

Social media
by Moundir Al Amrani

Age:	Teenagers / Adults
Level:	Intermediate +
Time:	90 minutes
Objective:	to develop speaking skills by discussing ideas related to social media; to improve listening skills; to learn new vocabulary; to improve reading and comprehension; to practise writing a well-structured paragraph
Key skills:	reading, listening, writing
Materials:	one copy of the worksheet per student; parts 1 and 2 of the audio downloaded from onestopenglish

Procedure**Activity 1**

Hand out the worksheet. Use the lead-in to initiate learners into the topic of the lesson. These questions are intended to introduce the aspects covered in the different parts of the lesson.

Activity 2

Use the quiz to raise learners' awareness to their use of social media. This will touch on their reality and help them relate to the topic of the lesson and discuss it from their own personal perspectives.

Key:

0 < Not an addict < 10

11 < Moderate user < 50

51 < Obsessed user < 100

101 < Addicted user < 200

Activity 3

After the first two activities, learners are now prepared to do the reading comprehension section. The reading passage gives numbers and statistics about the use of social media. This text helps learners see the use of social media from a wider and more objective perspective. Since the text is intended for intermediate learners and above, it is recommended to give them a few minutes to read the text silently. This will help them process the information that has been presented in a challenging manner to push them to use their cognitive skills to interpret the numbers and get meaning out of them.

Activity 4

The comprehension questions progress from questions about direct information in the text to questions about details and inference questions. They are meant to help learners recall the main points of the text and consolidate them.

Key:

a. Digital natives think the world has always been the same but digital migrants see a big difference between the past and the present.

b. It requires people to be online.

c. teenagers and young adults

d. 13–17-year-olds

e. Roughly 250 million users

f. the 90% of teenagers between 16 and 24 years old who are on social media

g. 25–34-year-olds come first in keeping in touch with relatives.

h. students' own answers

Activity 5

This exercise checks learners' understanding of vocabulary from the text and also gives them the chance to go through the text again. Learners do the exercise individually or in pairs, then check the answers with you. It is recommended that learners self-correct and peer-correct before checking the answers as a class.

Key:

1. appealing

2. keeping up with

3. urging

4. boomed

5. barely

6. roughly

7. buzz

8. distract

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This activity consolidates the vocabulary learnt in the previous one. Learners do the exercise individually or in pairs, then check the answers as a class.

Key:

- a. *keeping up with*
- b. *distract*
- c. *barely*
- d. *buzz*
- e. *boomed*
- f. *roughly*
- g. *appealing*
- h. *urging*

Activity 7

The listening activity revisits the information and vocabulary learnt so far in a more challenging format. To make things that bit easier for the learners, the recording has been divided into two parts. Part 1 gives learners a taste of what they will be dealing with in the rest of the recording.

Key:

- a. *a lot*
- b. *No, they don't. There are those that are very popular and those that are not.*
- c. *a lot about their role in people's lives*
- d. *100*
- e. *16–24-year-olds*
- f. *2.5*

Activity 8

Part 2 is more challenging in the sense that learners need to understand the numbers mentioned in the recording as well as their significance. The activity in this part tests their understanding of the recording by asking them to complete slightly modified sentences with information they hear in the recording.

Key:

- a. *2 billion*
- b. *2.4 billion*
- c. *1.5 billion*
- d. *800 million*
- e. *seventh/in seventh place*

- f. *Instagram*
- g. *655 million*
- h. *70.1%*
- i. *Viber*
- j. *professionals*

Activity 9

The writing activity at the end wraps up the whole lesson by asking learners to present information in a well-structured paragraph. The exercise gives clear directions on what they need to do and how they need to organize the paragraph. The teacher may need to revise paragraph structure briefly so that learners clearly understand what is expected of them. The useful language table provides help for learners in their task. Teacher may need to go over these expressions and how to use them with learners.

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Part 1

How many social networking sites are there on the internet? 20? 50? 100? Well, there are certainly a lot! However, some are more popular and have more active users than others.

The statistics related to social media use and its popularity reveal a lot about its role in people's lives. In 2015, for example, worldwide social media users spent more than 100 minutes per day on social media. This doesn't mean they spent this time doing one activity on one social networking site. When we look at the United Kingdom, we find that 16–24-year-olds have an average of three social media accounts per user, followed by 25–34-year-olds with an average of a little above 2.5 accounts per user. What these numbers tell us is that social media users enjoy being in different places at the same time.

Part 2

There were some 2 billion users of social networks worldwide in 2015, in comparison with almost one billion in 2010 and a projected estimate of 2.4 billion in 2018. Facebook remains the undisputed leader of social networks with almost 1.5 billion active users and its messaging app, Facebook Messenger, ranks fourth with 700 million active users, after WhatsApp with 800 million users, which comes third after QQ, which has 832 million users. There is Twitter in seventh place, with 316 million users, followed by Skype, Google+ and Instagram with 300 million users each. At the bottom of the list, we find LinkedIn with only 97 million active users.

The number of mobile social network users is also growing at a quick pace. In the second quarter of 2015, the number of mobile-only active users of Facebook reached 655 million. This number was 314 million in the first quarter of 2014 and jumped to 526 million in the fourth quarter of the same year. In other words, 62% of worldwide social network users accessed Facebook on their devices. In 2015, 70.1% of Facebook users accessed the site via their mobiles.

These social media sites serve different types of users by targeting different needs and interests. WhatsApp is popular among instant messaging fans. It also offers other services like sharing pictures, videos and location, as well as voice calls. In this regard, WhatsApp is very similar to Viber, although the latter specializes in instant messaging and voice calls. Professionals who are interested in finding like-minded people with professional interests turn their heads towards LinkedIn. On this platform, they can discuss their business and professional interests away from the general topics that are usually popular on other social networks.

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- Discuss these questions with a partner.
 - Are you an active social networks user?
 - How many social media accounts do you have?
 - Which social network is your favourite?
 - How often do you check your social media accounts?
- Are you a social media addict? Take the following quiz. Check your score with your teacher.

		never (0pts)	occasionally (5pts)	often (10pts)	always (20pts)
1	I check Facebook on my phone first thing in the morning when I wake up.				
2	I take a picture of my meal and post it instantly on social media.				
3	I ask my friends to check my photos on social media.				
4	I check my social media accounts several times a day.				
5	I take a break and stay away from social media.				
6	When I hear something I like, I remember to post it as my status on Facebook.				
7	I know the number of my friends and followers on social media.				
8	I feel disappointed when my posts do not get many likes on Facebook.				
9	I spend a long time on social media looking at what my friends have been up to in their lives.				
10	I feel happy when I get lots of friend requests on Facebook.				

- Read the following text.

The value of social media

For digital natives who never knew life before social media, the world seems like it has always been the same but for digital migrants, the present looks nothing like the past. If you were born in the late 1990s onwards, just try to imagine what your life would be like without Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Does it look appealing to you? Probably not. Your social interaction depends so much on social media and keeping up with friends requires you to be online most, if not all, of the time. This is why your parents and friends probably keep urging you to get away from your computer or put your smart phone down and spend more time with them.

The use of social media has boomed in recent years and statistics show that nowadays, there are almost two billion social network users in the world, most of them teenagers and young adults. This obsession with social media is well reflected in statistics. According to Statista, a website specializing in statistics, 51% of worldwide Facebook users who make new friends at least once a week are between 18 and 33 years of age. However, when it comes to younger users between 13 and 17 years of age, 72% of them make at least one new friend per week. This percentage gains more significance when we learn from Facebook that its monthly active users worldwide as of the second quarter of 2015 reached some 1.5 billion. This number barely reached 750 million monthly active users in the second quarter of 2011. In the same period of 2009, this number was roughly 250 million. As you see, these numbers speak for themselves but the more information we learn about the use of social media, the more interesting it gets.

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In the UK, for instance, the use of social networks is dominated by the 90% of young people between 16 and 24 years old who are on social media and the 75% of those between the ages of 25 and 44 who use Facebook. Add to this the fact that, in 2014, Facebook and YouTube were the top social media sites accessed by 8–15-year-olds in Great Britain.

What do young users spend their time doing on social media? There are a number of things but the top activities are finding out what friends are doing, sending them messages and knowing what they are watching or listening to. This is for 16–24-year-olds, followed in second place by 25–34-year-olds, who come first in keeping in touch with relatives.

In the midst of this entire buzz about social media, alarming voices warning of the dangers of such a situation can be heard. Some people argue that young people's overuse of social media represents an addiction that threatens their real-life communication skills. Moreover, this addiction can distract them from their studies and affect their concentration, especially given the many cases of use of social media during class that have been reported. Meanwhile, overuse of social networks by adults can harm their relationships. Other disadvantages include wasting time, identity theft, cyber bullying and crimes against children.

Now, where do you stand in all this? Are you a social media addict? Do you think social networking is worth all the importance people give to it?

4. Answer the following questions about the text.
 - a. How do digital natives and digital migrants see the world today?
 - b. What does keeping up with friends require nowadays?
 - c. Who are the majority of social media users in the world?
 - d. 72% of what category of Facebook users make at least one new friend every week?
 - e. How many monthly active Facebook users were there in the second quarter of 2009?
 - f. Who dominates the use of social networks in the UK?
 - g. In what social media activity do adults come before younger users?
 - h. What do you think of the criticism levelled at those who overuse social media?
5. Find words or expressions from the text with the following meanings.
 - a. attractive
 - b. staying in touch with
 - c. trying persistently to persuade someone to do something
 - d. grown or developed rapidly
 - e. hardly
 - f. approximately
 - g. excited interest or talk about something
 - h. get someone's attention and prevent them from concentrating on something

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6. Complete the following sentences with words and expression from above
- Social networking sites are very useful for _____ what is happening in the world.
 - Addiction to such sites can _____ students from their studies.
 - Nowadays, younger generations _____ know what it means to write, send and receive letters.
 - There is a real _____ around the topic of social networking sites.
 - The popularity of hashtags has _____ as they help people find posts and messages about a specific issue on social media.
 - _____ 70% of Facebook users access the site on their smart phones.
 - Social media has become very _____ to businesses as it allows them to post advertisements and reach their customers easily.
 - Many schools and universities are _____ teachers to use technology in their classes.
7. You are going to listen to a two-part recording. Discuss these questions with your partner. Then, listen to part 1 of the recording and answer the questions.
- How many social media sites are there on the internet?
 - Do all social media sites have the same status among internet users? Explain.
 - What do statistics tell us about social media sites?
 - How many minutes does an average user spend on social media per day?
 - Which age group has an average of three social media accounts?
 - What is the average number of social media accounts per user between the ages of 25 and 34 in the UK?
8. Listen to part 2 of the recording. Then, complete the following sentences.
- There were an estimated _____ users of social media in the world in 2015.
 - In 2018, the number of social media users is expected to reach _____ worldwide.
 - Facebook has _____ active users.
 - WhatsApp has _____ users, ahead of the Facebook messenger app, which has 700 million users.
 - Twitter is _____ on the list and LinkedIn is last.
 - In eighth place, we find Skype, Google+ and _____, with 300 million users each.
 - In the second quarter of 2015, the number of mobile-only active users of Facebook reached _____, which is double of what it was the year before.
 - This means that 62% of social networks users and _____ of Facebook users accessed the site on their mobiles.

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- i. WhatsApp and _____ are very popular among voice calls and instant messaging fans.
- j. LinkedIn serves _____ who use social media for business reasons.
9. Write a balanced paragraph about the advantages and disadvantages of using social media. Your paragraph must contain the following elements:
- a topic sentence to introduce both aspects (advantages and disadvantages)
 - arguments to substantiate each aspect
 - examples to illustrate your arguments
 - a concluding sentence or restatement to end your paragraph

Useful language

expressing contrast	giving examples	connecting ideas and sentences
... but ...	For example, and ...
However, ...	For instance, ...	Not only ... but also ...
On the one hand, ...	To illustrate this, ...	Moreover, ...
On the other hand, ...	As an example, ...	Furthermore, ...
Nevertheless, ...		In addition, ...
Nonetheless, ...		Similarly, ...