

# 31 Interesting Ways\* to use Twitter in the Classroom



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# #1 - Gather real-world data

*Put a shout out to your Twitter network for them to tell you (and your students) something.*

*This could be:*

- *Location (e.g. for Geography)*
- *Temperature (e.g. for Science)*
- *An interesting historical fact*
- *Their opinion about something*
- *Anything, really!*

*This makes learning based on up-to-date information and real people (with a real story behind it!)*

The screenshot shows a Twitter profile for @dajbelshaw with 324 following, 833 followers, and 5,107 updates. The main content is a tweet asking for help with a school project: "What are you doing? My class is trying to find out the most famous historical events that people were taught at school. Can you help? :-)". Below the tweet are three replies: one from @bualumni about a Boston University alumni blog, one from @tombarrett about rewriting rules, and one from @air73 saying "agreed!". The right sidebar shows navigation options: Home, @Replies, Direct Messages (710), Favorites, Everyone, and Facebook.

*Doug Belshaw (@dajbelshaw)*

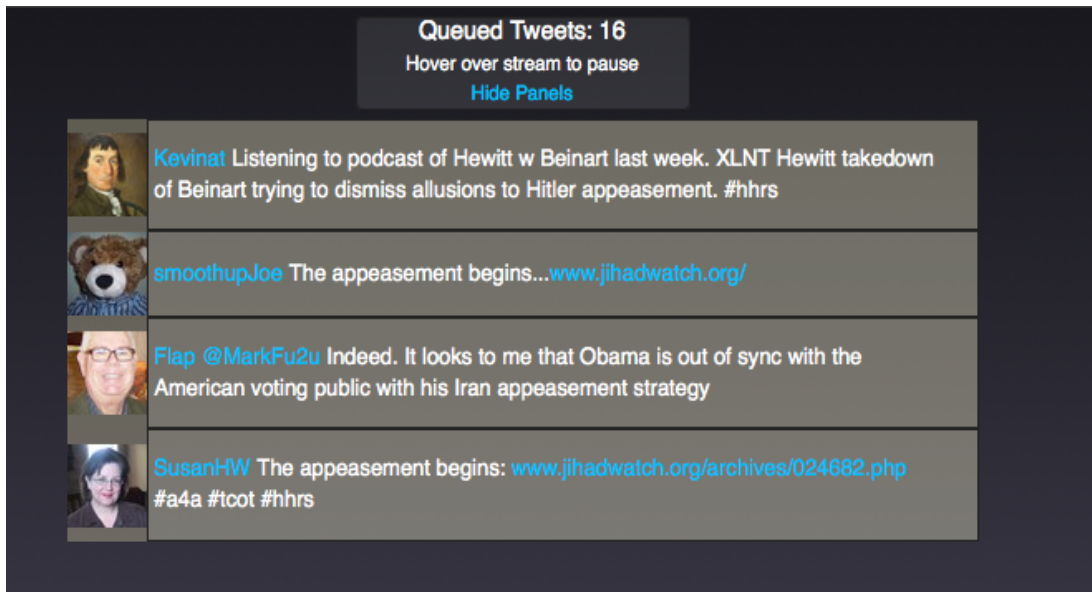
# #2 - Monitor / GeoTag the "Buzzwords"

*First...Use [www.twitterfall.com](http://www.twitterfall.com)*

- Type in a keyword ("communism", "appeasement", "poverty" - whatever)
- Then watch the results come pouring in using twitterfall!

*Then...use [www.twittermap.com](http://www.twittermap.com)*

- [www.twittermap.com](http://www.twittermap.com) allows you to GeoTag users and their posts
- You therefore get an idea of where certain topics are being discussed most...



Queued Tweets: 16  
Hover over stream to pause  
[Hide Panels](#)

**Kevin1** Listening to podcast of Hewitt w Beinart last week. XLNT Hewitt takedown of Beinart trying to dismiss allusions to Hitler appeasement. #hhrs

**smoothupJoe** The appeasement begins...[www.jihadwatch.org/](http://www.jihadwatch.org/)

**Flap @MarkFu2u** Indeed. It looks to me that Obama is out of sync with the American voting public with his Iran appeasement strategy

**SusanHW** The appeasement begins: [www.jihadwatch.org/archives/024682.php](http://www.jihadwatch.org/archives/024682.php)  
#a4a #tcot #hhrs



twittermap

Find:  [Update Your Location](#)  
[Twittervision](#)

Map Satellite Hybrid

**russeltarr** I wonder if my Year 9 historians would guess which Industrial Revolution heroes have been put onto stamps... <http://tinyurl.com/bna8e2>  
3 days ago in Toulouse, France

Russel Tarr ([@russeltarr](https://twitter.com/russeltarr))

# #3 - Summarise topics/views as tweets

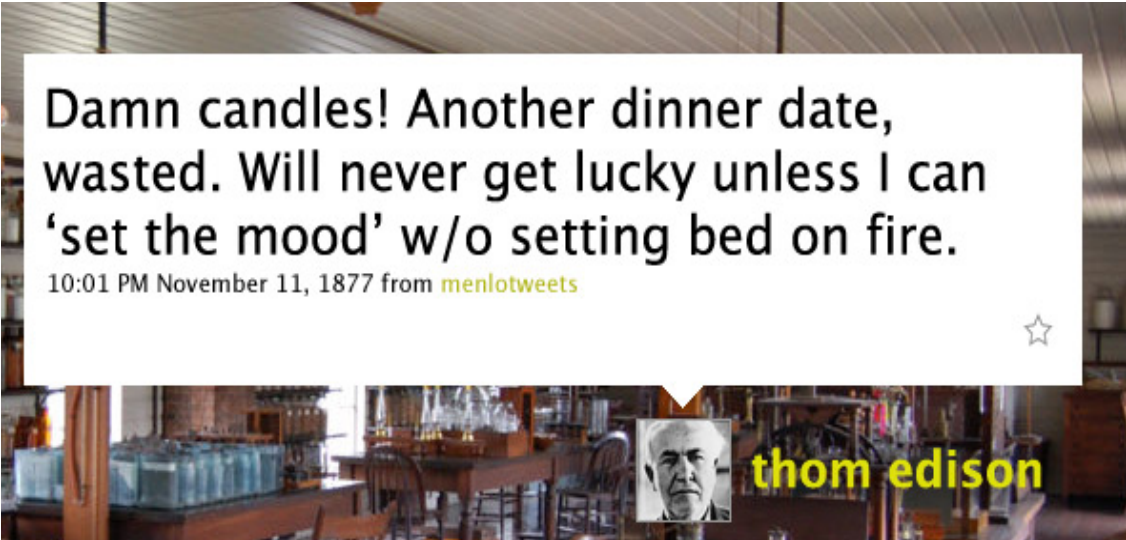
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***First...Use [www.historicaltweets.com](http://www.historicaltweets.com)***

- This gives some great ideas about how famous people might summarise their ideas / experiences as "Tweets" in 140 characters max!

***Then...students do the same!***

- Produce a Tweet dialogue between two opposing characters (e.g. King Harold and William the Conqueror) about a key issue...
- Summarise a topic / concept / viewpoint as a tweet; each student should be given a different one to focus on



Damn candles! Another dinner date, wasted. Will never get lucky unless I can 'set the mood' w/o setting bed on fire.

10:01 PM November 11, 1877 from [menlotweets](#)

The image shows a tweet overlaid on a background of a laboratory or workshop. The tweet text is: "Damn candles! Another dinner date, wasted. Will never get lucky unless I can 'set the mood' w/o setting bed on fire." Below the text is the timestamp "10:01 PM November 11, 1877 from menlotweets" and a star icon. At the bottom of the image, there is a small portrait of Thomas Edison and the text "thom edison" in yellow.

thom edison

Russel Tarr ([@russeltarr](https://twitter.com/russeltarr))

# #4 - Really simple one - tweetstory

## ***First...Choose your theme***

- Genre - Fairy Tale, Sports Story, Adventure etc.
- Give it a standard story opener and tweet this to your network
- Ask network to continue the story in tweets, collaborating with the previous tweets and following them via [www.twitterfall.com](http://www.twitterfall.com) or a #tag

## ***Then...students follow via twitterfall,choose the best ones and edit them into a coherent story***

- Great for editing skills, story structure etc.
- Where will your network take the story?

# #5 - Collate classroom views

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**Homework** (or netbooks or ICT room):

**First...set up new twitter account with name of topic or question**

- EG: Students discussing current economic climate might be: SaveOrSpend
- Ask pupils to tweet @SaveOrSpend which they think is the wisest thing to do with your hard earned cash, or Government taxes
- Any topic that has an open question to ask

**Then the twitter account collates the classes tweets in a web page...**

**<http://twitter.com/saveorspend>**  
(that's a dummy address so no need to URL it)

- Instant collaborative web page with contributors' identities included



**[@daibarnes](#)**





## #6 - Let parents follow what you are up to

Iain Hallahan (@don\_iain)

Set up a new Twitter account for your class - you will possibly want to 'protect' your updates. Invite parents to 'follow' you, and they can see what the class are up to from any computer (home, work, internet cafe...) at any time of the day or night. They might even tweet back now and again!



**IMSLewis** Our weather words today were cloudy, damp and overcast. Not a nice day!



**IMSLewis** After formal skills, diary and snack we had a fabulous drumming workshop!

*22 days ago from web*



**IMSLewis** We were doing measuring work with measuring jugs and millilitres this afternoon, then we designed our own tartans!

*16 days ago from web*

# # 7 - Find out where people are



Put up a tweet asking people to give you their location.

Class first estimate distance from school, then use an atlas to gauge distance.

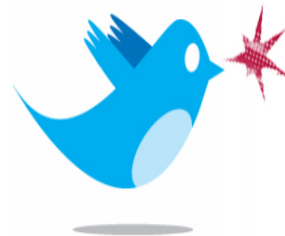
Then using Google Earth - can place mark where they are and find out distances.

Retweet results!

Benefits:

Gives class an immediate set of places and distances to research.

Interested to find out where people are and who they are!



[@dawnhallybone](#)



# #8 - Short but sweet

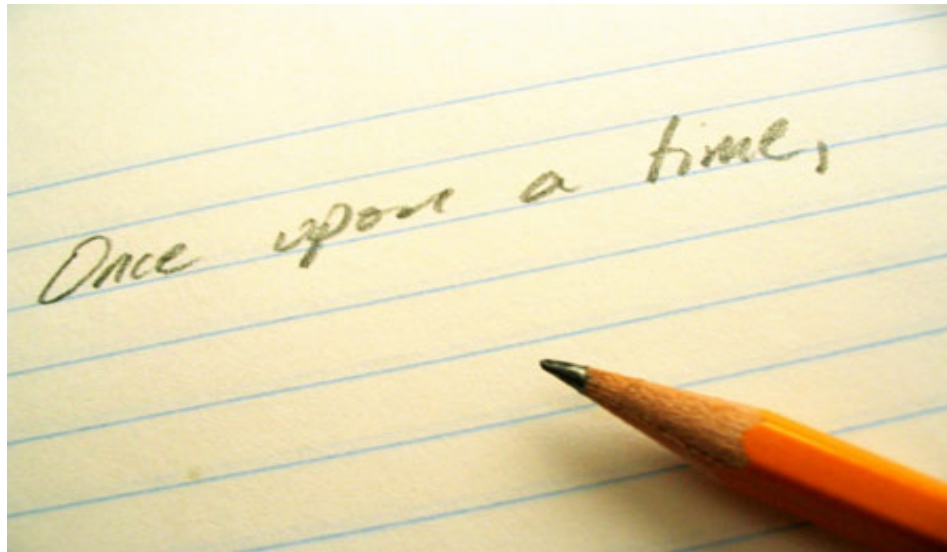
Give children individually the twitter 140 characters rule - they have to write story introduction, character description or whole story.

Results can then be posted onto twitter or via blogs



In groups tell children they are to play pass it on - but must do this in only twitter 'speak' 140 characters.

They then add to it around the group and can be shared in same way!



[@dawnhallybone](https://twitter.com/dawnhallybone)

# #9 - Twitter Poll



How do adult opinions differ from the views of the class?

Use a twitter poll to collect and graph opinions about a controversial issue.

<http://twtpoll.com/> \_

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[Noel Jenkins](#) with due respect to [Ian Usher](#)





#11 -

# Come together.....

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*Find someone in another class, school, country who is interested in the same topic you are. Following each other on Twitter, share information, resources and ideas. Help each other find answers or even suggest questions*

## **Example - Rain Forest**

- Primary class, primary teacher, class from special school, teacher (special), secondary class, secondary teacher and subject expert all linked via Twitter
- Sharing resources/learning with others is easy and context specific
- Primary/special pupils can tweet questions to secondary pupils who can either answer from prior knowledge or investigate. Subject expert able to make sure all is correct
- Twitter quiz set by secondary pupils as plenary activity for special/primary pupils



# #12 - Point of View and Character Development

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Based on a novel or short story...

- After a study of point of view and character development
- Students become a character and create a twitter account ex: @janeeyre, @rochester
- Students use their study of that character to create conversations around key events in the plot
- Would be even more interesting to focus on events and situations that are omitted from the text, but referred to, so the students are creating their own fiction based on their knowledge of the writer, the time period, and the characters

# #13 - GeoTweets



*Following in the footsteps of Tip #1 and #7*

- Introduce your class to the features of Google Earth by asking your Twitter network for a small piece of location info.
- Challenge your class to find the teachers who have replied.
- Try to gather some evidence that you have found them - name on football pitch, distinct shape of building - something to prove they have been found.
- Reply with this info.
- Use different Google Earth layers of information to help with the search.
- Gives a great real purpose to the use of Google Earth



**maggie** @tombarrett look at the intersection of Henderson Rd and N George Mason Drive for Barrett Elementary School & riptide 09:15 AM January 09, 2008 from web in reply to tombarrett ☆ 🔒



**Riptide\_Furse** @tombarrett 's class I'm actually down the road a bit from the Pentagon Lat. 38°52'23.70"N Long. 77° 6'40.52"W 08:59 AM January 09, 2008 from im in reply to tombarrett ☆ 🔒



**chrislehmman** @tombarrett Can you find 55 N. 22nd St. Philadelphia? We're just past the overpass. :) 08:53 AM January 09, 2008 from twitterrific in reply to tombarrett ☆



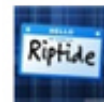
**shoemap** @tombarrett - Hi class. Can you find the Soo Locks in Michigan, USA? 08:47 AM January 09, 2008 from web in reply to tombarrett ☆



**dmcordell** @tombarrett Can you locate Fort Ann, New York? 08:38 AM January 09, 2008 from web in reply to tombarrett ☆ 🔒



**JLWagner** @tombarrett --- I am at Latitude: 333556N Longitude: 1171645W 05:27 AM January 09, 2008 from web in reply to tombarrett ☆



**Riptide\_Furse** @tombarrett Hi Mr. Barrett's class can you find the Pentagon in Arlington, VA 08:26 AM January 09, 2008 from im in reply to tombarrett ☆ 🔒

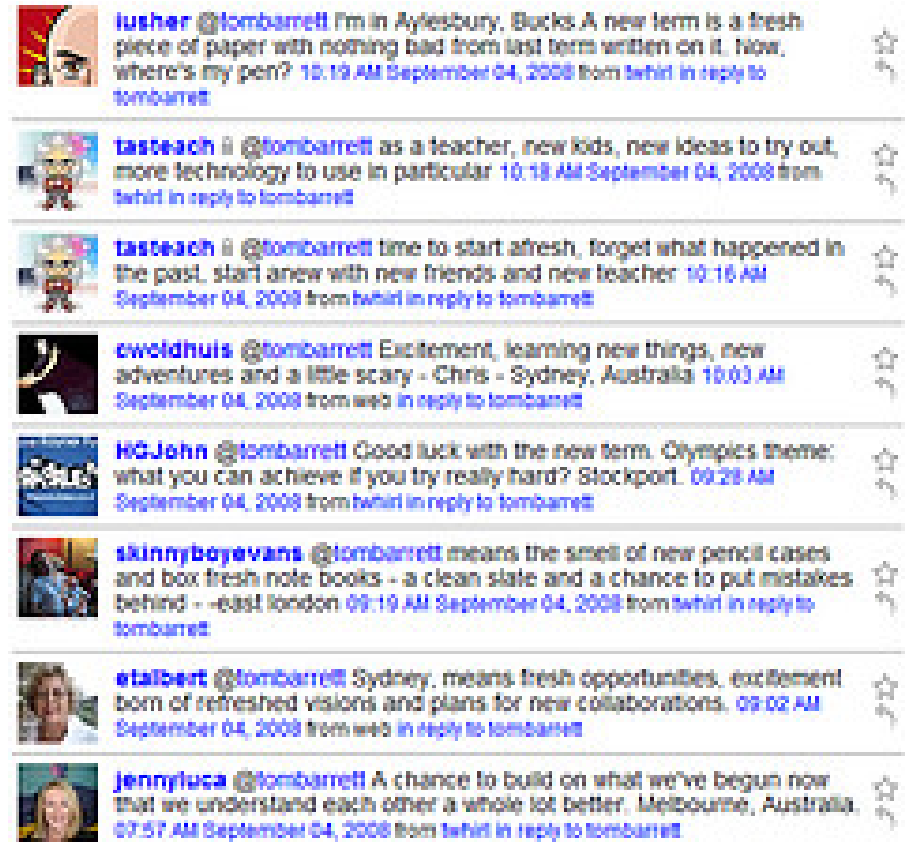


# #14 - Global Assembly

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- Ask you Twitter network to comment on local or national issues for a class or whole school assembly.
- In the past I have asked mine to comment on the question, "What does WATER means to them?" and "What does a new term mean to you?"
- With a global, if somewhat still limited, perspective we were able to talk about how world climate differences can influence such a commodity.
- Ask you network to comment on the issue you are discussing and to ensure they provide where they are.



[@tombarrett](https://twitter.com/tombarrett)

[Assembly blog post](#)

# #15 - Word Play

## **Games...**

Anagrams - post 8 letters and see how many new words can be formed?

*"What does it mean?"*

Use [twtpoll](#) to post definitions. Who can guess the correct meaning?

[@bookminder](#)

## **Post a Word and Guess...**

Synonyms?

Antonyms?

Homonyms?



## #16 - Twiddeo

Use <http://beta.twiddeo.com/>  
to upload videos from mobile  
phones to a



twitter #ashtag or @ccount

on a field trip or day out to the  
museum etc

# #17 - Communicate with experts

There are loads of experts on Twitter these days, and some are willing to talk to the kids. Find an author, a scientist, a local historian...

[NASA](#) has many twitter streams, as do [NASA Fellows](#) (teachers who work on NASA projects.) They're Twitter-friendly!



@turrean I am currently working out the bugs in the system Broadcasting at 2:10 would be good. I will try to be on in a few minutes 2 test

11:43 AM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox in reply to turrean

@turrean I found out that the MESSENGER spacecraft is the size of a Volkswagon

11:14 AM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox in reply to turrean

I just found out that I can video stream WWOOOOHOOOOO!!! Does anyone want to chat with me from my website? If so @ what time ?

11:13 AM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox

It's too bad you all cannot see everything I can see here. A lot of this work will not be available until the scientists publish their work

10:56 AM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox

@spidersensed Thanks I am trying to get things to you as fast as I find out about them. Is there anything you are interested in finding out

10:53 AM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox in reply to spidersensed

@porchdragon a 3rd grade will be brainstorming questions 4 u in a few minutes--hope you're ready! Anything u would like them 2 know?

new broadcast @ 2:10 make sure you use twitter to text me

1:59 PM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox

mercury is over emphasize the color amber/red on mercury

10:51 AM Oct 7th, 2008 from TwitterFox

[@turrean](#)

[@porchdragon](#)

# #18 - Use a Twitter widget for instant webpage updates.

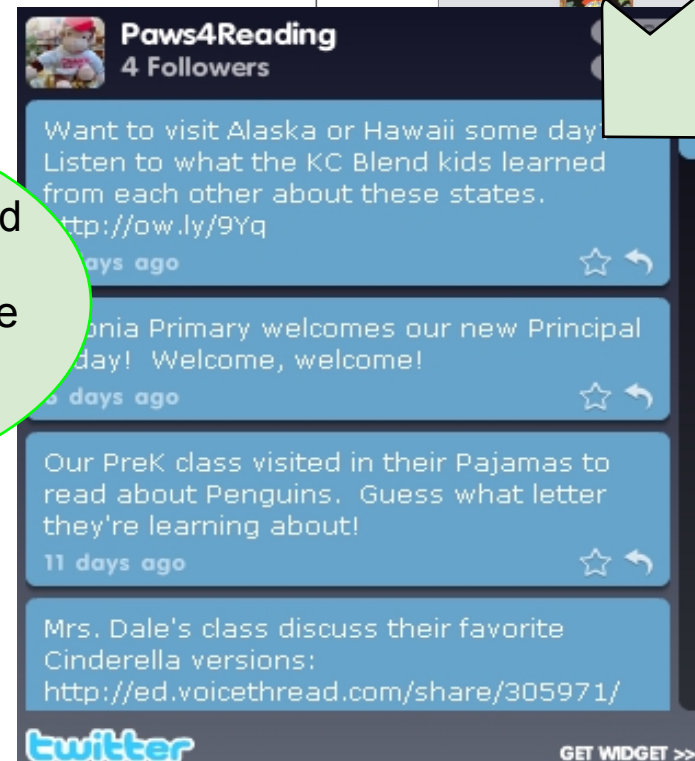
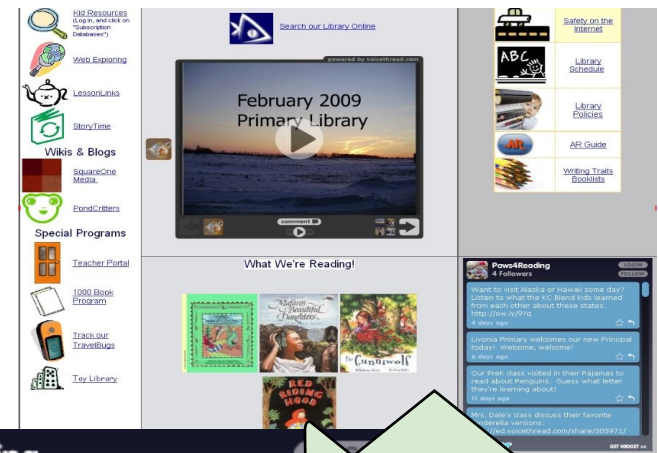
Teachers are often locked into using particular website builders.

Adding a [Twitter badge](#) means being able to add instant web updates any time, anywhere.

These updates can be viewed by everyone who visits your website--even parents who've never heard of Twitter.



[@turrean](#)





# #19 - Monitor the learning process

While they work on assignments, stimulate your students to tweet and reply about:

- stuff they learn
- difficulties they face
- tips they want to share
- great resources they find
- ...

In this way, Twitter replaces the students logbook

It's useful to the students: they become aware of their own learning process + it's a way of collaborative learning.

It's useful to the teacher: each students learning process becomes visible and can be evaluated.





# #20 - How Probable?

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**When learning about probability and the language of chance in mathematics, use your Twitter network to offer a real world response to your questions.**

- "What are the chances you will see a deer today?"
- "What are the chances it will snow where you are?"
- With a variety of people in different locations you will hopefully have a variety of different responses.
- I have used this successfully for a few years now in my maths lessons, and the different language used in replies provides a great teaching opportunity. From "50/50" to "Buckley's Mate" !
- Twitter replies could then be captured, added to a IWB notebook and placed on a probability scale or indeed a map of the origin, sparking further discussion about how this affects the probability of different events.



**tombarrett** Maths lesson-probability-pls tell my class a word or two to describe the probability THAT IT WILL SNOW TOMORROW WHERE YOU ARE. Location? 09:16 AM March 04, 2008 from [twhirl](#) ☆ 🗄



**jonesieboy** @tombarrett quite possible - maybe a 1 in 4 chance? East Lothian Scotland. 09:22 AM March 04, 2008 from web in reply to tombarrett ☆ ↻

# #21: Twalter-egos

Following a discussion with @tonycassidy on Enquiry in Geography, we thought about creating a fictional alter-ego in Twitter who would develop as a 'character' who had a back story.

After this had been developed, they could be 'introduced' to classes, who could follow, and do activities based on past tweets.

Created 3 characters. The most developed is @pensionerfrank

My farming character is being followed by Farmer's Weekly.

Blog post with details [HERE](#) .



**pensionerfrank**

time to put the kettle on, if I can find it ! Alice and I might wander down to the beach later...

4:34 PM Mar 10th from web

was also great to see Dennis again - back from Canada - good job

**Name** Frank Smithee  
**Location** Rotherham currently, East Coas  
**Bio** Pensioner. Retired three months ago and hoping to live by the East Coast.

0 following 4 followers 21 updates

Updates

Favorites

# #22 - Scavenger Hunt

- Have students find websites, pictures, or other online documents that fit a certain criteria related to your subject area.
  - For example, if you are studying China, you could have students locate a map of China before PRC was formed or a narrative account of the Tiananmen Square incident.
- Students then post links to Twitter, and once a resource has been posted, it can not be posted by another student/group.
- This could be used in conjunction with teaching research skills & information literacy and/or as a method for collecting resources.

# #23 - Track with Twitter

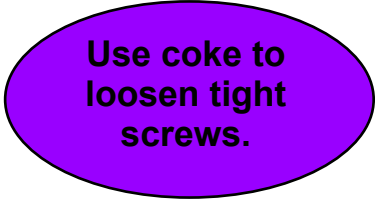


Twitter is the most brilliant trip-tracker. I used it last year on a 100km charity walk, so that those supporting and sponsoring could follow our journey, and am using it again for a school trip: [twitter.com/hadrianswall09](https://twitter.com/hadrianswall09)

It updates instantly, works from a mobile phone, and can also upload photographs that are geotagged, so parents of those pupils can be part of the trip, the rest of the school can watch developments, and those on the trip have a brilliant record of what they got up to!  
[@mrlockyer](https://twitter.com/mrlockyer)

# #24 - Teach bite-sized info

Twitter is perfect for teaching info which can be learned in any order and taught in small amounts.

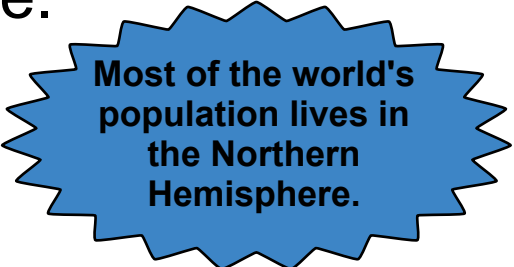


Use coke to loosen tight screws.

[Set up a Twitter account dedicated to teaching just one topic](#) - No class interaction, no links, just pure information.

This could raise your profile as an expert in your field. Your students could be your class or anyone anywhere. Plus, they can follow you for life.

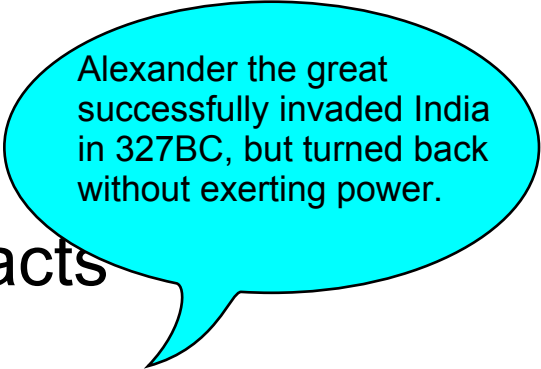
Angela Alcorn - [@smange](#)



Most of the world's population lives in the Northern Hemisphere.

Examples / ideas for dedicated education Tweets:

- Medical terminology
- Advanced English words
- Shakespeare quotes
- [@Frenchmot](#)
- Preschool activities
- DIY tips
- [@Cookbook](#)
- Study tips
- Geography
- Gardening
- Singing
- Historical facts
- Trivia
- Whatever you know!



Alexander the great successfully invaded India in 327BC, but turned back without exerting power.

# #25 - Twitter as a **Research Diary**



If you are a researcher, you may use twitter as a research diary for your daily classroom findings through:

- **sharing**
- **reflecting**
- **engaging**
- **inquiring &**
- **reporting**



By getting back to your tweets, you will definitely find invaluable accumulated **materials, links, notes, and reflections** that could contribute to your final research report.

Invite your **colleagues, other experts, or even your supervisors** to check your progress of '*what you are doing*' and to offer you instant advice & feedback if possible.

[@tweet4education](https://twitter.com/tweet4education)





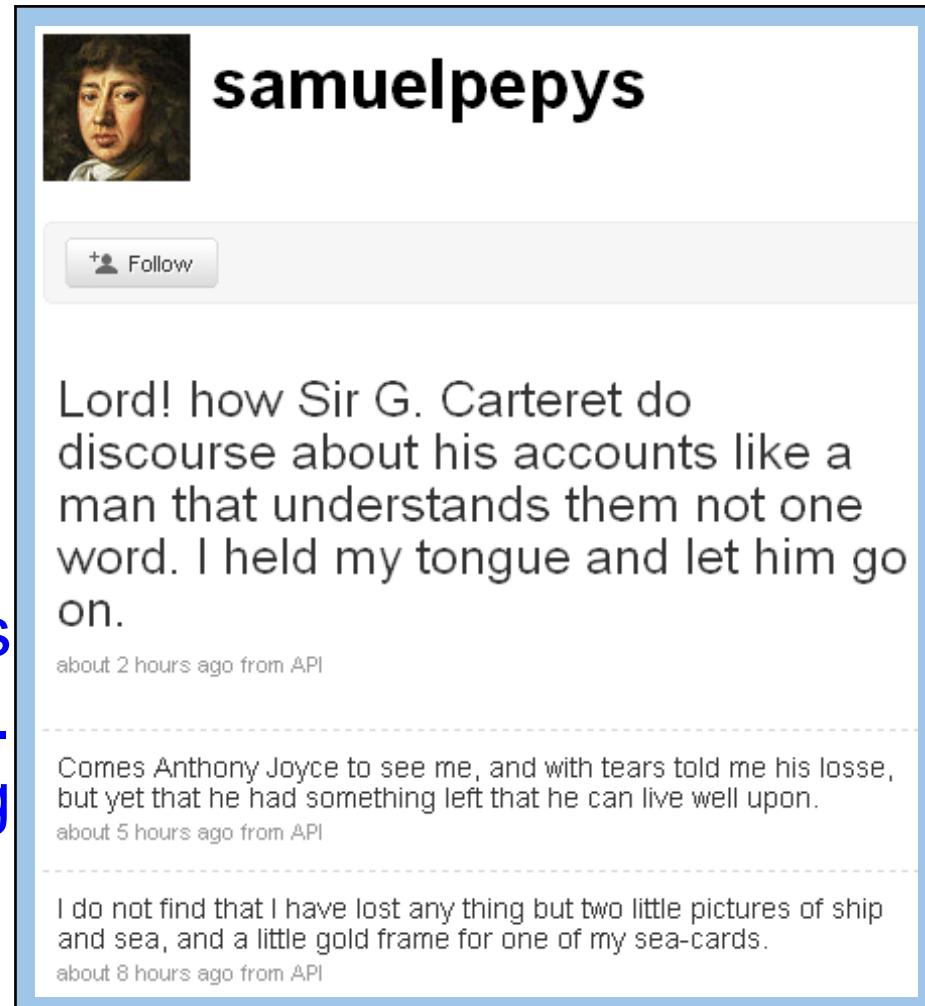
# #26 - Historical Figures

Invite your students or classes to generate a Twitter account for a historical figure.

For example Samuel Pepys has an account and has been explaining his experiences during the London fires. A hauntingly effective way of gaining insight.

This concept could be applied to any time period.

- What would an Egyptian Vizier report during the construction of the pyramids?
- A nobleman within the court of Henry VIII?
- Children during evacuation?



The image shows a simulated Twitter profile for 'samuelpepys'. It features a profile picture of Samuel Pepys, a 'Follow' button, and three tweets. The first tweet reads: 'Lord! how Sir G. Carteret do discourse about his accounts like a man that understands them not one word. I held my tongue and let him go on.' The second tweet reads: 'Comes Anthony Joyce to see me, and with tears told me his losse, but yet that he had something left that he can live well upon.' The third tweet reads: 'I do not find that I have lost any thing but two little pictures of ship and sea, and a little gold frame for one of my sea-cards.'

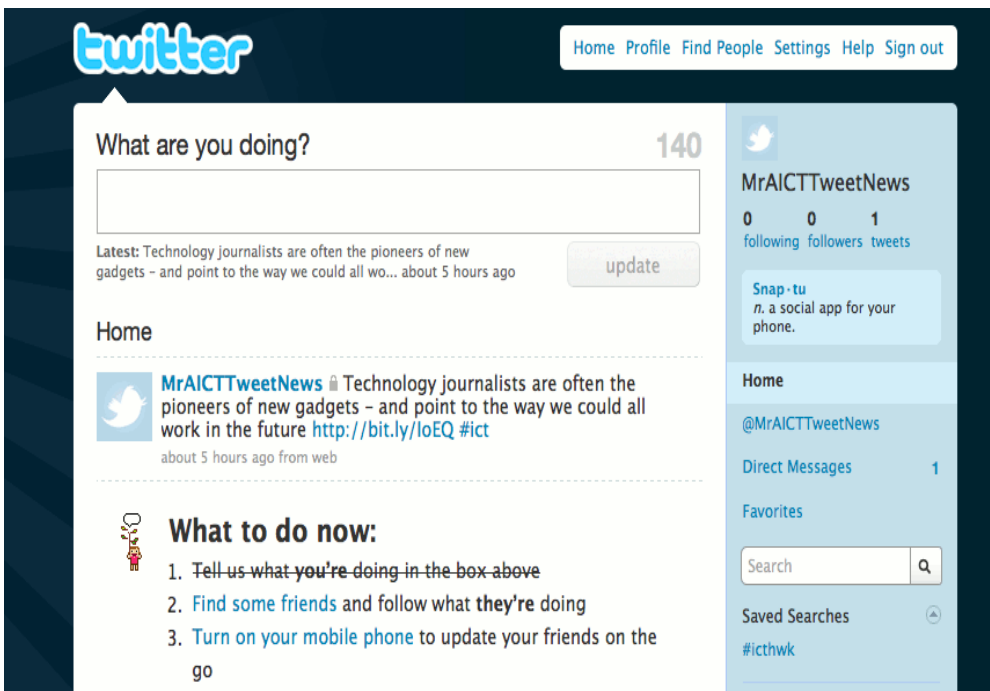
Historical recount published on the same date in history would be very powerful.

# #27 - Students tweeting current news events

Students use twitter to report real time ICT news events. As part of their A level coursework they have to assess the impact of ICT on society.

A teacher account - [MrAICTTweetNews](#) is followed but students who set up an account specifically for tweeting news accounts. They have to tweet at least once during a 7 day period, ensuring that no other pupil has tweeted the same topic. As they complete their coursework they review previous tweets.

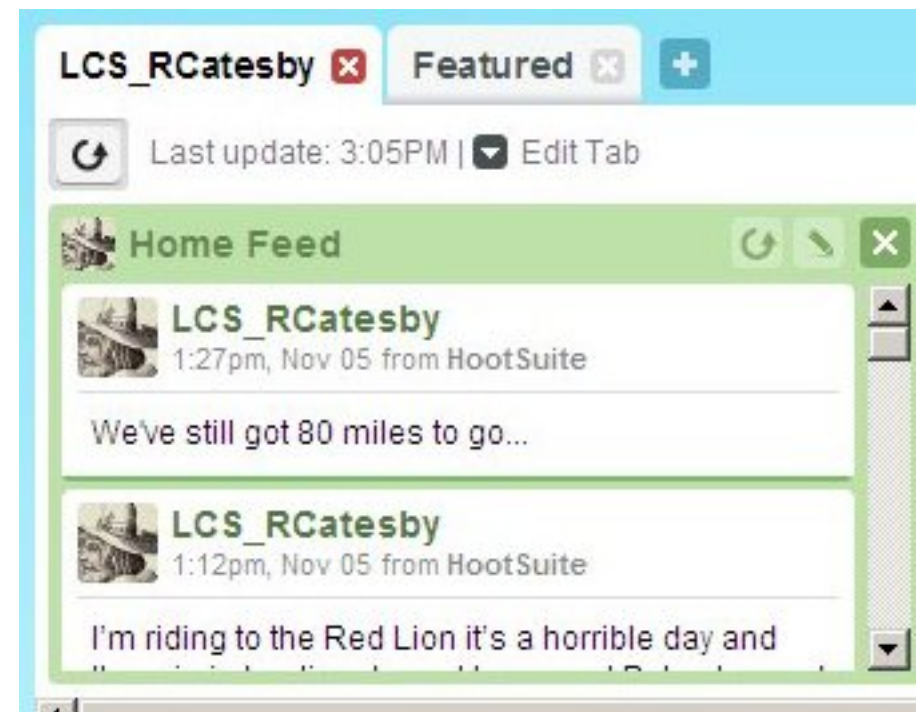
[@infernaldpart](#)



# #28 - Recreating History

Children could research and write the tweets for a historical character. We used [@LCS\\_RCatesby](#) to tell the story of Robert Catesby, Gunpowder Plot mastermind, after Guy Fawkes had been captured. [Hootsuite](#) was used to schedule the tweets to appear at a later date. [Wallwisher](#) was then used to receive feedback.

The children really enjoyed researching the topic and loved having an audience for their work. This could be repeated with other schools taking on other roles within the plot.



# #29 - Twits 'n' Tweets

We listened to the Twits audio book and after each chapter the class composed a tweet to describe the key events of the chapter they had heard.

We then collected the ideas together, discussed how hard it was (limiting the amount of characters is such a good thinking skill especially I find for boys) and then created our final class one which we posted.

The children loved the idea of me typing directly onto the page and then seeing it be published on the internet.

We extended our use throughout our book week.

Robert Drummond >> [my blog](#) >> [my school's blog](#)

# #30 - Multi-media Class Newspapers

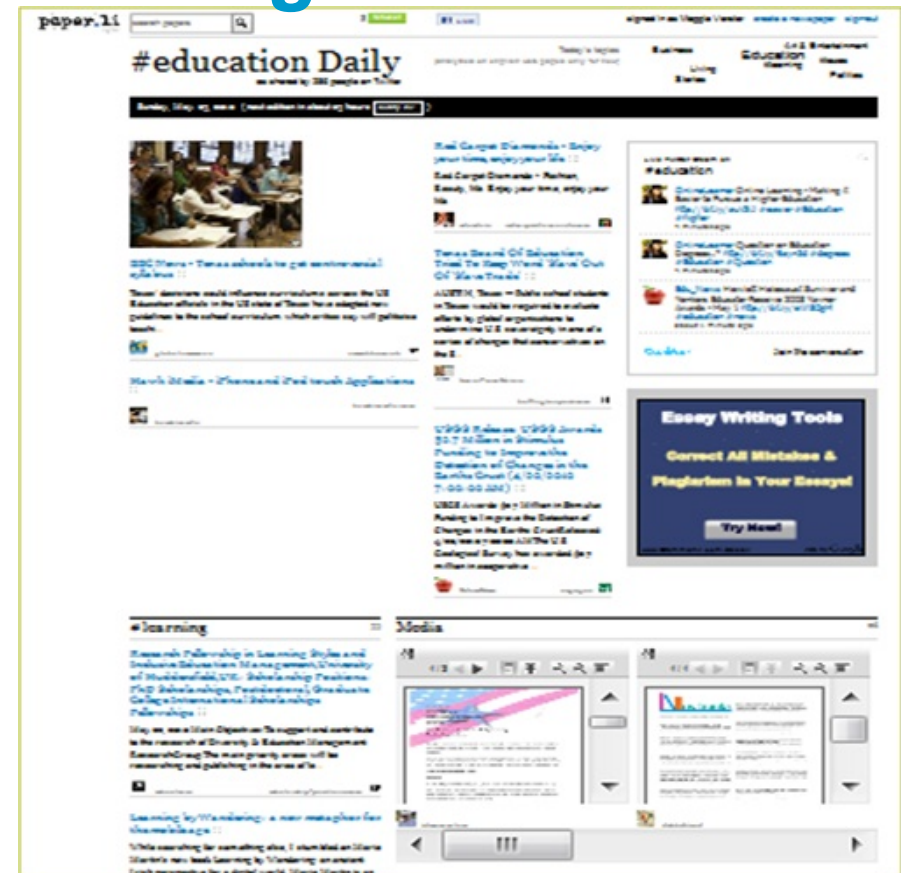
Create a class or project newsletter at [Paper.li](http://Paper.li) by:

- Simply creating either a specific hashtag # or (safer) a specific twitter account for the class/project.
- Going to [Paper.li](http://Paper.li) and creating the newspaper.

It will auto-publish a very glamorous multi-media newspaper from all the # tags or all the tweeps followed by the main twitter account and send it out to those who subscribe on an updated daily basis.



**Students shared links and tweets become professional looking articles**



# #31 - Revision challenges

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Create a list about a topic for an exam your children are revising for, then post a daily (they could be more than one a day) challenge in the form of a question, task, etc...

Then favour the best answers and give feedback in the form of more probing questions!

Pupils who get most favoures answers could win a prize at the end. Simple, but effective. My kids told me they learnt a lot from the tweets they exchanged with each other and me!



[@asober](#)



If you would like to:

- Contribute your ideas and tips to the presentation.
- Let me know how you have used the resource.
- Get in touch.

You can email me or I am @tombarrett on Twitter

If you add a tip (or even if you don't) please tweet about it and the link so more people can contribute.

I have created a page for all of the **Interesting Ways** presentations [on my blog](#).

The whole family in one place :-)



Image: *'Sharing'*

Thanks for helping  
*Tom Barrett*

Have you seen [Maths Maps](#) yet?