



Cawangan Kedah  
Kampus Sungai Petani

Faculty of Administrative  
Science and Policy Studies

# i-SPIKE 2021

*Leading An Artificial Innovation In Knowledge, Education And Design*

## **i-SPIKE 2021 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION & SYMPOSIUM E-PROCEEDINGS**

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## TWEET IT! ESL WRITING ACTIVITY MODULE USING TWITTER

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### ABSTRACT

There is a demand to transform the whole teaching and learning experience in accommodating the needs of the students from the younger generation who are more familiar with the advanced technology in the present days. When it comes to learning English as a second language, many would find learning it in a common classroom setting with a fixed syllabus to be challenging and less effective as there is a tendency to make the learning process an isolated experience from the real world. With the utilisation of one of the popular social networking sites, Twitter, the learning of English writing could be transformed into a more interactive and relatable one to these young generations. Twitter has a lot of facilitative features for engaging interactions among users, along with simplicity as its main highlight of the site. Available on both the website and mobile application, engaging with students through Twitter would only require simple steps into the application to begin with. The 'TWEET IT!' highlights the need to improve ESL learners' ability to improve their argumentative skills. This is a crucial element in writing as the 'TWEET IT!' ESL Writing Activity module provides a guideline to use Twitter for ESL writing activity, with 14 argumentative topics from easy to advance level. These topics are comprised of general knowledge, current issues, and relevant discussion prompts. The module aims for a duration of 14 weeks (one semester), which is suitable for the target ESL learners in higher learning institutions. By fully utilising this module, it is expected that ESL learners would be able to improve their argumentative skills, enhance their vocabulary skills as well as increase their confidence to interact with others using the English language correctly.

**Keywords:** ESL, writing, twitter, language learning tools

### INTRODUCTION

In tandem with the advancement of technology, many aspects of life have shifted from traditional approaches to more advanced, interactive ones. The Internet, especially, has become a prominent part of our younger generation's lives especially those who are Generation Z (Taskiran, Gumusoglu & Aydin, 2018). Social media or social networking sites (SNS) are one of the services on the Internet which has gained tremendous popularity over the years. SNS are known as the online platform for people who want to build social relationships with people of similar interests, background, or connection (Meishar-Tal & Pieterse, 2017).

Among the many sites for SNS, Twitter is one of the most popular networking sites which allow users to connect with people globally and discuss diverse topics across the platform. Within 280 characters per posting, which is also known as 'tweet', users can express their thoughts and opinion to their 'followers'. Besides its social features that allow users to connect with English speaking users, the character limit feature is an element which can be used to encourage creative communications as users are more likely to concentrate on their main point

when posting on Twitter (Allam & Elyas, 2017). Many educators find this feature of Twitter something beneficial especially in terms of language learning. When it comes to teaching and learning writing, several studies found that the usage of Twitter in the helped students to perform better in writing and feel less restricted in using the language (Ahmad, 2015, Bonnah & Donellan, 2017). Another study done in the following year (Bozkurt et al, 2016) also stated that the Twitter platform enhances creative writing among students. Through a creative writing competition on Twitter, students are more motivated to be creative in selecting vocabulary to write. Taskiran *et al* (2018) conducted a study in which students would respond to argumentative topics on Twitter as an extracurricular activity for 4 weeks, and it was found that their language learning experience improved in terms of expressing and communicating in English through writing. Local studies who explored the use of Twitter in ESL writing classes also revealed that students find this platform useful in improving their writing skills (Arshad, 2018; Azlan & Yunus, 2020).

There are many promising possibilities of using Twitter as an effective tool in English language learning especially in writing. Hence, this product proposes an English as a Second Language (ESL) writing activity module for a 14-week lesson.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This ‘Tweet It!’ ESL writing activity module consists of 14-week duration of activity plans which incorporate the use of Twitter features to elicit interactive discussion and feedbacks from students. Instructors can use the module as either in-class activity or extra-curricular activities for continuous learning experience.

The module provides a list of argumentative topics which would prompt students to respond argumentatively. Argumentative writing is an important skill in terms of ESL writing and is considered a critical lifelong skill in forming learners’ judgments and beliefs (Jonassen & Kim, 2010). Approaching argumentative topics on a more informal setting like Twitter would provide an authentic learning experience for students as they would be able to prolong the language learning experience for a lifelong skill in expressing their thoughts and opinions with maturity (Blattner & Dalola, 2018). This proposed module targets undergraduate ESL learners in higher learning institutions, which shall be carried out within the duration of one semester (14 weeks). The argumentative topics are listed from easy and entertaining topics to serious and controversial ones towards the end of the semester.

**Table 1.** The Module

Week	Topics
1	Would you rather travel back to the past, or jump into the future?
2	It is okay to judge an actual book by its cover.
3	The breakfast cereal is a scam. What do you think?
4	Travelling in space for everyone will become something feasible soon.
5	“Just do what you love” is not a good advice.
6	Idolising celebrities is harmful to young adults. Do you agree?



7	Ignorance is a blessing. Do you agree?
8	The authorities are the ones to blame for the global climate change. Discuss.
9	The learning process is more important than the result. Do you agree?
10	Bullfighting should be made illegal everywhere.
11	Strict parents have well-behaved children. Discuss.
12	Should criminals get second chances? Why?
13	The normalization of victim-blaming is apparent in our society. Discuss.
14	Being a YouTuber is a profession many would opt for in the future. Discuss.

The following are the necessary guidelines for both instructors and students. A visualized guide is provided in the attached document (Appendix A) as well as in the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/tweet-it-esl>).

#### **Guide for Instructors:**

1. The instructor would set up a Twitter account and act as the moderator.
2. Every week, the instructor will post a tweet containing the topic. It is encouraged to include a unique hashtag (written with a # symbol) at the end of the tweet to index the keyword on Twitter.
3. Instructors will then interact with the replies from students under the topic and encourage interaction among the students for a fruitful discussion.
4. Encourage the students to share the tweet by 'retweeting' to include more genuine responses from people outside the class.
5. Encourage students to 'like', 'retweet' and 'quote' their classmates' statements that they agree with the most, as a visual representation of agreement to the proposed reasons.

#### **Guide for Students:**

1. Students should have a twitter account and follow the moderator's (instructor's) Twitter account.
2. Every week, the students will log on to Twitter and respond to the weekly topic posted by the instructor. Every reply should include the same unique hashtag, so it is easy to track responses from the particular group of students.
3. Students shall respond to the replies under the topic as well, whether they agree or disagree with them. They can use the 'like', 'retweet' and 'quote' feature of Twitter.

#### **Alternatives:**

4. For advanced ESL learners, instructors can divide the class into two groups: opposing and proposing team for a balanced discussion.
5. A Twitter poll can be created before the discussion topic is posted.
6. Instructors can also turn the discussion into a competitive one, where responses with the most replies, likes and retweets to win the argument.

This activity should be carried out weekly basis, and the discussion should be opened until the end of the week. The instructor will be looking through the replies and can also refer to the indexed posts by navigating through the hash tags used for the class.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Through the interaction on Twitter, it is expected that students will be able to express their thoughts without being restricted by the environment of a classroom. The topics and responses obtained from this activity on Twitter can be carried forward into the class session to expand it into essay writing, provided that everyone has contributed to the discussion so that each ESL learners have gained background knowledge of the topic. From the activity, students shall have enhanced their vocabulary skills, knowledge of a certain topic, and the ability to justify their opinions during arguments.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, Twitter is an effective language learning tool which allows ESL learners to interact outside the classroom setting. The limitation of words on Twitter no longer poses as a barrier, but a door to creativity and challenges to these learners to improve on their message delivery and vocabulary skills. Teachers and language instructors should incorporate the usage of Twitter in the writing activity of their learners to enhance the learning experience and improve students' writing performance.

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## Appendix A

### The Module Pages

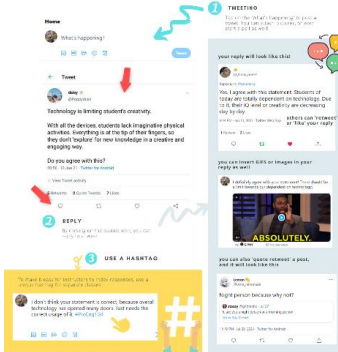
### TWEET IT!

#### ESL WRITING ACTIVITY MODULE

**INTRODUCTION**

This module is designed to help students develop their writing skills by using social media as a platform for discussion and debate. The module is divided into two parts: a writing activity and a discussion activity. The writing activity is designed to help students develop their writing skills by using social media as a platform for discussion and debate. The discussion activity is designed to help students develop their discussion skills by using social media as a platform for discussion and debate.

#### FEATURES OF TWITTER



1. **TWEETING**

2. **REPLY**

3. **USE A HASHTAG**

### TWEET IT!

#### ESL WRITING ACTIVITY MODULE

• 140 characters (including spaces)  
• 100 photos (up to 5MB)  
• 100 videos (up to 10MB)

#### GUIDELINES FOR INSTRUCTORS

- The instructor would set up a Twitter account and act as the moderator.
- Every week, the instructor will post a tweet containing the topic. It is encouraged to include a unique hashtag (written with #) at the end of the tweet to make the response on Twitter.
- Instructors will then interact with the replies from students under the topic.
- Encourage the students to share the tweet by 'retweeting' to include more positive responses from people outside the class.
- Ask students to 'like', 'retweet' and 'reply' their classroom statements that they agree with the most, as a visual representation of agreement in the proposed replies.

#### GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

- Students should have a Twitter account and follow the instructor's Twitter account.
- Every week, the students will log on to Twitter and respond to the weekly topic posted by the instructor. Every reply should include the same unique hashtag, so it is easy to track responses from the particular group of students.
- Students don't need to be registered under the topic as well, whether they agree or disagree with them. They can use the 'like', 'retweet' and 'reply' features of Twitter.

#### OPTIONS

#### ALTERNATIVES

- For advanced ESL learners, instructors can divide the class into two groups: reporting and preparing team for a featured discussion.
- A Twitter poll can be created before the discussion topic is posted.
- Instructors can also turn the discussion into a competitive one, where responses with the most replies, likes and retweets to win the argument.

### TWEET IT!

#### ESL WRITING ACTIVITY MODULE

Weekly assignment topics

#### WEEK 1

Would you rather travel back to the past, or jump into the future? Why?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 2

It is okay to judge an actual book by its cover. Do you agree?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 3

The breakfast cereal is a scam. What do you think about this?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 4

Travelling in space for everyone will become something feasible soon. Do you agree with this?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 5

"Just do what you love" is not a good advice. Do you agree?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

### TWEET IT!

#### ESL WRITING ACTIVITY MODULE

Weekly assignment topics

#### WEEK 6

Idolising celebrities is harmful to young adults. Do you agree?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 7

Ignorance is a blessing. Do you agree?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 8

The authorities are the ones to blame for the global climate change. Discuss.

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 9

The learning process is more important than the result. Do you agree?

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 10

Bullfighting should be made illegal everywhere.

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

### TWEET IT!

#### ESL WRITING ACTIVITY MODULE

Weekly assignment topics

#### WEEK 11

Strict parents have well-behaved children. Discuss.

Advanced level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 12

Should criminals get second chances? Why?

Advanced level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 13

The normalization of victim-blaming is apparent in our society. Discuss.

Advanced level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

#### WEEK 14

Being a YouTuber is a profession many would opt for in the future. Discuss.

Intermediate level  
writing, opinion, self-expression

Module designed & developed by:



Link: <https://tinyurl.com/tweet-it-esl>



Cawangan Kedah  
Kampus Sungai Petani

Faculty of Administrative  
Science and Policy Studies

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