In the first of three blogs I’m going to share with you why I use Twitter to communicate with students, and the different ways in which Twitter can be used as an academic resource. But it’s probably best if we start off with a simple guide as to how to set up a Twitter account. Let’s go.

**Step 1**

Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and click on the button in the top right that says ‘Sign up’.

**Step 2**

A page pops up asking three questions: Your full name, email address and password. Pretty easy, so far…

**Step 3**

It asks you to enter your phone number. This is so you can retrieve your account if your email account gets hacked. But it’s not compulsory. Click on the blue ‘skip’ button if you feel the shadow of big data looming.

**Step 4**

This is the difficult one. You’ve got to come up with a username that hasn’t been used before. Don’t dwell on it too much. It can be changed later on. Just think about your intended audience. It’s probably not a good idea to call yourself bumsucker55 if you’re intending to use this profile for work.

**Step 5**

Congratulations, you’re in! Now it asks what you’re interested in. This is just an algorithm attempting to profile you and is not compulsory. Click continue when done. Or skip.

**Step 6**

Want to find friends and see who they follow? If you do, import your contacts from Gmail or Outlook by clicking on the relevant button. This is the point where you discover the Professor of English has the username of bumsucker54. Click ‘no thanks’ if you’re feeling unsociable and don’t want to follow people in your email address book.

**Step 7**

More algorithms. Two lists are generated on the screen. One is suggestions of people to follow based on your interests in step 5. The other is organisations and people based on your location. That’s right folks, Twitter knows where you are already and you haven’t even tweeted yet. Give the conspiracy theories a night off and celebrate making it through to the profile page.

**Profile Page**

Now it’s time to put a bit of slap on your home page and cement your online profile.

**Step 1**

Click on the photo icon where your profile name is (@bumsucker55). This is a small box in the top left. Upload an image that conveys who you are. I have a suitcase for my @MemoryTheatre account because it’s about a travelling literature project. Perhaps you just like rabbits. Either way it doesn’t matter. These images can be changed whenever you like.

**Step 2**

When you’ve done this an ‘Introduce yourself’ box will pop up. This is your biog, an entire life distilled in 140 characters: I am a Professor of English at NTU. I like reading. That’s it. [www.profreaderntu.com](http://www.profreaderntu.com) Click save when done.

**Step 3**

Now Twitter wants to know your birthday. Skip if you want to keep this private or, most likely, you’re in denial that you’re 40+

**Step 4**

Where do you live? Not your house address, the city or region. This is social media. It’s trying to connect you and be social. This isn’t the NSA.

That’s it! There are other things you can do but life is short. Now you just need to figure out how to tweet. Good luck.

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