

Instagram

Audience: FOC members, some of whom are unfamiliar with using social media.

# How to Instagram

A lot of calligraphers and artists are on Instagram. This article talks about some of the ins and outs of using Instagram so you can decide if it's for you.

## What is Instagram?

Instagram is a free social-media app for sharing photos and short videos. Its focus is mainly visual, with limited text in the form of captions and comments. The Instagram app runs on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, and you can only post from those devices. You can use a web browser to view Instagram on laptops and desktop computers.

## Why use Instagram?

The main things to do with Instagram are to browse the Instagram accounts you follow (called your "feed") or to post content (photos and videos) of your own. Some people enjoy viewing the content their friends post to support them with likes or comments. Others look to Instagram for inspiration. For example, you can follow some of your favorite calligraphers and see what they post. You can also use Instagram to share your own work. Many artists post pictures or videos of their work to connect with others, get feedback, or even sell their work. Some calligraphers post videos and narrated tours of their calligraphy studios. You can use hashtags to create collections of work from workshops, classes, or other calligraphers.

## Who uses Instagram?

Individuals use Instagram, and so do businesses and organizations. People share photos of their styles, food, families, pets, vacations, art, businesses, and lots else. Artists, teachers, business owners, politicians, all use Instagram. Calligraphy guilds (like us!) use it to announce events such as workshops, classes, and lectures, or to showcase members' work. Small business owners might use Instagram to increase exposure for their business or to demonstrate products, and so on.

## Do you have to have an account to use Instagram?

Yes, you need an account to follow other accounts, curate what you want to see in your feed, and to post your own content. However, you don't need an account to view an Instagram post or an Instagram account page.

## Where you can use Instagram

You can use Instagram anywhere you are connected to WiFi on your smartphone, tablet, or computer. But watch out that you aren't using your cellular data to use the Instagram app on

your device. Running the app through your cellular data can eat into your data plan and be expensive if you go over your data limits.

A setting in the app lets you use the app through your cellular data or through WiFi only. To get to that setting on an iPhone, in Instagram, tap the profile icon or your profile picture, tap the **Menu** icon (☰), and tap **Settings** (⚙️). Tap **Account**, then tap **Data Usage**. Tap the circle next to Use Less Cellular Data (iPhone) or Data Saver (Android). To revert to the original setting, deselect the circle. These instructions might be different for other devices. To find instructions for your device, go to the Instagram Help Center at <https://help.instagram.com/>, or search for “cellular data settings for <your device name>”.

## How is Instagram different from Facebook?

Instagram is simpler than Facebook, in that it focuses on photo and video sharing. Instagram doesn't have features like groups, events, or a marketplace, although some people do use Instagram to sell their products. Facebook owns Instagram, so there are some similarities between the two social media platforms like the suggested content and sponsored ads.

## Why is Instagram free?

Instagram is free because of sponsored ads. You'll see posts in your feed that are not from accounts that you follow that are advertisements. You'll know if something is a sponsored ad if it has the word “Sponsored” underneath the account name on the post or story.

## How to get Instagram

To get the Instagram app, download it to your device (your smartphone or tablet), then set up an account. The order isn't important, but it's probably most straightforward to download and install the app on your device and then create an account.

For Apple devices running iOS, you can find the free Instagram app in the App Store. For Google devices running Android, you can find the free Instagram app in Google Play.

After you download and install the app on your device, open the app and set up an account. If you are creating an account, the app will guide you through creating a username, often called a “handle,” and a password when you open the app on your device for the first time. If you already have an account, open the app and log in to your account by entering your username and password.

## How to use Instagram

Here's a review of some things you might want to do if you have a newly created account, along with some other ways you might use the app regularly.

## If you just created your account

If you have a newly created Instagram account, you'll want to log in and do some basic account set up.

### Logging in

Log in to your account in the app on your device. After you log in on a device for the first time, you can opt to stay signed in on that device so you don't have to sign in every time you want to use Instagram.

### Account setup

If it's your first time logging into your account, you might want to do some basic setup of your account. For example, you can add a profile picture or go to the settings to customize your account for privacy, data use, and so on. This link from the Instagram Help Center shows how to access your Instagram account settings: <https://help.instagram.com/284802804971822/>

### Start following some accounts

The accounts that you follow make up what you see when you use Instagram. To search for a calligrapher or artist you admire, enter a term or name in the search box at the top of the page. Tap a name in the list that appears to see more about that account. You can also search by categories, like Blackletter, pointed pen calligraphy, and so on. To follow an account, tap the blue Follow button. Some suggestions are: calligraphy, calligraphy guilds, and calligraphers, in the US and in other countries; and conferences, such as Write on the Edge (the 2022 International Conference), and IAMPETH.

An Instagram handle is designated by the @ sign and your username and appears in all lowercase. For example, account names look something like this: @friendsofcalligraphy. To find someone on Instagram, you enter their handle (with or without the @ sign) in the search bar of the app. You can also usually find someone by entering their name in the search bar.

## Using Instagram regularly

Usually, using Instagram means you're either posting your own content to share, or you're viewing other people's content. You can browse the content in your feed, or post your own content for others to see. You can view a high-level overview of the icons and features of Instagram at <https://suebzimmerman.com/how-to-understand-instagram-icons-a-beginners-guide/>

## Viewing pictures and videos

Like most social media apps, Instagram has a *feed* that is the main way you view content. Your feed shows you pictures and videos posted by accounts that you follow. When you open the Instagram app, you see your feed.

## Posting

To add a photo to your feed, tap the plus sign (+) with a square around it. Follow the prompts to take a photo or video, or to upload a photo or video already on your camera. Be mindful of copyrights--post your own artwork, don't post or repost other people's artwork.

## Stories

An Instagram story is a 15-second photo or video that disappears after 24 hours. Stories appear in a circle at the top of your feed. People use stories in a more casual way than posts, to make brief announcements and highlights.

## Liking and commenting

As you view posts in your feed, you can tap the heart icon to show that you like the post. You can also write a brief comment. Likes and comments are visible to anyone who can view the account you liked or commented on. To comment on a post, tap the Comment icon (💬), enter a reply, and tap **Post**.

## Direct messaging

You can use the Instagram direct messaging feature, also called DMs, to write privately to other Instagram users. You can access all of your direct messages or start a new message to someone by tapping the paper airplane (or lightning bolt) icon (✈️) in the upper-right corner of the app. You can also DM a post to someone by tapping the paper airplane or lightning bolt speech bubble icon under any post.

## Saving posts

You can save any posts you like and look back on them at any time. To save a post, click the Bookmark icon (🔖) To access saved posts, click the Menu icon (☰), and click **Saved**.

## What are hashtags?

A hashtag is a label used on social media sites that makes it easier to find information with a theme or specific content. They are composed of a combination of letters, numbers, or emoji, preceded by the pound sign (#), for example, #foccreates. Hashtags are searchable and tapable. Hashtags encourage social media users to explore content that catches their eye. Individuals or associations can use hashtags to reach their target audience and to help members filter information.

#foccreates

#calligrafun  
#focfeatured  
#friendsofcalligraphy  
#calligraphyworkshop  
#calligraphyclass  
#onlinecalligraphyclass  
#onlinecalligraphyworkshop  
#learncalligraphy  
#sanfranciscocalligraphyclass  
#albanycalligraphyclass  
#sanfranciscocalligraphyworkshop  
#albanycalligraphyworkshop  
#bayareacalligraphyclass  
#bayareacalligraphyworkshop

You might also want to follow hashtags for specific hands or focuses, such as #broadedgepencalligraphy, #copperplatecalligraphy, #blacklettercalligraphy, #frakturcalligraphy.

## Advanced features

Instagram has other features that you might want to use. These features include notifications, Instagram Live, Reels, and the Link in Bio feature. You can find information about these features in the Instagram Help Center at <https://help.instagram.com/>.

## Privacy and Instagram

By default, your account is visible to anyone using the app, but you can change it to be private, which means that you have to approve who follows you. To make your account private, on the app, tap your profile picture and open the menu in the top right. Select **Settings > Privacy and Security > Switch on the Private Account toggle**.

## How FOC uses Instagram

Friends of Calligraphy uses Instagram to share photos of students' artwork from classes and workshops (with permission). We also share the art of our members in monthly posts that are indicated by the hashtags #foccreates and #focfeatured. Check out our account or follow us! The FOC Instagram handle is [@friendsofcalligraphy](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofcalligraphy).

## Learn more

You can also check out this quick, easy to understand video about how to set up and use Instagram: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0qrvLKtu6Y&t=294s>