

Getting to grips with
Instagram

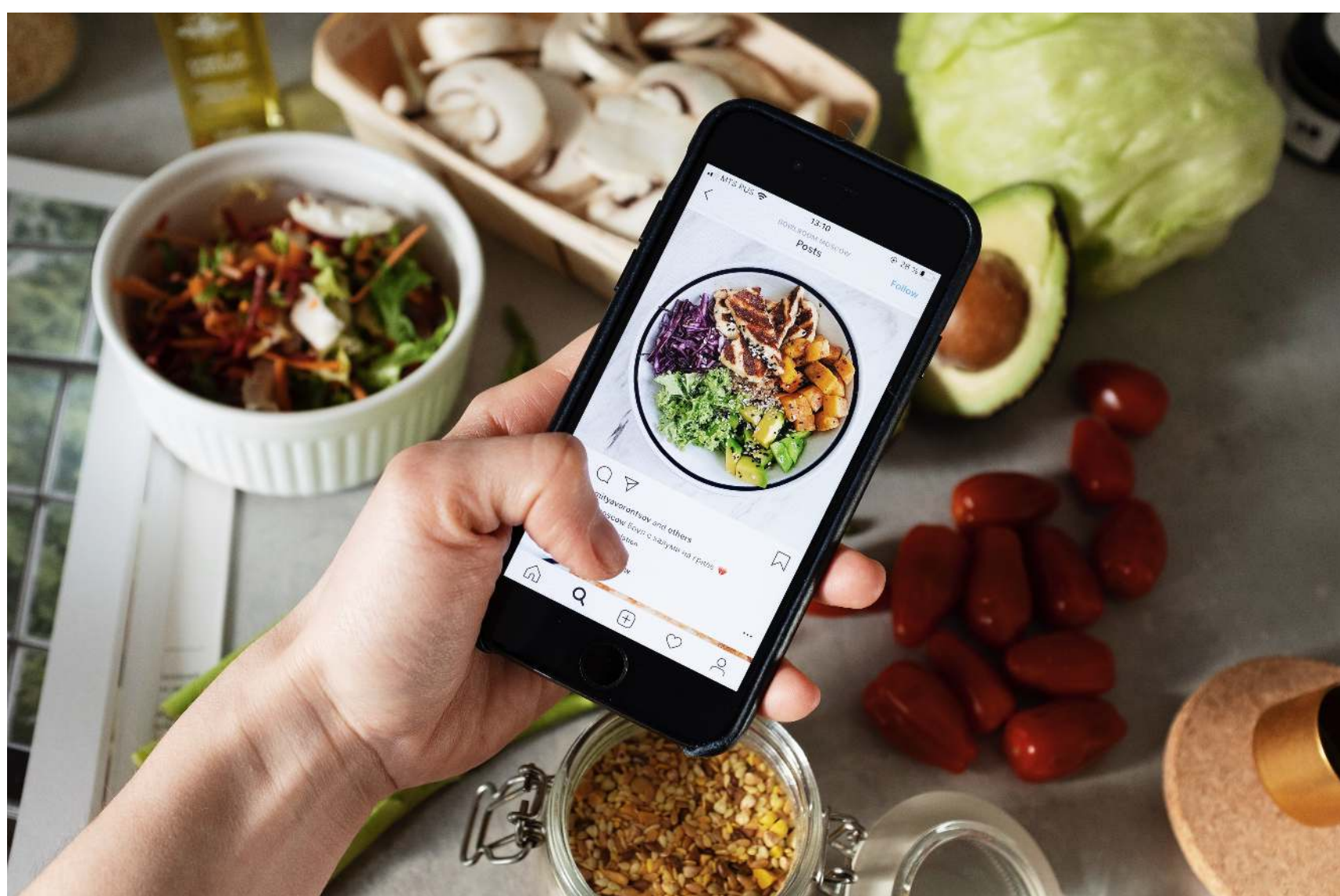


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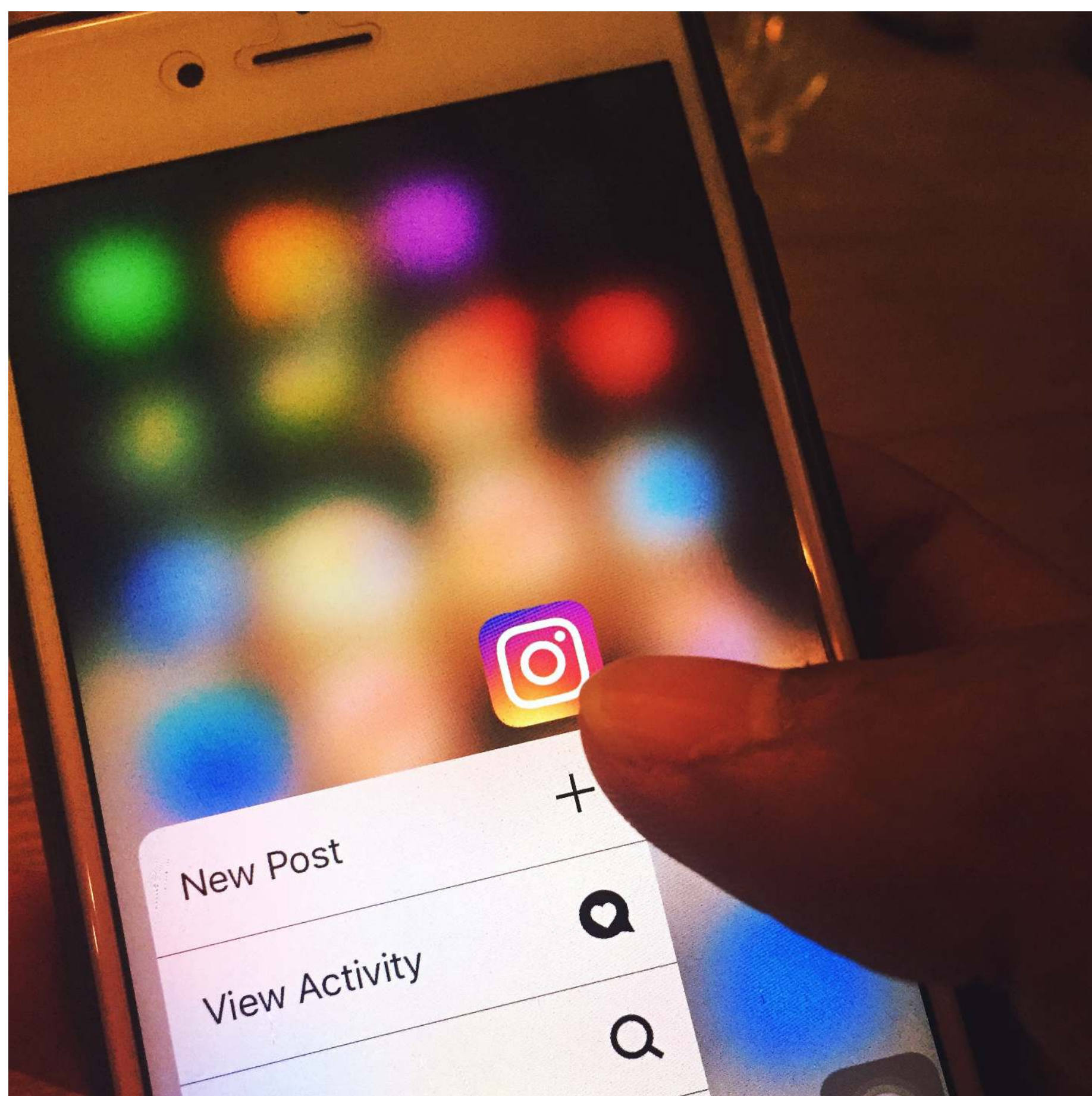
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How to use this guide:

This guide will work best if you use it alongside the instagram app. It's intended to be used as a quick reference guide to explain the app and help you get started. You will be able to find much more detailed and specific advice online by using a search engine to find written guides or youtube to find video tutorials.



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a **social media** platform that focuses on pictures and other images as the main purpose for **posting**.

It was started in 2010 and has become a popular means of sharing images both with friends and family, and strangers or online acquaintances. Like other social media platforms, you can choose the level to which you make your account visible to others.

To use Instagram you must have an Instagram account. It is possible to use it on a PC or laptop, but it is designed to be used via the Instagram **app**, meaning that some features of the platform are only available when using the app.

To download the app to your phone or tablet: On an android device, you do this via the Googleplay store. On an apple device, you do this via the App store.

How to use Instagram

If you don't have an account, you will need to create one. You do this by providing an email address, a profile picture, some personal information and coming up with a user name. Please note the username is visible to all and is the means through which other people will find your account. When searching, usernames are normally preceded by the **@** symbol (e.g. @username).

There are three ways of adding posts to Instagram; read the **gallery**, **story** and **reel** sections of this guide to find out more.

If you would like to view an Instagram account to explore while you are learning, why not search for @discoverdigitalsot to view the Instagram account from the Discover Digital Pop-Up shop in May 2022

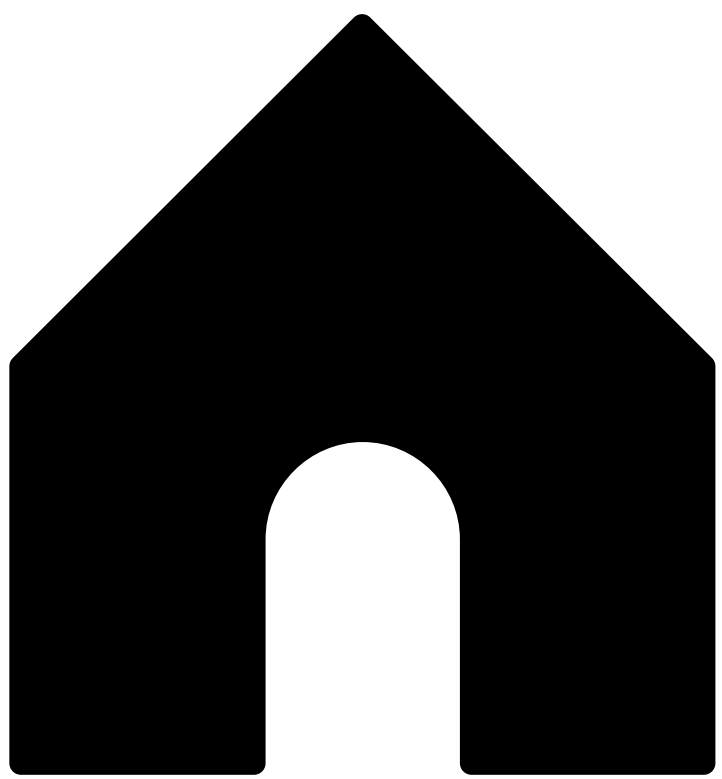
You create content by sharing photos and videos that you have taken. The main appeal of this app over other social media is to share beautiful, creative, artsy and aesthetically pleasing images with your **followers**, rather than just any and all photos. You can have a look at accounts you are interested in to get an idea of the type of things people usually post on Instagram.

You can find the profiles of the people you find interesting and follow them to see content that they post.

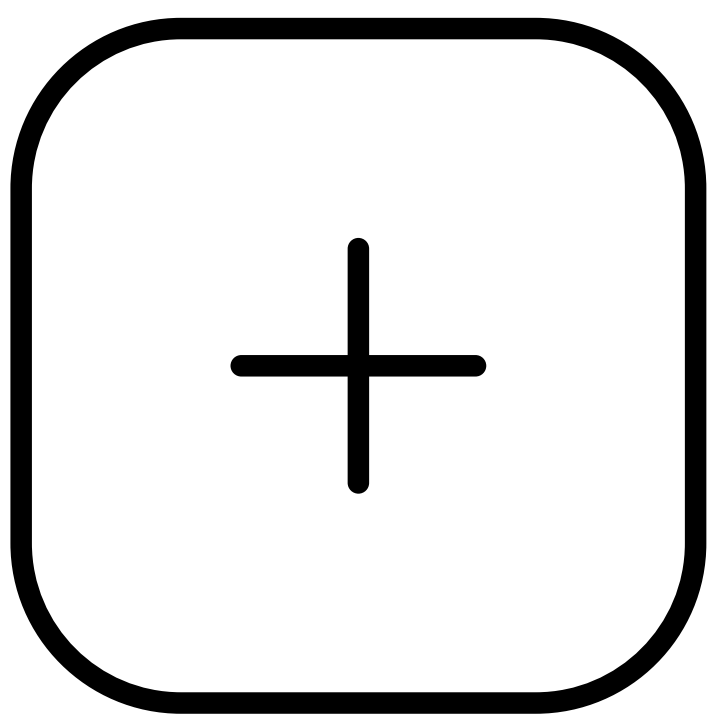
Instagram works by using an **algorithm**, which is a computer program in the app that learns what you like so it can show you more things it thinks you will enjoy. This means that everyone's experience on Instagram is different as it is personalised to each account.

Icons and symbols

A quick intro to the options you will see in the app. It's important to note that the colours will change from black to white to show you which menu you are currently on.



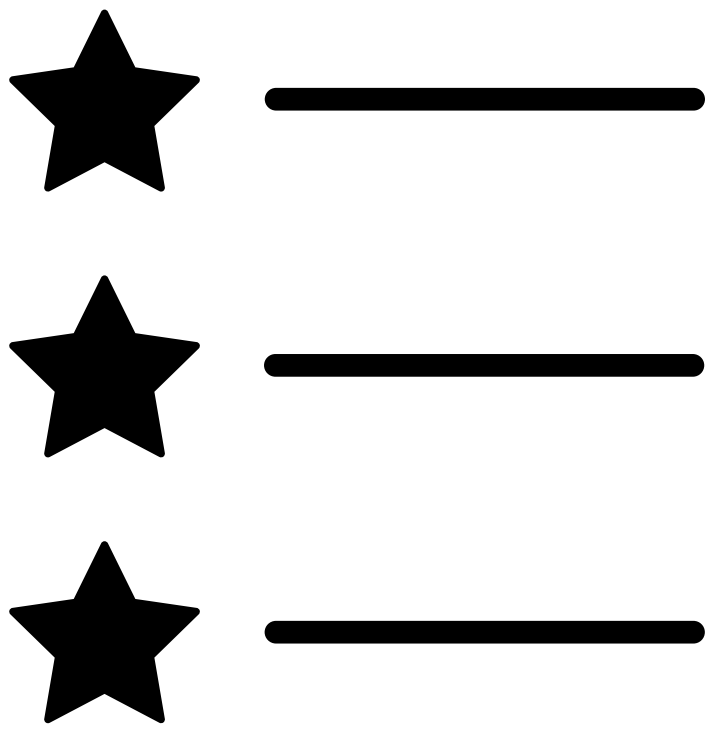
This is the home symbol. When you first log in to the app, this is the page you will see. The contents of this page change throughout the day. You can refresh the contents by pulling the page down with your finger and letting it go.



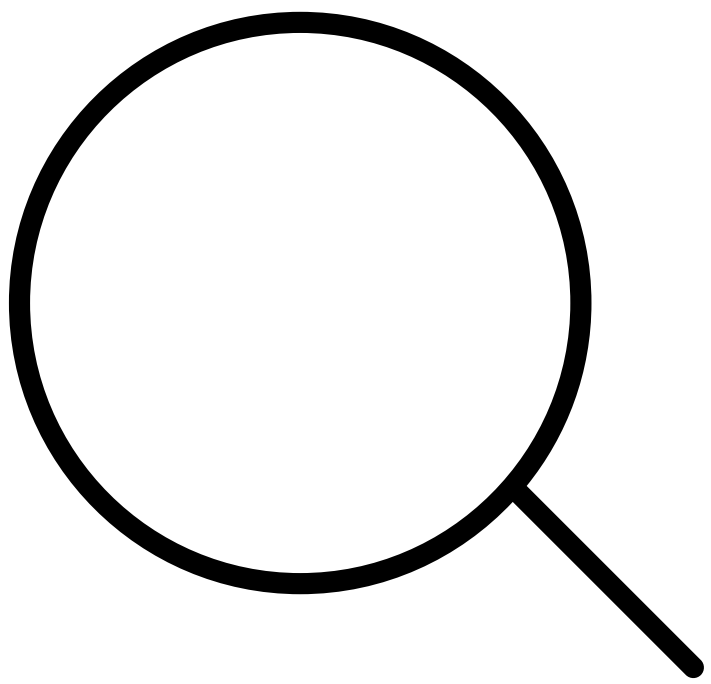
This is the add symbol and it appears in the top right corner of your home and gallery pages. It is used when you want to add content to your profile to allow other people to see it. When you select it, you will see choices at the bottom of the page about the types of post you can create.



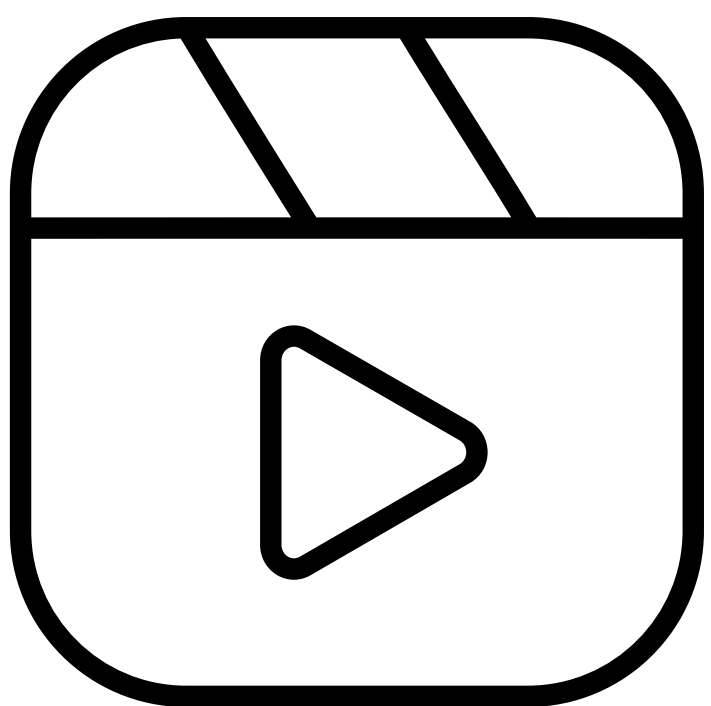
This is the settings menu. To access it, you click your profile picture in the bottom right corner. This menu will appear in the top right corner of your profile page.



This is the close friends menu. It appears in the settings menu (see above). You don't necessarily need to use this feature, but if you have a lot of friends and followers, you may want to use this feature to only show some posts to the people on the list you create rather than everyone who follows you.



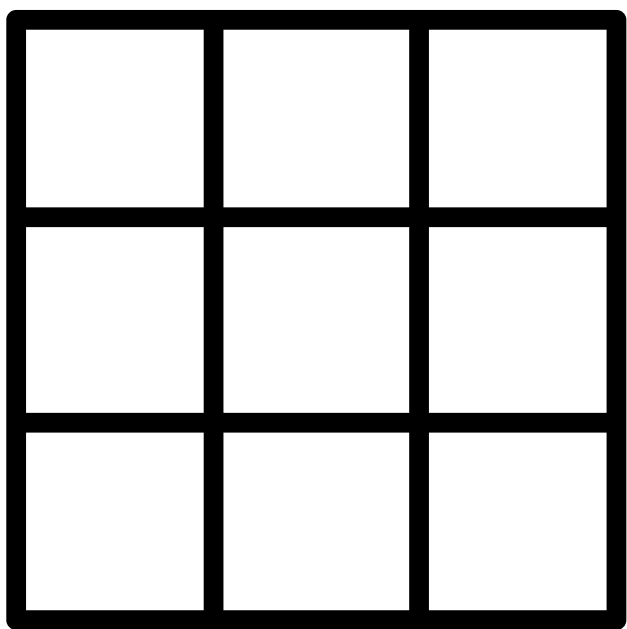
This is the search menu which also contains the **Explore page**. At the top of this page is a search bar which you can use to look for people, topics or **hashtags**.



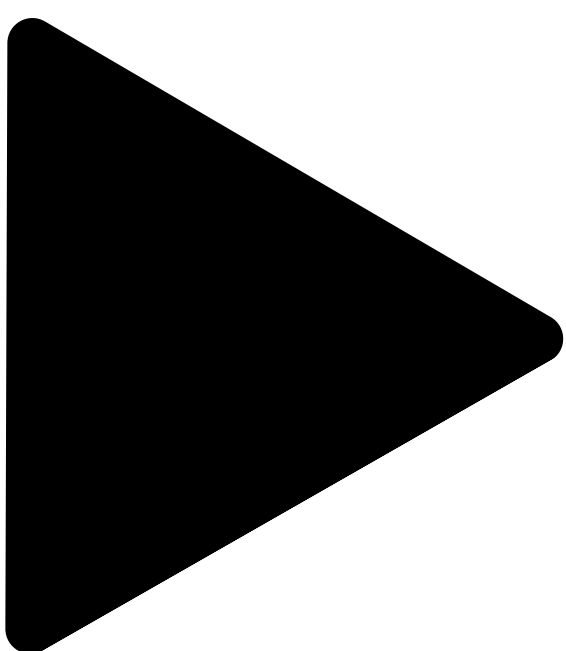
This is the **reel** page. These are short, publicly visible videos that others have made. You may see reels made by people you know or strangers. You will notice that they sometimes use the same video formats or sounds. This is because these videos are using a **viral trend** to make their content more popular and visible.



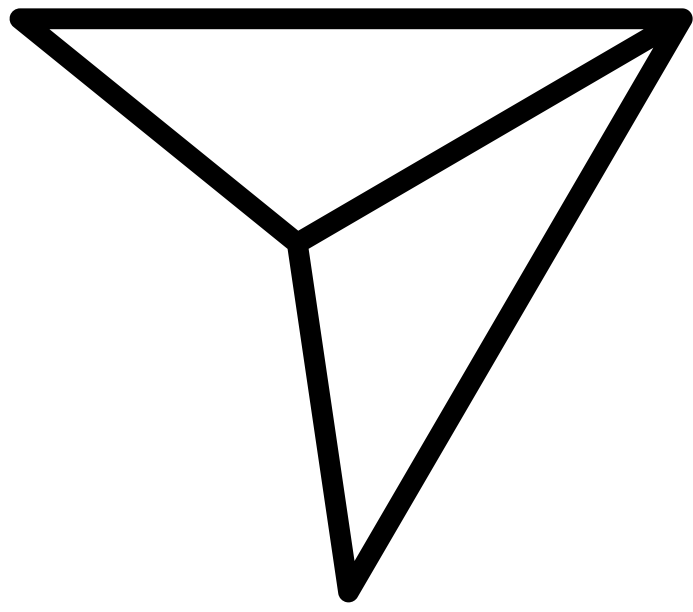
This is the **Instagram store**. It will recommend content to you based on your tastes for Instagram profiles that are selling items you might be interested in. You might see big companies, that you may have seen in shops before, or you might see small businesses or even individuals working alone.



This is the **Gallery**. This menu appears when you are viewing your profile and you can also see this option on other people's profiles too. It is the collection of permanent images, reels and videos that you have posted to your profile.



This menu shows the videos that you have posted to your profile. This menu appears when you view your profile, or the profiles of others if videos have been posted as permanent content in the past.



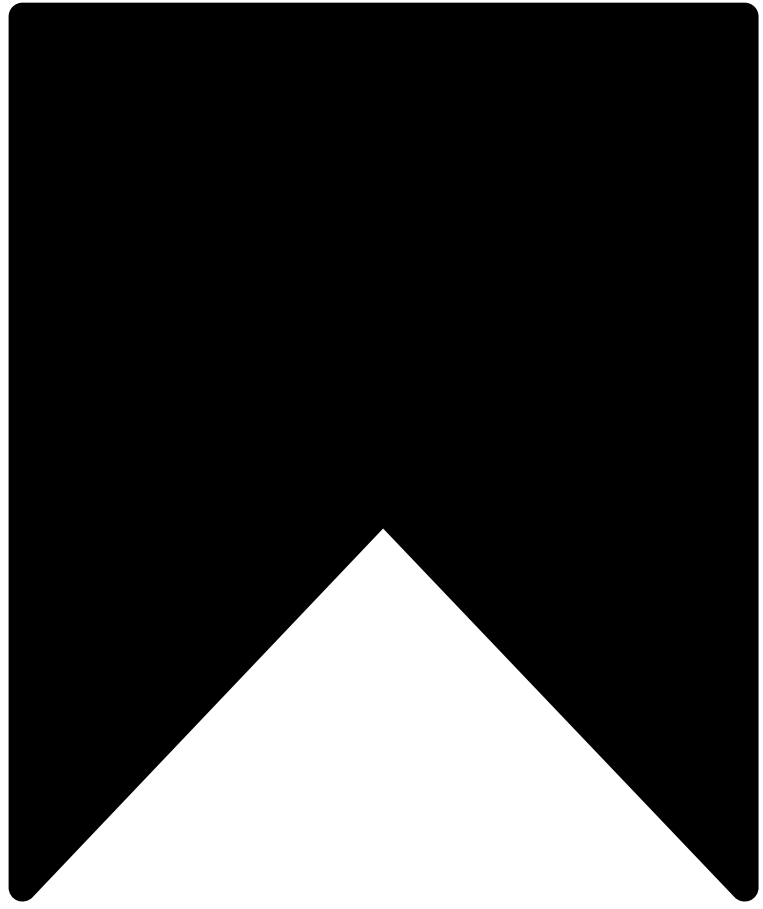
This is the share button. This allows you to send items that you like to your friends. The same symbol is used for messages you may send or be sent by your friends.



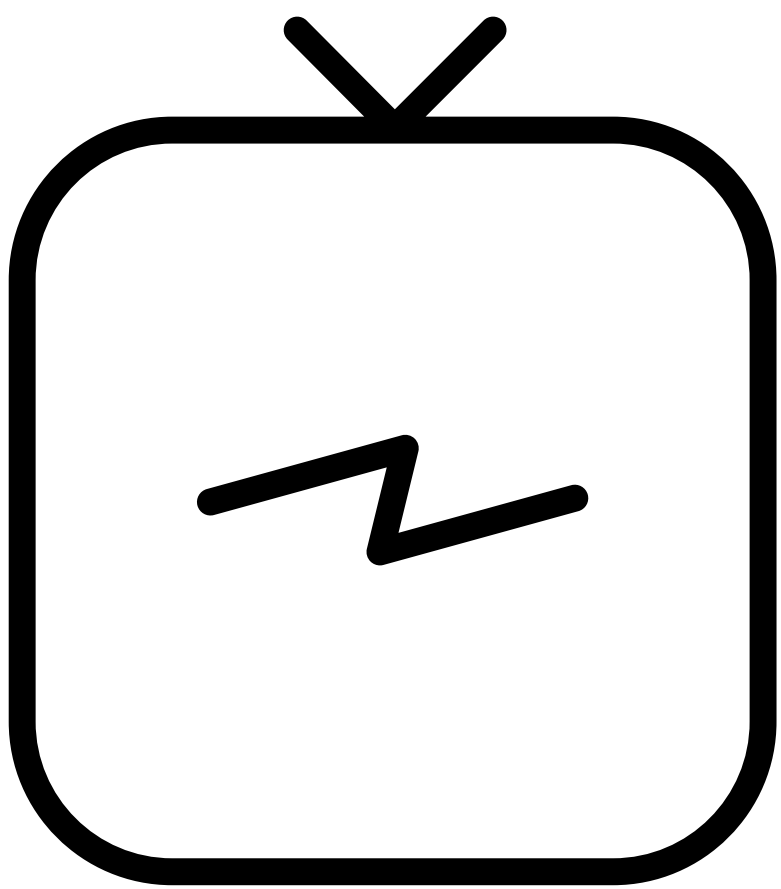
How to **like** something: There is a heart button under every type of content on instagram. It is not coloured in as standard, but if you touch it with your finger, you can "like" the post to show the person who made it that you enjoyed the content. The heart will then be coloured in red. You can achieve the same thing by double tapping the screen on a picture you're viewing.



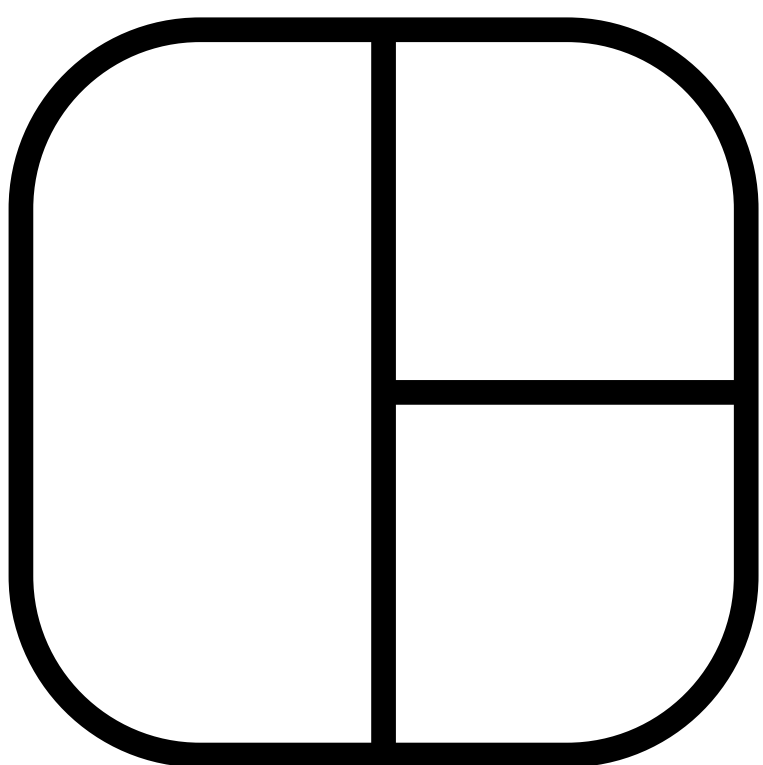
How to **comment** on something: There will be a speech bubble under each picture and video to allow you to say what you think of some content. On reels these options are on the right. The person who made the content is sent a notification that someone has written something on their post. Remember all comments are public so everyone can read them.



How to **save** content by others: This symbol appears under image and video posts. On reels, the option is available but is hidden in the ... menu on the right. This option allows you to save items made by others to allow you to look at them again later without needing to worry about the app refreshing and changing the content you see. You can view items you saved in the settings menu.



This symbol is for **IGTV** or Instagram TV. For a time it was available as a standalone app but it is now being shut down. It was intended for longer videos rather than the short form typical on Instagram. You may see this symbol in the corner of some older videos on the explore page if they were from IGTV.



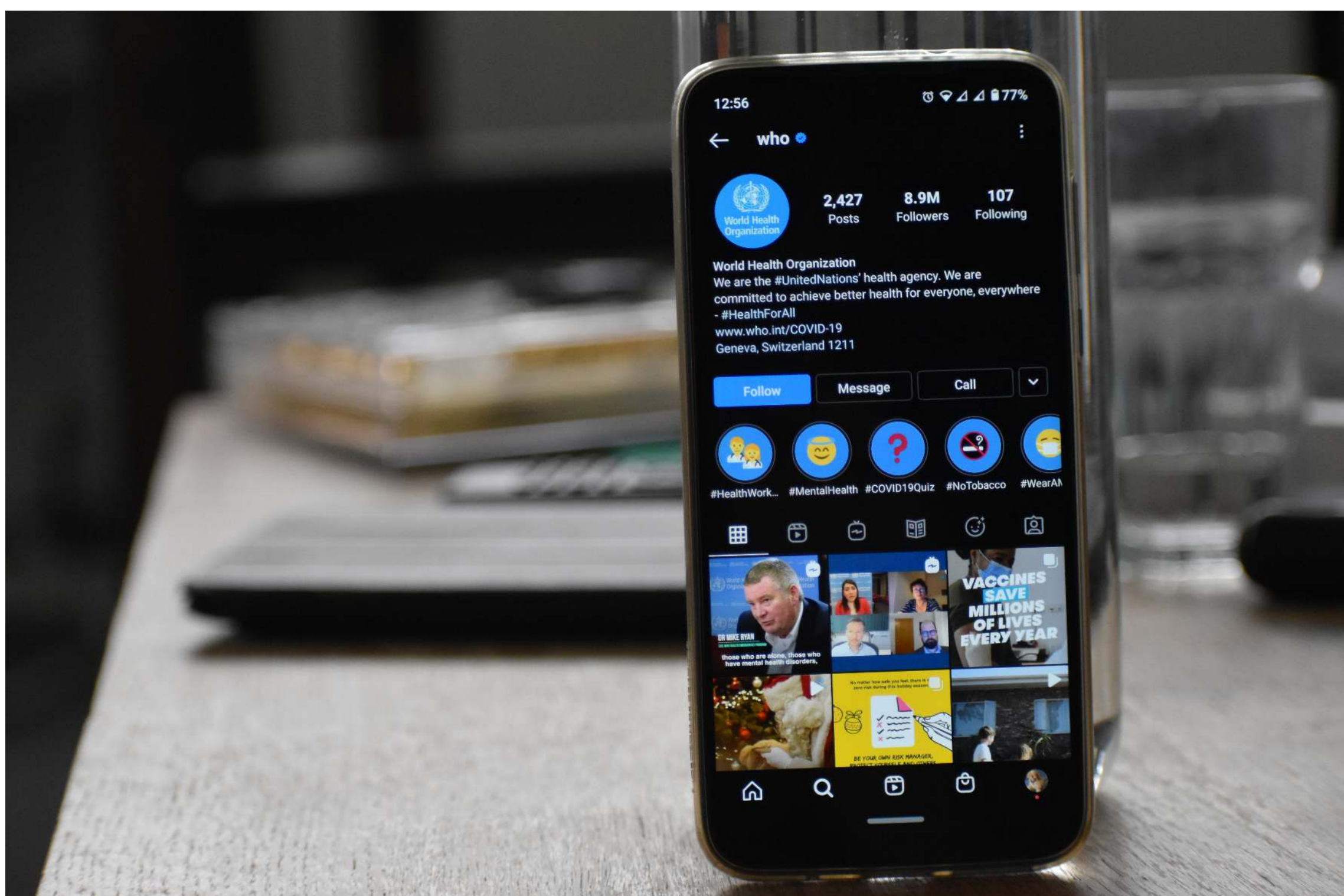
This is the layout button. This option is only visible when you are creating a **story** for your own profile. It provides you with different template options to display multiple photos at once.

Gallery

The Gallery view is the main page of your profile that others will see. It will look like the image below as you add more content to it over time.

You can make your profile private to only allow people you have granted permission to see it by changing your settings.

If you are being particularly mindful about how your profile appears, you might want to think about coming up with a theme to make your photos look coherent when they are together, but most people aren't concerned about doing this.



Stories

Stories are temporary pictures and videos that only remain on your profile for 24 hours. You can use the highlight feature to save them, but otherwise after 24 hours they no longer appear on your account.

People use stories to do many things. It may be that you have taken a nice photo but don't think it fits with the rest of your profile so you only want to display it temporarily. You may want to share a news item from another account or do something a bit silly for some fun.

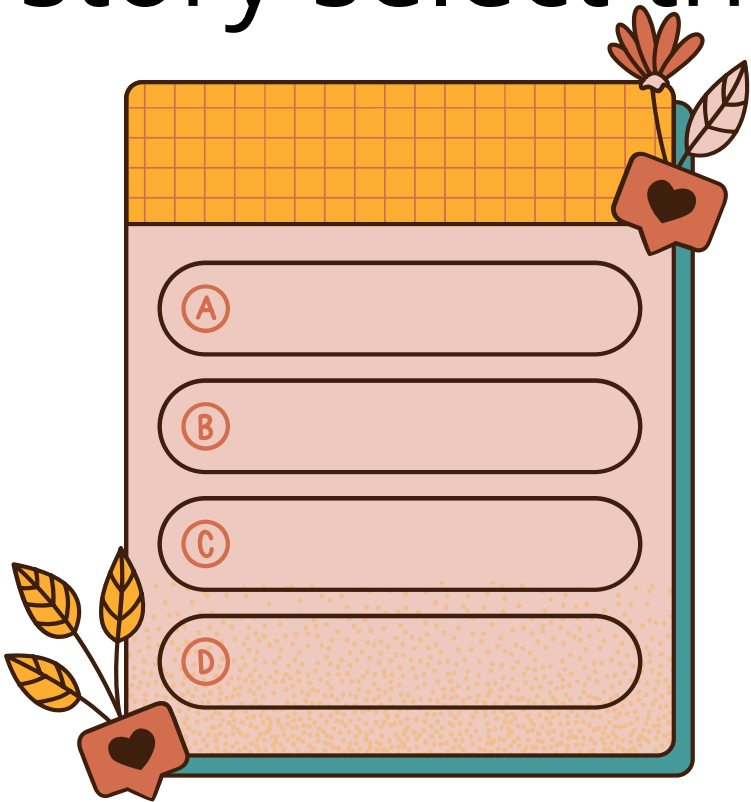
From your home page you create stories by swiping the screen to the left.



On your home page you will see a horizontal list of profile pictures showing the people you follow. When those photos have a coloured ring around them like this, it means they have a story for you to view.

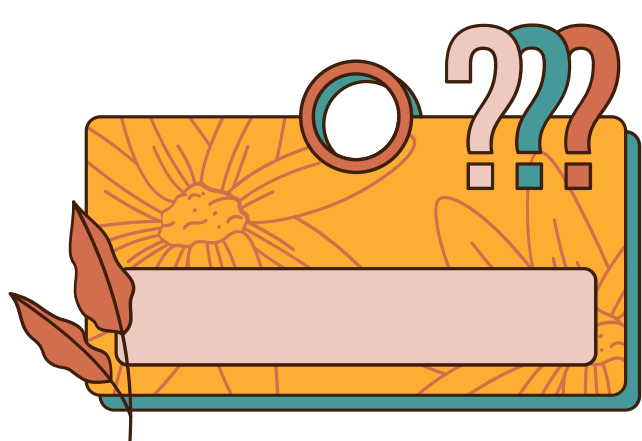
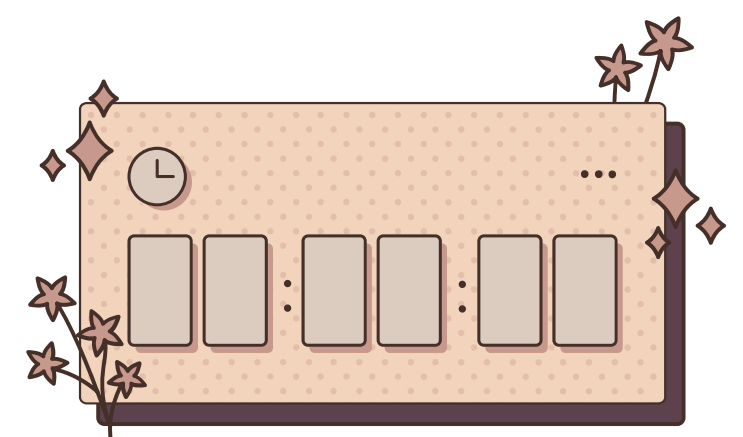
Fun features

Stories can do a lot of fun things that aren't available on other posts by using stickers. After you start making your story select the square with a smily face to use them.



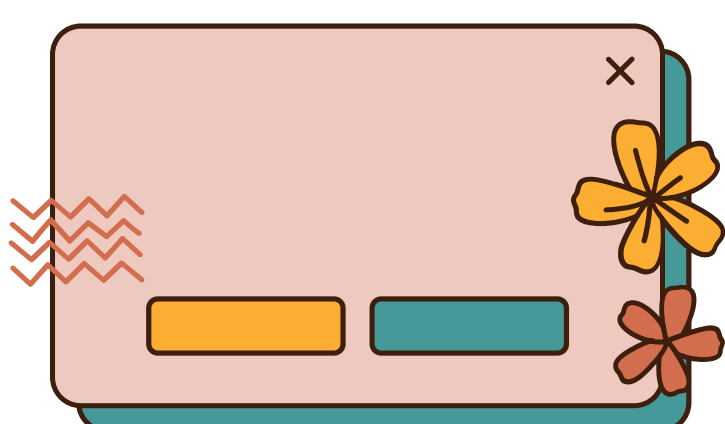
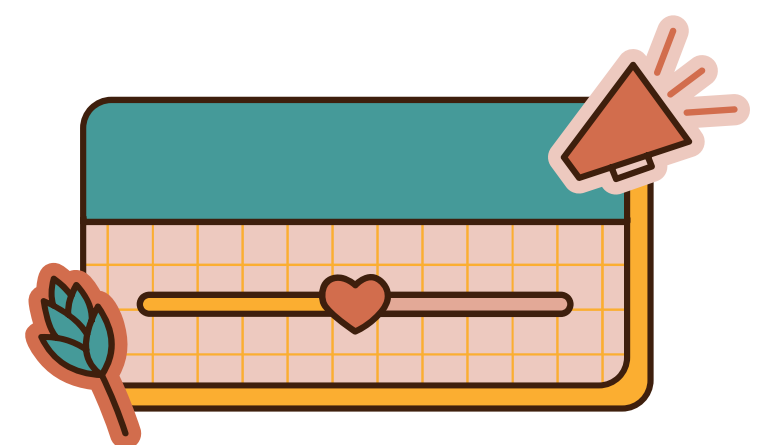
Quizzes: pick a question and the answers and your followers will be able to answer you. You'll sometimes see businesses do this for feedback

Countdown: add a timer to count down to something exciting like a holiday



Questions: get your followers to ask you questions. You'll sometimes see this on influencer or business pages

Emoji slider: allows people to rate a statement based on the emoji you choose to go with it e.g. how funny was this?



Poll: works in a similar way to quizzes but you don't need to set a correct answer

Reels

Reels are quick videos that are less than a minute long. You will find them on the reel page which is the middle button on your home page.

You can scroll through reels that other people have created by swiping up. You don't need to watch a reel to the end to skip it.

You may notice that a lot of reels have the same sound effects. If you look at the bottom of the screen you will see the details of any **filters** or sounds the creator used to make the video. When making a reel it's possible to browse a library of audio effects and use them in your own video. You will find that the sounds are often used to allow people to follow **trends**, as viewing the sound information will show all videos that used it.

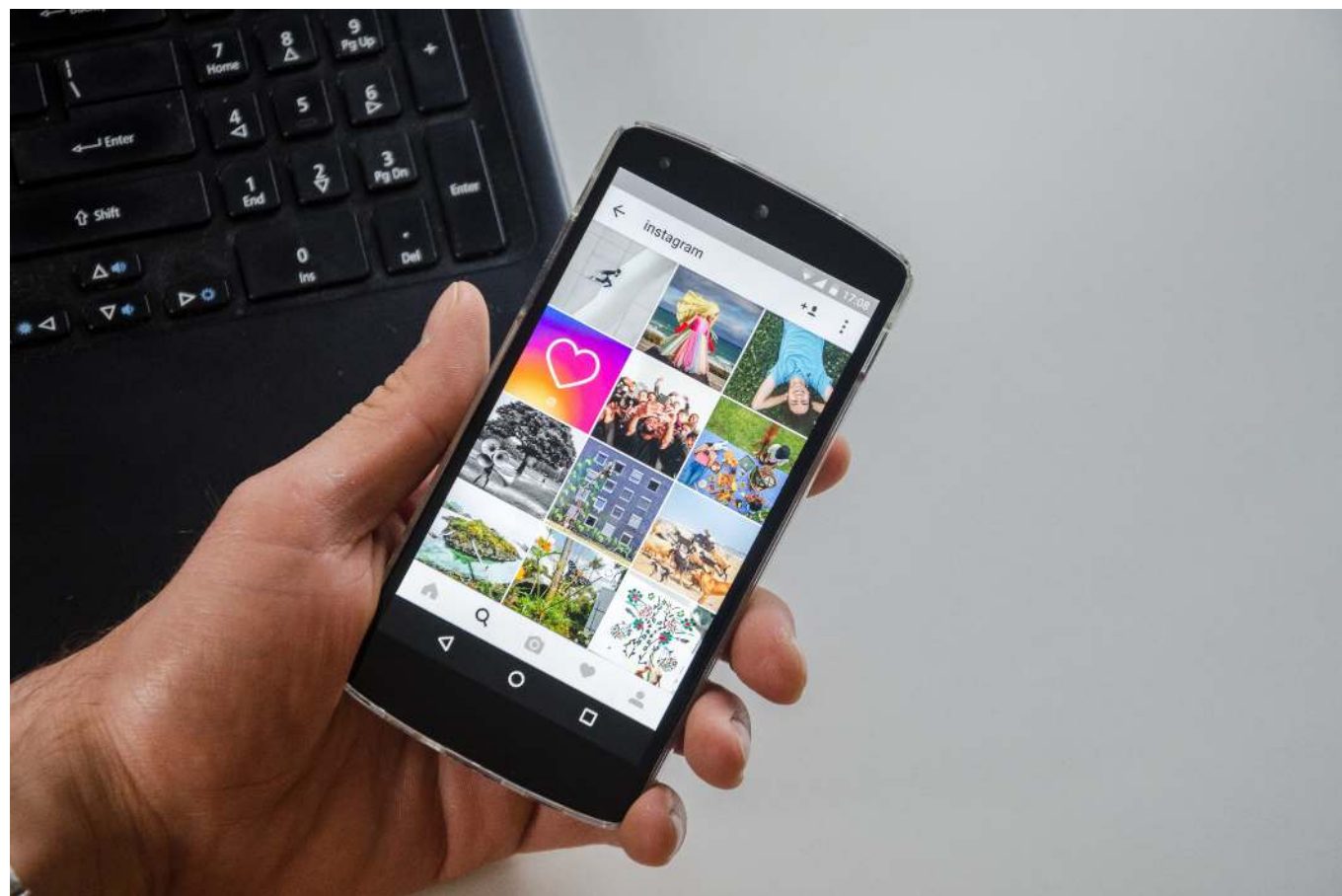
There is a great deal of variety in the type of content reels are used to make. Sometimes the creator will be trying to start a trend of their own by making something they think other people might want to use, sometimes they are adding to a running joke and sometimes they use it to share information widely (so you may see a lot of reels from small businesses and artists).

All reels are publicly visible so this should be considered if you decide to make one.

Scrolling through an unending supply of reels can be very entertaining but quite addictive. You may notice that more time has passed than you realise. It's important to be conscious about your mental health and how social media affects you and impacts your life.

However, they can be a great way of finding new accounts to follow that you might not have seen before.

Explore page



The explore page can be seen by selecting the magnifying glass on your home page. At the top of the page you will see a search bar which is where you can look for other accounts, topics that interest you or **hashtags**. It also shows you a selection of content that the algorithm has suggested for you. It may show content from creators you already know about along side content you may not have seen before. You can scroll through these suggestions as a group (which is the view you see when opening the explore page) or you can select individual items to look at them more closely.

Glossary

Algorithm: a computer program that works by learning how you use something like a social media platform and using that information to show you more things, like creators or content, that you might like based on how you used it in the past.

App: an application that you download to your tablet or phone in order to add that feature or program to your device.

Comment: When you write what you think about something you have seen on that item of content (like a photo). Comments are always visible to the person who made the content and to everyone else who can see it too (which may mean that comments are public). You should remember that a person will be reading what you write so think carefully before you comment about whether what you say might be hurtful, insensitive or unkind.

Explore page: One of the browsing options on Instagram. This is where you can search for accounts, topics or hashtags but also view recommended content based on your activity on Instagram.

Filter: An effect that can be applied to photos or videos posted in the Instagram app. Filters may make the photo better quality, such as adjusting the lighting and contrast of the photo. However, they can also add unrealistic effects like making a photo look like someone is wearing make-up, has different facial features or cartoon effects. There are unlimited options and they can be fun to use, but some people have concerns about the effect they have on mental health when they are used to change the way people look.

Follow/following: Follow is the term used to describe subscribing to an account so that you frequently see content they create (when they make it). Following is the term used to describe the reverse when someone subscribes to see content you create. Depending on the privacy settings on the account, you may not be able to follow them without their permission. You can also set up your account to do the same.

Gallery: The gallery is the view of your account that other people see when they look at your profile. It will show the images, videos and reels that you have created as tiles that can be selected to view in more detail. This will also be the view that you see when you look at other people's accounts.

Going viral: For something to go viral, it must become publicly popular very quickly (e.g. within a few hours). For something to be considered "a viral sensation" it has normally been seen by multiple thousands or millions of people

Hashtags: These are words or phrases preceded by the # symbol. You can use these in the description on the content you post to describe it (e.g. #sillycat) but hashtags also group together all posts with the same tags. This means if you were to search for the hashtags you used, you would see content made by others on the same topic. This can also be a way of showing your content to people who are interested in what you post about. For example, if you used #bookstagram on a post about books, people interested in books might be following that hashtag.

Like: This shows the person who created the content that you enjoyed it. It is shown as a heart button on Instagram. It is a way of showing appreciation for what you have seen. You can like something by tapping the heart or double tapping the picture with your finger. If you like something by mistake, you can undo this by pressing the button again.

Posting: Posting is the word used to describe making content available on your profile. Some types of content on Instagram can be saved as a draft and only posted (made available) when you are ready.

Profile: Your profile is the information created about you based on your username, profile photo and the content you create. It is what other people see about you when viewing your account. The word is sometimes used interchangeably when describing your account.

Reel: A type of Instagram content. Reels are short videos usually less than a minute long. Audio effects are sometimes added to make the video fit in with current trends. Reels are publicly available and can be viewed on the reel tab of the Instagram app.

Save: The option that allows you to keep a list of content by other people as a list for you to view later. You can see the items you have saved in the settings menu of your account.

Social media: An online platform that allows people to network and socialise online. They may interact with people that they know or strangers from all over the world. They may communicate with each other in real time or over several hours or days. Instagram is one of many social media platforms that focuses primarily on sharing images and videos.

Story: A type of temporary Instagram content. Stories can be images, text or videos and remain on your profile for 24 hours.

Tag: A means of showing that another person or place is related to the content you create. For example, you may take a photo of a nice view and tag the location where it was taken, or a photo with multiple people in may have tags to identify everyone in the picture so that it appears on their Instagram profile too.

Trend: Something that is popular on social media.

Useful links

Mental health:

This website is aimed at young people but has good advice for everyone:

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/social-media-and-mental-health/>

Technical support:

Instagram help centre:

<https://help.instagram.com/>

Basic how to video tutorial:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1vtAZoMMuU>

e-safety:

Cybersecurity advice:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/social-media-how-to-use-it-safely>

More safety tips:

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/personal/blog-item/how-to-be-safe-on-instagram-a-guide-to-being-secure-on-social-media/>