

# Oversharing

“Think Before You Post”

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Social media sites exist so that you can share ideas, comments, photos, videos and links with people who aren't sitting next to you. Some social media sites are for sharing with a select group of friends and others let you post publicly. Sharing things can be fun. You learn things, and it can be a great way to connect with people. But beware of the pitfalls of oversharing.

Notes

Whenever you reveal an inappropriate amount of detail about your personal life, you are oversharing. People have different opinions about what is an “appropriate” or “inappropriate” amount of detail. You can avoid oversharing just by taking a few seconds to reflect on what you are about to post and why. What are your motivations? What would you think if you saw someone post the same thing? If you're the only person gaining anything from a post, then it's not “social,” it's selfish.

2. Your digital footprint is a record of all your online activity, and it doesn't go away. Many websites keep track of your posts, edits and other online behaviors. Even if you delete a Facebook photo or a tweet, it may still exist on the internet. So make sure that the stuff you post online won't come back to haunt you!

Notes

3. It's easy to be cruel online because you don't have to witness the reaction of the person you are being cruel to. But it doesn't hurt any less when you are on the receiving end. Tone of voice and body language do a lot when it comes to communicating, so what is intended as a joke might not come across as a joke when it's sent online. So be kind online! There have been many stories in the news recently about online bullying. It can be very harmful and have dangerous consequences.

Notes

That's not to say you can't offer criticism. Websites like Yelp invite users to leave feedback about goods and services, and sometimes those goods and services aren't very good. When writing reviews about a store or purchase, make it constructive. Constructive criticism is meant to offer ideas for improvement. Don't just be mean.

4. Sometimes really good things happen to you, and you want to let people know about it. Excited that you got a summer job at a restaurant? Tell the world, you worked hard and you deserve recognition. But use your judgement about what is appropriate to share and what's not. People don't need to know that you got into every one of the colleges you applied to. Your friends who didn't might feel bad, and it will seem like bragging. Selfies are another example of a type of post that can easily come across as vain and narcissistic. In Greek mythology, a hunter named Narcissus sees his reflection in a pool of water. He finds his own image so attractive that he can't look away, and he dies. The moral of the story? It's not good to be too interested in the way you look and come across as self-obsessed.

Notes

5. Some personal details just shouldn't be online. Here's the shortlist: Bathroom activity, specific details about a sickness, bodily functions in general and anything gruesome or grotesque.

Notes

While your mom might enjoy up-to-the-minute updates about your whereabouts and activities, most of your online friends don't care. Select only truly interesting information to share online to better capture your audience's attention. A post about the litter of 10 puppies your family's dog just birthed might get missed if it's mixed in with 30 posts about your morning routine.

If you're lucky enough to be in a healthy, happy relationship, be picky about what you post.

Constant couple selfies and posts about your boyfriend or girlfriend might annoy your friends and make some single people uncomfortable. You can enjoy private moments privately.

6. Cryptic cliffhangers are vague posts that reveal that something important is happening in your life, but don't provide details. It's like announcing, "You would not believe what just happened to me!" and then not continuing with the story. If you want to share something, don't tease people. It's frustrating and annoying. Sometimes people post "cryptic cliffhangers" because they want to talk about something they might feel embarrassed or sad about, but aren't sure how to.

Notes

Nobody likes to hear a string of complaints. It's just a downer! So try not to bring down other people because you are unhappy. Instead be proactive and see how you can improve a situation, and try to maintain a positive mental attitude. If your complaints are serious, then take serious steps to resolve them. There are many online support groups where you can talk anonymously. And there's always friends IRL. That's "in real life."

7. Here's a good test before you make a new post. Ask yourself: "Would it be OK if my grandma saw this? What about a future employer?" If the answers are no, it's something you should reconsider posting. In fact, some employers google the names of applicants. An inappropriate photo or tweet could mean you don't get that job.

You should always make sure you adjust your privacy settings so that your audience is limited. Different social media websites have different privacy settings, so do a little research so that you know just how private—or public—your posts are.