Lesson Plan: Egypt & Social Media
By Sarah Sahr

Events in Egypt the past months have created some great content to engage students in discussions about social media and its effects on day-to-day living. Arguments have been made that Twitter and Facebook fueled the revolution against Mubarak. This lesson helps students create conversations and tweets about the events in Egypt. For further discussion, teachers can expand the conversation to Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Wisconsin...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age &amp; Language Level:</th>
<th>Materials:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary Education, Intermediate to Advanced</td>
<td>Scissors, pens/pencils</td>
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<td>Higher Education, Upper Beginner to Intermediate</td>
<td>Handouts: Egypt_Timeline</td>
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| Time: | 60 minutes (However, this lesson could easily be drawn out into 2 days) |

Objective(s) – Students will be able to:
- Communicate some of the protest events that took place in Egypt from January 25, 2011–February 12, 2011.
- Organize a timeline based on the Egyptian protest events.
- Summarize some of these Egyptian events into a Twitter post (140 characters).

Note to Teacher:
To have an effective lesson, you do not have to use all the information or steps presented below. As a teacher, you should be able to see/hear:
- Students are talking about Egypt and what happened, in English.
- Students are summarizing what happened in Egypt, in English.

Introduction (Motivation): 10 minutes
Start by showing this 4-minute video on YouTube. Consider enlarging the video to fill the screen so students don’t see the title.

After students have watched the video, create a quick dialogue, with student partners, by asking some simple questions: What are they doing? Where are they going? Why? Think-pair-share works great with this:
- Think about what you just saw. (30 seconds)
- Pair up with a classmate and talk about what you just saw. (60 seconds)
- Share these thoughts with the class. (2 minutes)

Move student pairs into groups of 4–6 people. Ask some specific questions about the video: What’s happening to traffic? What was the large group of people at the end doing? Why are they there?

Part 1 – The Timeline 15–20 minutes

Information:
Students will create a timeline of the events in Egypt. Review with students what a timeline is. Give an example of a morning routine:
- 7 am: Turn off alarm
- 7:15 am: Take shower
- 7:40 am: Get dressed, etc.

By now, students should have moved their tables together to make groups. They will need to organize
many pieces of paper into a timeline, so they need space. (Teaching note: Try not to make homogenous language groups. Students need to use their English to communicate. If, for example, all the students have Chinese as their L1, it will be challenging for them to keep their conversation in English.)

Distribute page 1 of the timeline handout to the groups of students. Go over some of the events as a class. If there are any challenging events (events students don’t understand), go over them as a class. Once students have an idea of what’s going on and are comfortable with what the timeline says, review a bit of what happened in Egypt during the months prior to the protests. Use the events in the boxes to trigger students’ prior knowledge.

**Guided Practice:**

***Modeling***

As a class, chose two or three event squares to do as a class. For example:

- Facebook, Twitter, and Blackberry Messenger services are disrupted. – the second event
- Hosni Mubarak announces in a televised address that he will not run for re-election. – a middle event
- People celebrate in Tahrir Square until early morning. Prodemocracy protesters start to clean the square. – the last event.

When you feel students are comfortable, let them finish the timeline on their own.

**Independent Practice:**

In groups, students cut up the boxes on the timeline worksheet and make the timeline. As the teacher, walk around the class monitoring progress, helping and listening for English.

**Assessment:**

Go over the actual timeline to make sure groups have a close idea of when events took place. They do not have to be exact. However, students should have enough of the information correct to see how quickly things in Egypt changed.

**Part 2 – Match Twitter Feeds to Timeline**

**Information:**

Once the protests started, Egyptians went to social media to get their message out to the world about the unrest. Twitter and Facebook became battle grounds for this revolution. Mobile devices became peaceful weapons.

Using the tweet handout, have students cut up the tweets and place them on the timeline with an appropriate event. These do not need to be exact. Students just need to create a logical placement for as many of the tweets as they can—more than one tweet can go with an event.

If there is time, there are also Facebook postings student can match to the timeline as well.

**Guided Practice:**

***Modeling***

As a class, place one or two tweets with an event. Again, it is not important where the tweets go, as long as they make sense in their placements and the students agree with each other within their groups.

For example:

Tweet - Checking SMSing. Random poll suggests that like internet, it is down. #Jan25 #Jan28

This tweet could go in more than one place in the timeline:

- Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger services are disrupted.
- Internet and mobile phone text message users in Egypt report major disruption to services.
**Independent Practice:**
As groups, students cut up the boxes on the tweet worksheet and place tweets on the timeline. Encourage groups to only place as many tweets as they want but they do not have to place them all. If some of the tweets don’t make sense, there is no reason to place them. Ask students to place a minimum of five tweets.

As the teacher, walk around the class monitoring progress, helping and listening for English.

**Assessment:**
Have the groups share with the class where they place certain tweets. Create a quick dialogue on why students chose to put certain tweets where they did or didn’t.

**Part 3 – Write Twitter Feeds**

**Information:**
As some of your students may know, Twitter only takes posts that are 140 characters or less. These characters include spaces and punctuation. Chatting language and text speak, ways of communicating through shortened words, (e.g., gr8, LOL, TTYL, BRB, AFAIK, emoticons, etc.), have organically developed because of new quick forms of technological communication. Encourage students to use these shortened words in this activity, making sure they understand the difference between text speak and traditional written English.

**A Word About Hashtags**
Hashtags – a way to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. All hashtags start with “#”. Clicking on a hashtagged word in any message shows you all other Tweets in that topic. You can hashtag any word in your post. Here’s an example:

```
#Tahrir: Numbers continue to grow. #Mubarak insulted his people last night by saying we were carrying out a foreign agenda. #Jan25
```

Go to the tweet handout for more examples of Hashtags.

As groups, student should choose two or three events on the timeline to summarize as a tweet. Encourage students to use the longer events so they are forced to shorten the event to a length appropriate for a tweet.

**Guided Practice:**

***Modeling***
As a class, shorten the first event in the timeline:

```
On a national holiday to commemorate the police forces, Egyptians take to the streets in large numbers, calling it a "day of rage."
Protest organizers heavily relied on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.
```

Ask the class how this event, currently 220 characters, could be shortened to fewer than 140 characters, including hash tags. (The example above with three hashtags is 130 characters.) You might end up with something like:

```
Egyptian people do not like police. :'( People going to #Tahrir. Twitter rocks #Jan25 (85 characters)
```

Ask groups to come up with their own tweets as examples. Have groups share.
**Independent Practice:**
In groups, students create tweets on scrap paper, classroom notebooks, or even on the back of the event papers.

As the teacher, walk around the class monitoring progress, helping and listening for English. Encourage students to use chat language or text speak to use fewer characters. You may want to provide them with an extra handout of commonly used terms.

**Assessment:**
As groups share their tweets with the class, have other groups guess which event the tweet goes with.

**Closure:**
Ask students:
- **About Egypt:** How did social media help the people of Egypt?
- **Self-Reflection:** How can social media help you learn English?
- **Mobile devices:** How many of you have a Facebook page? A Twitter or YouTube account?

**Homework:**
Encourage students to post on their Facebook pages what social media means to them. How do they use it? Why do they use it? Etc.

Or have students tweet a message about the importance or unimportance of social media. (Remember—only 140 characters.)

**EXTRA ONLINE RESOURCES:**
- **Timeline** –
- **Social Media** –
  Twitter: [http://twitter.com/Jan25Voices](http://twitter.com/Jan25Voices)
  Twitter Voice: [http://jan25voices.net/](http://jan25voices.net/)
  Facebook: [http://www.facebook.com/#!/EhnaHena](http://www.facebook.com/#!/EhnaHena)
  Youtube: [http://www.youtube.com/results?uploaded=d&search_filter=0&search_type=videos&suggested_categories=25,22&search_query=protests+in+egypt](http://www.youtube.com/results?uploaded=d&search_filter=0&search_type=videos&suggested_categories=25,22&search_query=protests+in+egypt)
- **News Media** –
  Al Jazeera: [http://english.aljazeera.net/video/](http://english.aljazeera.net/video/) (type Egypt into search mid-page)
  CNN: [http://www.cnn.com/search/?query=egypt%20protest&primaryType=mixed&sortBy=date&intl=false](http://www.cnn.com/search/?query=egypt%20protest&primaryType=mixed&sortBy=date&intl=false)
- **Chat Language and Text Speak** –
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Timeline

**January 2011:** Activists in Egypt call for an uprising in their own country, to protest against poverty, unemployment, government corruption and the rule of president Hosni Mubarak, who has been in power for three decades.

Cut out the boxes and arrange the events in the order you think is correct:

| Google improves its speak2tweet technology for the people in Egypt. | The Egyptian health minister says 11 people have died. | Internet access across Egypt is still shoddy according to most reports. | On a national holiday to commemorate the police forces, Egyptians take to the streets in large numbers, calling it a "day of rage." |
| Internet services are at least partially restored in Cairo after a 5-day blackout aimed at stymieing protests. | The United Nations says 300 people may have been killed. | The European Union calls for free and fair elections in Egypt. | Protest organizers heavily relied on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter. |
| Internet access across Egypt is still shoddy according to most reports. | News agencies have counted more than 150 dead. | Al Jazeera says its broadcast signal is facing interference. | |
| Internet and mobile phone text message users in Egypt report major disruption to services. | The city sees possibly the biggest crowd of demonstrators, including Egyptians who have returned from abroad. | People celebrate in Tahrir Square until early morning. Prodemocracy protesters start to clean the square. | Hosni Mubarak announces in a televised address that he will not run for re-election. |
| Banks officially reopen for 3.5 hours. | Mubarak announces that he has fired the cabinet. | Turkey sends aircraft to evacuate its citizens. | Chants urging Hosni Mubarak to leave, as the country enters its eleventh day of protests. |
| Protests continue in Tahrir Square to protect the Egyptian museum. | Mubarak refuses to step down. | The U.S. embassy in Cairo advises all Americans to consider leaving as soon as possible. | |
| Facebook, Twitter, and Blackberry Messenger services are disrupted. | Hosni Mubarak resigns as president and hands over power to the army. | | |

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1. January 25:
   - On a national holiday to commemorate the police forces, Egyptians take to the streets in large numbers, calling it a "day of rage."
   - Protest organizers heavily relied on social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

2. January 27:
   - Facebook, Twitter, and Blackberry Messenger services are disrupted.

3. January 28:
   - Internet and mobile phone text message users in Egypt report major disruption to services.

4. January 29:
   - Mubarak announces that he has fired the cabinet.
   - Mubarak refuses to step down.

5. January 30:
   - Turkey sends aircraft to evacuate its citizens.
   - The U.S. embassy in Cairo advises all Americans to consider leaving as soon as possible.

6. January 31:
   - Internet access across Egypt is still shoddy according to most reports.
   - The European Union calls for free and fair elections in Egypt.
   - Al Jazeera says its broadcast signal is facing interference.

7. February 1:
   - Hosni Mubarak announces in a televised address that he will not run for re-election.

8. February 2:
   - Google improves its speak2tweet technology for the people in Egypt.
   - Internet services are at least partially restored in Cairo after a 5-day blackout aimed at stymieing protests.

9. February 4:
   - Chants urging Hosni Mubarak to leave, as the country enters its eleventh day of protests.

10. February 5:
    - The Egyptian health minister says 11 people have died.
    - The United Nations says 300 people may have been killed.
    - News agencies have counted more than 150 dead.

11. February 6:
    - Banks officially reopen for 3.5 hours.
    - Protests continue in Tahrir Square to protect the Egyptian museum.

12. February 8:
    - The city sees possibly the biggest crowd of demonstrators, including Egyptians who have returned from abroad.

13. February 11:
    - Hosni Mubarak resigns as president and hands over power to the army.

14. February 12:
    - People celebrate in Tahrir Square until early morning. Prodemocracy protesters start to clean the square.

Adapted from: http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/01/201112515334871490.html
Lesson Plan: Egypt & Social Media
Twitter Feeds

Cut out the boxes and place the tweets with the proper event in your timeline.

Please spread the word. We at #Egypt are being banned from all online and mobile presence! Help! #Jan25

This is becoming the region first telecommunication civil war. Our internet & smart phones are weapons they won't allow us to have. #Jan25

Who in the world, in 2011, shuts down the internet? An aging dictator called #Mubarak who has suffocated #Egypt for 30 years. #Jan25

#Tahrir: Numbers continue to grow. #Mubarak insulted his people last night by saying we were carrying out a foreign agenda. #Jan25

#Tahrir: " people peacefully laid down in front of army vehicles involved in trying to remove barricades, stopping them." #Egypt

Journalists continue to have difficulties getting images out of #Cairo. #Tahrir.

Prayer has finished in #Tahrir. Chants begin. Many helicopters. #Jan25 #Egypt

Just left #Tahrir looking for food for a group I am with. Things in Square remain very calm." #Jan25 #Egypt

I am shaking right now.I am a normal person. It is my country that is burning. We just came for the good of Egypt." #Jan25

Reminding that many are concerned of a cash flow problem given continued lack of availability of ATM etc. #Egypt

Girls whose mothers wouldn't let them out. Now out. Protesting. With their mothers. #Jan25

NOW Another AlJazeera journalist arrested. Total is 6. #Egypt #Aljazeera #Jan25

Egyptians have uncountable cell phone videos, photos. Expect unprecedented flood when internet is up. #Jan25 #Jan28 #Egypt #Jan29

Armed Forces Emergency Number 19614. Pls distribute to friends and family in Egypt but they have no internet #jan25 #jan28 #egypt

Driving through cairo means lots of civilian checkpoints, major and minor roads #Egypt #Jan25

at the airport: short on food, few drinks. Announcements that there are not enough pilots. Some there for 48 hours. #Jan25

I heard: Yesterday (via landlines) "Any idea when mobiles will be back? Today (via mobiles) "Any idea when our internet will be back? #Jan25

Checking SMSing. Random poll suggests that like internet, it is down. #Jan25 #Jan28

Human chain to protect Egyptian Museum. #Jan25 #Jan28 #Egypt

M set a new tone in terms of citizenship, but the violence he is talking about came first from him. #Jan25 #Jan28

If you have landlines please contact us Jan25Voices(at)gmail.com #Jan25

We want freedoms, press, religion, opinion. A democratic state...we want people to be able to live without worry #Jan25

Taken from: http://twitter.com/Jan25Voices

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TESOL Connections, March 2011
**Extra Feeds:** Facebook also had several profile created from the Egypt Protests. These *wall* postings are from Facebook Profine - #Jan25. Students can arrange them with the timeline as well (if there is time...)

| **Renee Randi Hawkins** | To bypass government blocking of website names, use numerical IP addresses:  
| for twitter "128.242.240.52"  
| for facebook "69.63.189.34"  
| for google "72.14.204.99" Egypt can use this number for dial up: +33172890150 (login 'toto' password 'toto'...) - thanks to a French ISP (FDN) |
| **Tarek Sharif** | how can egyptian unite when internet and mobile services are blocked! where is the freedom of speech?? |
| **Israr Qureshi** | Congratulations... you have shown the world that you can achieve anything without resorting to violence. |
| **J acopo Panichi** | Keep on fighting! But you must work on a opposition government (not Mubarak's), that takes upon itself the responsibility, starting from homeland security, to foreign policy. |
| **Nixe Muschelschloss** | (Reuters) - Google Inc said on Monday it has launched a new service for people in Egypt to send Twitter messages without requiring an Internet connection, amid widespread anti-government protests in the country.  
| Google said the new service allows people to dial a telephone number and leave a voicemail, which is automatically translate...d into a message on Twitter. See More |
| **Joachim Wendt** | Al Jazeera confirms: China blocked all news from Egypt as preventative measure against riots. |

Taken from: [http://www.facebook.com/#!/EhnaHena](http://www.facebook.com/#!/EhnaHena)