

Unit 2:

# Social Media Literacy: an introduction

## A Warm-up

1. Do you use social media for personal use, professional use, or educational use?
2. Which of these activities do you use social media for? (check ✓)  
 shopping       watching videos/listening to music       job hunting  
 getting news       playing video games       chatting with friends  
 dating       making new friends
3. What are the benefits and drawbacks of using social media to do these things?
4. What kind of information do you think is appropriate to share online, and what isn't?
5. How would you define *social media literacy*?

## B Vocabulary

### 1. Match the words from the Academic Word List with their definitions.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| a) expert (n)          | ___ a person who is very skillful or knows a lot about something |
| b) appropriately (adv) | ___ necessary; important   |
| c) beneficial (adj)    | ___ correctly; properly  |
| d) assist (v)          | ___ accepting what happens without being active                  |
| e) crucial (adj)       | ___ the conditions that surround something                       |
| f) environment (n)     | ___ good for something   |
| g) evaluate (v)        | ___ to judge or grade  |
| h) passive (adj)       | ___ help   |

### 2. Learn the different uses of these phrasal verbs.

1. Match the meaning of **pick up** with its use in the example sentences:

- to buy sth (informal)
- to meet s.o. with a car, in order to take them somewhere
- to become better; improve
- to answer a phone call
- to learn something, especially in an informal way
- to start doing something again

\_\_\_ Teacher: "Let's pick up our lesson where we finished last week."

\_\_\_ Can you pick me up at the airport when I come back from my trip?

\_\_\_ Mark picked up a little Thai while he was vacationing there.

\_\_\_ Business has been picking up since we started advertising on the Internet.

\_\_\_ I knew it was my ex-boyfriend calling, so I didn't pick up.

\_\_\_ I need to pick up some milk and eggs on the way home.

### 3. Personalization

- Do you know anyone who is an expert at something?
- Are you an active or passive student in class?
- What Internet site is most crucial for your life as a student? What site is most crucial for your social life?
- Can social media be beneficial to students? How?
- Have you ever picked up some English outside of school lessons?

## C While Reading

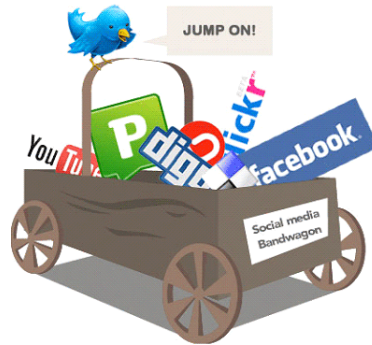
Complete the following exercises while reading the article on the next page.

- Fill in the blanks with the words from Vocabulary exercise 1.
- Find the phrasal verb *bring up* in the text. What is its meaning in this article? \_\_\_\_\_
- Find the phrasal verb *pick up* in the text. What is its meaning in this article? \_\_\_\_\_

# Social Media: The Five Literacies



You may have studied media literacy in high school or university. Media literacy is our ability to think critically about what we watch, read, or listen to. This media literacy is important of course, but as social media becomes a bigger part of our lives, we also need to pick up social media literacy skills. Knowing how to post on Twitter or Facebook is not social media literacy. Social media literacy is having the knowledge, skill and attitude to \_\_\_\_\_, and to judge, share and create useful content on the Internet.



These days, many employers use social media to check up on workers, so social media literacy is \_\_\_\_\_ for students to be ready for their careers after they finish school. According to Howard Rheingold, an American social media \_\_\_\_\_, social media literacy can be divided into five sub-literacies. We should think about all of these to manage our social media lives:

**1. Attention literacy:** Online attractions compete with the real world for our attention. Unfortunately, many Internet users have not learned how to divide their attention effectively. Sometimes, “multi-tasking” can be a useful skill, but at other times we need to give tasks (or other people) our complete attention.

**2. Participation literacy:** By posting our own content on the Internet, we become active citizens instead of \_\_\_\_\_ consumers of media. However, to do this responsibly, users should learn

how to use social media in a way that is \_\_\_\_\_ to others as well as to themselves.

**3. Collaboration literacy:** Doing things together gives us more power than doing things alone. Social media helps people cooperate in ways that were too difficult or expensive before the Internet. Knowing how to work together and \_\_\_\_\_ each other online is an important skill for a positive social media experience.

**4. Network awareness:** Social groups (networks) are an important part of being human. In the past there were limits on how many people we could include in our “networks”. With social media, those limits are gone. But who are you going to include in your networks, and what access do these people have to your personal information?

**5. Critical consumption:** This is the ability to decide what information we can trust. Social media doesn’t have traditional media fact-checking. Internet users must \_\_\_\_\_ the media they are consuming.

Developing these social media literacies can help modern users to benefit from the current revolution in communication. Print technology and literacy shaped the historical period we call “The Age of Enlightenment” in the 1700’s. These days, the new revolution is social media, and it is shaping the social and cultural \_\_\_\_\_ of the 21st century.

## Notes

literacy/literate

social networks

personal information

critical

crap detection

fact checking

Age of Enlightenment

get the most from

## D Check Your Understanding

Circle true (T) or false (F) for the following statements about the article.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Social media's role in our lives is growing.   | T / F |
| 2. Some companies check the social media accounts of people who apply for jobs.                 | T / F |
| 3. Social media users are generally passive Internet users.                                     | T / F |
| 4. These days there are more limits on the number of people we can have in our social networks. | T / F |
| 5. Printed media also had a big impact on the world when it was invented.                       | T / F |

## E What Do You Think?

How often do you use social media for these things? Circle your answers then ask a classmate for their answers.

### How often do you use social media for...?

...chatting with friends	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...shopping	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...checking restaurant reviews	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...getting news	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...sharing photos or videos	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...blogging	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...games	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...for school	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never
...(your idea)	every day	often	sometimes	rarely	never

### Further discussion

1. Which of the social media literacies does each of these rules represent?

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't keep Facebook friends who always make you angry or sad.

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't check your Twitter account while in a university class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't trust every Facebook post you read.

\_\_\_\_\_ Don't tweet something negative about a co-worker after having an argument with them.

\_\_\_\_\_ Learn how to use your networks to get things done.

2. Which of these literacies do you think is most important for young people today?

3. Which of these literacies do you think might be your "weak point" in social media literacy?

4. Do you think you are social media literate? Why or why not?