Twitter is a micro-blogging tool where users opt-in to receive and send extremely brief content -- or tweets -- with others. Or, in layman’s terms, it’s a way to share thoughts and ideas in 140 characters or fewer.

**Getting Started**

When you first register at twitter.com, you will choose a username (also known as your “Twitter handle”).

**The tweet**

The “tweet,” or messages used in Twitter, are limited to 140 characters. This creates a wonderful practice of being concise with the message you would like to convey.

**Interacting**

If you want to reference or “tweet at” another user, you simply use the @ symbol followed by the Twitter handle of the user. For example, @marcwais.

**Who to Follow?**

Twitter is not only a useful tool to connect with your friends and keep abreast of their daily activities. The true power of Twitter is in the viral dissemination of information. You can follow news organizations, celebrities (both movie stars and industry & thought leaders), and other organizations. You could follow the Chronicle of Higher Ed (@chronicle), NCAA News (@ncaa), and other NYU departments & personalities.

**Organizing your feed**

When you start to follow users who update a lot throughout the day, you might be overwhelmed with the sheer number of posts. You can organize the people you follow into lists and focus just on one group of users at a time. You can also use a tool like Tweetdeck, which is an application that allows you to group your feed into different columns (for example: friends, news, work, or whatever category you choose to create).

**Hashtags**

When there is a topic that you are tweeting a lot about, you can track all posts made by creating a hashtag (which is the # sign). For example, #nyudining would be an appropriate hashtag for tweets about NYU Dining. This encourages other users to tweet using your hashtag and also makes it easy to track the conversation. Events may have their own hashtag: #nyustrawberryfest, #nyuwelcomeweek, etc. Here is an example:
URL Shorteners
If you are including a link to further content, it could eat your 140 characters pretty fast. Instead, there are services like bit.ly and goo.gl (just type them into your address bar) and they will shorten the URL.

Frequency of Tweets
It may take some practice to find the “sweet spot” of how often to tweet so you are sharing pertinent information with those who follow you without overwhelming them. A good practice is to start small -- say, 2-4 posts a day -- and slowly increase to what feels natural, experimenting with the kinds of content you are sharing.

Live Tweeting
When at a conference, lecture, or event, it is easy to capture interesting insights by rapidly tweeting about them. Not only does this keep a record of your thoughts during the event, but also allows your followers to experience the event as well. Try to find out if there is a hashtag already associated with the event (e.g., #NASPA12, #FYREolympics, #FirstThursday) or feel free to create your own! Utilizing a live-tweet client like tweetchat.com will automatically add the hashtag & let you engage with others live-tweeting as well.

Twitter Chats
Groups of people looking to have a conversation about a specific topic at a specific time could host or join a Twitter chat. For example, #SACChat is a chat about Student Affairs which takes place every Thursday from 1-2pm. A moderator asks questions in the format Q1, Q2, Q3, and so on. Then you can reply with your answer in the same format. This is a great source of knowledge, resources, and new connections.

Abbreviations
Often on Twitter you might see strange abbreviations. Some of the more common abbreviations are: RT -- ReTweet, used to RT someone else’s tweet; MT -- Modified Tweet, used when you want to ReTweet, but need more character space to comment; FT -- Final Thought, used mostly in Twitter Chats, it is the last tweet about a subject; cc -- carbon copy, used the same way you would “cc” someone on an email.