

# Learning Inspirations

LEARNING LINK JAN-MAR 24

## HOW TIKTOK IS REWRITING THE WORLD

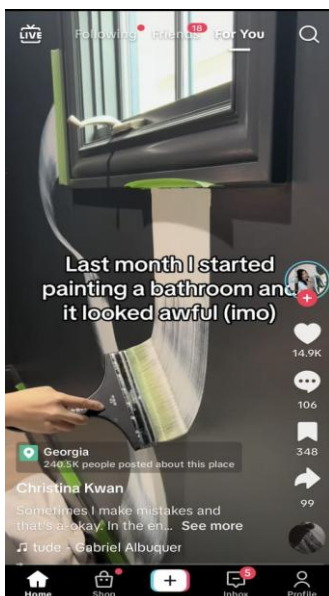
If you have not used TikTok, you are rapidly becoming the global exception. With over 1 billion monthly active users, the app, once written off as a silly dance-video fad, has become one of the most prominent, discussed, distrusted, technically sophisticated and geopolitically complicated juggernauts on the internet — a phenomenon that has secured an unrivaled grasp on culture and everyday life and intensified the conflict between the world's biggest superpowers.

### *The basic human explanation of TikTok*

TikTok is an app for making and sharing short videos. It's easy to make a video on TikTok, not just because of the tools it gives users - you can select from an enormous range of sounds, join a dare-like challenge, or participate in a dance meme, or make a joke. Or you can make fun of all of these things.

### *So that's what's on TikTok. What is it?*

TikTok is an algorithmic feed based on videos you've interacted with, or even just watched. It never runs out of material. It is not, unless you train it to be, full of people you know, or things you've explicitly told it you want to see. It's full of things that you seem to have demonstrated you want to watch.



It is constantly learning from you and, over time, builds a presumably complex but opaque model of what you tend to watch, and shows you more of that, or things like that, or things related to that.

TikTokers are increasingly using the app as a visual search tool; 40 percent of Generation Z respondents to a Google survey this year said they had opened TikTok or Instagram, not Google, when searching for nearby lunch spots. (One tweet in June, "I don't Google anymore I TikTok," has been 'liked' 120,000 times.)

And as Americans' trust in news organizations has fallen, TikTok's role as a news source has climbed. One in three TikTok viewers in the United States said they regularly use it to learn about current events, Pew Research Center said last month. In the United Kingdom, it's the fastest-growing news source for adults. (The Washington Post's TikTok account has more than a million followers.)



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TikTok's cultural influence on a new generation of media has led to some astounding ripple effects. Viral videos of people delighting in their favorite books, many of them with the hashtag #BookTok, which has 78 billion views, helped make 2021 one of the publishing industry's best sales years ever. Books from the author Colleen Hoover, BookTok's biggest star, have sold more copies this year than the Bible, according to data from NPD BookScan, which tracks sales at 16,000 stores nationwide.

History will probably come to remember TikTok as having a prominent role in Black Lives Matter, promoting it as a trend on its Discover page and winning the hashtag more than 23 billion views.



TikTok tells advertisers that these “continuous cycles of engagement” make it more memorable, emotional and immersive than TV. A company-funded study that used brain-imaging scans on test subjects found that TikTok users engaged with the app about 10 times a minute, twice as often as its social media peers. “The TikTok audience is fully leaned in,” a marketing document said.

There can be no denying that TikTok has become a world-shaping force of its own — so colorful and compelling that many viewers find it hard to quit. TikTokers with powerful messages – for now – are free to run amok, defiant in their power to take on the algorithm, the internet and the world beyond.

Well, looks like its back to scrolling again!



Adapted from:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/10/style/what-is-tik-tok.html>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/interactive/2022/tiktok-popularity/>

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201216-how-tiktok-changed-the-world-in-2020>