online service where you enter messages of up to 140 characters at a time.

This ebook is written in the Twitter-style of 140 characters or less per sentence.

The Twitter-style has been used for hundreds of years.

The *Art of War*, by Sun Tzu, was written in a similar style.

The purpose of Twitter is to answer the question: What are you doing?

Friends, family, and interested others can keep track of what you have to say by becoming an online follower.

Anyone can sign up for a Twitter Account at <http://www.twitter.com>.

Once you sign up you can provide your own updates as often as you want...or never.

With an account, you can become a follower of others on Twitter. You can follow as many people as you want.

If you follow someone, you will see their Twitter comments as soon as they enter them.

You can use an RSS Reader to follow someone on Twitter, just like you do with a blog.

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You can even send and receive Twitter messages via a cell phone.

Others can also follow you, of course.

If you don't want to allow followers there are settings you can use to block individuals or everyone except those you specifically allow.

Twitter is easy to master and fun to use.

Is Twitter useful for teachers? That's what this ebook is all about. The answer in a word is YES!

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## Chapter 2: How can Teachers use Twitter?

There are (at least) five basic ways that a teacher can effectively use Twitter.

1. Provide students and parents with updates, such as homework assignments.
2. Develop a place where students can exchange ideas on topics.
3. Give facts for review.
4. Distribute tidbits of information, such as interesting websites and trivia.
5. Produce a network to communicate with other teachers and get quick feedback and help.

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## Chapter 3: Provide Updates

You can post your homework assignments.

In addition to students knowing what the assignments will be...their parents will, too.

Parents might even want the homework sent to their cell phones so they don't miss an assignment.

The date of your next test can be sent on Twitter.

If you are assigning a project or report, Twitter's the place.

Remind students of your homework of your grading policy and expectations...often.

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## Chapter 4: Exchange Ideas

Brainstorm with your students on Twitter.

Pick a topic and solicit opinions.

Run a debate...online.

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## Chapter 5: Review

Use Twitter as a forum for review.

List facts that will appear on your next test.

Remind students of the types of questions that will be on the next test.

Provide an extra credit question on Twitter.

Students can ask you questions about the next test or assignment.

Post tips on topics, such as <http://www.twitter.com/tipsforwriters>.

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## Chapter 7: Teacher Network

Find teachers on Twitter.

Create your own teacher network.

Post questions on teacher concerns.

Post answers.

Provide tips for teachers.

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## Chapter 8: Tips for Using Twitter

Encourage students to write in complete sentences.

Make comments on a regular basis...at least one per day.

If you have a Web site, you can add Twitter messages to it.

Although Twitter was meant as a place to post personal comments, it doesn't have to be.

Avoid silly personal comments like, "I'm having my coffee." Does anyone really care?

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## Chapter 9: Twitter Glossary

Tweacher...a teacher who uses Twitter

For a complete listing of Twitter related words look at <http://twitter.pbwiki.com/Twitter+Glossary>.

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## Who's Joel Heffner?

Joel Heffner was a middle school social studies teacher in Brooklyn, New York for almost thirty years. He left the classroom to become a staff developer for the New York City Department of Education's Office of Instructional Technology. He spent six years at OIT helping teachers and fellow staff developers learn how to integrate technology into the classroom.

Joel writes articles and ebooks, and conducts workshops for teachers on topics like *Email in the Classroom*, *Web Your Classroom*, *Ten Ways to Get Kids to Want to Write*, and *Creativity in the Classroom*. He also Tweets at [Tips for Speakers](#) and [Tips for Writers](#) and, of course, [Tips for Teachers](#).

He can be reached at [teachertips at joelheffner.com](mailto:teachertips@joelheffner.com).

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