

# Media Literacy for Parents

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## Media Literacy 101: People They Might Meet

 Meta + **NAMLE** National  
Association  
for  
Media  
Literacy

# People They Might Meet

Millions and millions of people inhabit the social media spaces where we connect, share, learn and create.



But don't be intimidated—the people your teens might meet online often fall into specific roles and relationships that can help us understand who they are and how they might interact with us.

The people we meet online have their own unique purposes for using social media. From influencers to creators, friends to followers, and advertisers to activists, knowing the roles and personas common in social media communities can help you understand the digital ecosystem in which your teens engage and can help you recognize and analyze the media messages encountered through these relationships.



Learn more: [meta.com/familycenter](https://meta.com/familycenter)

# Flex Your Knowledge

## Social Media Roles

**Content Creators** — Social media can be an incredibly creative space where people share art, music, writing, games, fashion, food, decor and more. Creators are people who like to document their creative process using their online platforms and often also sell or promote their work. Creator accounts can be a great place to learn new skills or techniques related to a hobby or passion.

**Activists** — Social media offers unique, efficient ways to connect people around causes and issues. People interested in supporting a cause or joining a movement often turn to social media communities to find like-minded individuals or to identify ways to contribute. Activists leverage social media's digital connections in various ways: to raise awareness for a cause, to organize advocacy efforts such as marches or demonstrations, and to fundraise.

**Friends** — Your teen undoubtedly has friends they connect with via their social media accounts. These close connections could also be family members or classmates. Teens also often develop friendships through social media that are based on shared interests and mutual connections. A “friend” on social media is someone your teen is connected with online, even if they haven't yet met in real life. While it might feel strange to many adults to think of the term “friend” as a person you've never met, this kind of connection is typical for teen social media users.

**Followers** — Followers are people who choose to see (and are given access to) all of the content posted through another user's social media account in order to stay connected and regularly receive content or updates from that account. Followers might even receive an automated notification when certain accounts share new content. Exactly who “follows” your teen on social media will be a result of their privacy and security settings, the platform they are using, and their own preferences for who they decide to connect with. Depending on your teen's security and privacy settings, people may be able to see content they post without being an official follower.

**Influencers/Creators** — Influencers are social media users who have a wide following because they have developed expertise, credibility, and/or likeability regarding the content they post. Influencers might also call themselves “content creators” because they create and post content to keep their community of followers engaged. In some cases, influencers may monetize their social media accounts. Because influencers have such a wide reach and their audience tends to value their opinion, brands will often pay influencers to promote products and services that align with the influencer's content and reputation. They are often known for being ahead of the trends, for providing inspiring content, or for documenting unique or creative aspects of their lives.

**Advertisers** — Just like on television or radio, advertisers can pay for space online. These advertisers are paying to have their media messages be seen by certain demographics. This means your teen might encounter video, audio or visual ads.

# Talk It Out

- ➔ **Guide the discussion:** Building healthy relationships with your teens around social media requires open-minded discussion that is aimed first at understanding and learning about their online worlds.

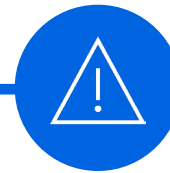
Consider these starting points for conversation:



Get a sense of what types of influencers/creators your teen connects with online. What are they learning from these influencers/creators? What do they like about their content and social media presence?



Similarly, find out what kind of creators your teen likes to follow on social media. Do these creators share hobbies or interests your teen would also like to experience? How could they take their online interests and transfer them to-in person creative experiences? Is your teen creative in a way they would like to share with their own online communities? What would that look like for them?



Ask your teen about the social and political issues they see discussed online. What kind of activism do they see online related to the causes they care about? How does connecting with activists over shared issues inspire them? What concerns do they have about how those activists might communicate their messages or coordinate in-person action?

# Action Steps



**Pick a hobby or interest of your own that you'd like to learn more about,** and ask your teen for help finding creators online from whom you can learn and be inspired.



**Having friends and followers online is a great way to connect with other people,** but we often aren't completely sure who can see our social media messages. With your teen, review the privacy settings across any social media accounts in your family, and make sure the settings are appropriate for your comfort level.



**Set an annual reminder to join your teen in curating your friends and followers online.** Sometimes relationships fizzle out, or we no longer need or want certain followers to have access to our social media accounts. Conducting an annual audit is a great way to keep tabs on who is in your social media community.

