

FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022

Majorities of teens credit social media with strengthening their friendships and providing support while also noting the emotionally charged side of these platforms

BY *Monica Anderson, Emily A. Vogels, Andrew Perrin and Lee Rainie*

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Monica Anderson, Associate Director
Emily A. Vogels, Research Associate
Haley Nolan, Communications Manager
202.419.4372
www.pewresearch.org

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, November 2022,
"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on
Social Media in 2022"

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, computational social science research and other data-driven research. It studies politics and policy; news habits and media; the internet and technology; religion; race and ethnicity; international affairs; social, demographic and economic trends; science; research methodology and data science; and immigration and migration. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

© Pew Research Center 2022

How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to better understand the experiences American teens are having with social media. For this analysis, we surveyed 1,316 U.S. teens. The survey was conducted online by Ipsos from April 14 to May 4, 2022.

This research was reviewed and approved by an external institutional review board (IRB), Advarra, which is an independent committee of experts that specializes in helping to protect the rights of research participants.

Ipsos recruited the teens via their parents who were a part of its [KnowledgePanel](#), a probability-based web panel recruited primarily through national, random sampling of residential addresses. The survey is weighted to be representative of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 who live with parents by age, gender, race, ethnicity, household income and other categories.

This report also includes quotes from teen focus groups. Pew Research Center worked with PSB Insights to conduct four live, online focus groups with a total of 16 U.S. 13- to 17-year-olds. The focus groups were conducted Jan. 12-13, 2022.

Here are the [questions used for this report](#), along with responses. Here is the [survey methodology](#) and the [focus groups methodology](#).

Table of Contents

Overview	4
1. What teens post on social media	17
2. Teens' views about social media.....	23
3. Focus Groups: Social media stirs a range of emotions and reactions in teens	37
Acknowledgments	47
Appendix A: Survey methodology	48
Appendix B: Focus groups methodology.....	52
Appendix C: Supplementary table	55
Topline questionnaire: Teens Survey.....	56

Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022

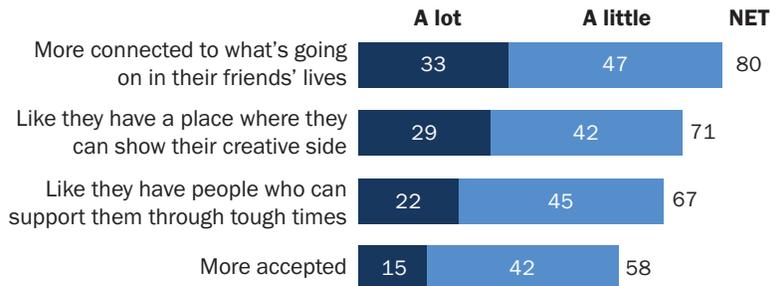
Majorities of teens credit social media with strengthening their friendships and providing support while also noting the emotionally charged side of these platforms

Society has long fretted about [technology's impact](#) on youth. But unlike radio and television, the hyperconnected nature of social media has [led to new anxieties](#), including worries that these platforms may be negatively impacting [teenagers' mental health](#). Just this year, the [White House announced](#) plans to combat potential harms teens may face when using social media.

Despite these concerns, teens themselves paint a more nuanced picture of adolescent life on social media. It is one in which majorities credit these platforms with deepening connections and providing a support network when they need it, while smaller – though notable – shares acknowledge the drama and pressures that can come along with using social media, according to a Pew Research Center survey of U.S. teens

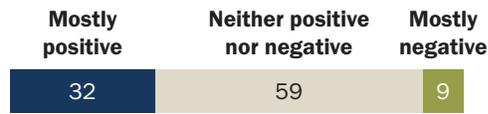
Majorities of teens say social media provides them with a space for connection, creativity and support ...

% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel ...

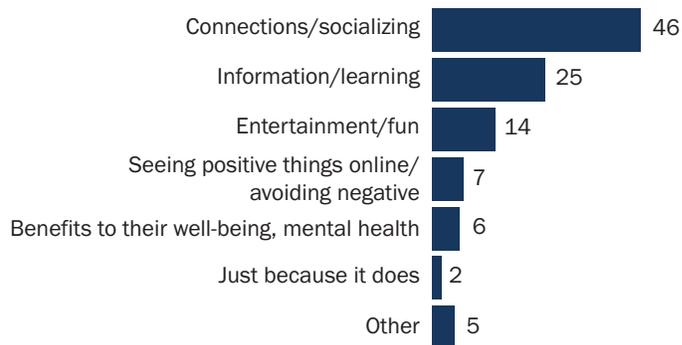


... and are more likely to say these sites have had a positive rather than negative impact on them, with many citing friendships, connections as reasons why

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on them, personally



Among those who say mostly positive, % who give each of the following as the main reasons why



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Verbatim responses have been coded into categories. The 13% who received this question but did not give an answer are not shown. Including this group, figures may add up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

ages 13 to 17 conducted April 14 to May 4, 2022.¹

Eight-in-ten teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel more connected to what’s going on in their friends’ lives, while 71% say it makes them feel like they have a place where they can show their creative side. And 67% say these platforms make them feel as if they have people who can support them through tough times. A smaller share – though still a majority – say the same for feeling more accepted. These positive sentiments are expressed by teens across demographic groups.

When asked about the overall impact of social media on them personally, more teens say its effect has been mostly positive (32%) than say it has been mostly negative (9%). The largest share describes its impact in neutral terms: 59% believe social media has had neither a positive nor a negative effect on them. For teens who view social media’s effect on them as mostly positive, many describe maintaining friendships, building connections, or accessing information as main reasons they feel this way, with one teen saying:

“It connects me with the world, provides an outlet to learn things I otherwise wouldn’t have access to, and allows me to discover and explore interests.” – Teen girl

While these youth describe the benefits they get from social media, this positivity is not unanimous. Indeed, 38% of teens say they feel overwhelmed by all the drama they see on social media, while about three-in-ten say these platforms have made them feel like their friends are leaving them out of things (31%) or have felt pressure to post content that will get lots of likes or comments (29%). Another 23% say these platforms make them feel worse about their own life.

¹ A [2018 Center survey](#) also asked U.S teens some of the same questions about experiences and views related to social media (e.g., whether social media makes them feel more connected to what’s going on in their friend’s lives). Direct comparisons cannot be made across the two surveys due to mode, sampling and recruitment differences. Please read the [Methodology section](#) to learn more about how the current survey was conducted.

Teen girls report encountering some of these pressures at higher rates. Some 45% of girls say they feel overwhelmed because of all the drama on social media, compared with 32% of boys. Girls are also more likely than boys to say social media has made them feel like their friends are leaving them out of things (37% vs. 24%) or worse about their own lives (28% vs. 18%).

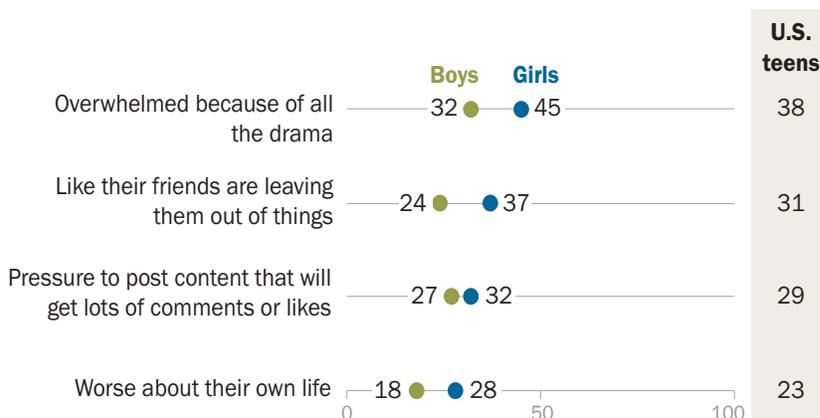
When asked how often they decide not to post on social media out of fear of it being using against them, older teen girls stand out. For example, half of 15- to 17-year-old girls

say they often or sometimes decide not to post something on social media because they worry others might use it to embarrass them, compared with smaller shares of younger girls or boys.

These are some of the key findings from a Pew Research Center online survey of 1,316 U.S. teens conducted from April 14 to May 4, 2022.

Teen girls more likely than teen boys to say social media has made them feel overwhelmed by drama, excluded by friends or worse about their life

*% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel **a lot or little** ...*



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Teens are more likely to view social media as having a negative effect on others than themselves

The [strong presence of social media](#) in many teenagers' lives begs the question: What impact, if any, are these sites having on today's youth?

Even as teens tend to view the impact of social media on their own lives in more positive than negative terms, they are more critical of its influence on their peers. While 9% of teens think social media has had a mostly negative effect on them personally, that share rises to 32% when the same question is framed about people *their age*.

There are also gaps when looking at the positive side of these platforms. Some 32% of teens say social media has had a positive effect on them personally, compared with a smaller share (24%) who say the same about these platforms' impact on teens more broadly.

Still, regardless of whether teens are assessing social media's impact on themselves or others, the most common way they describe its effect is as neither positive nor negative.

More teens say social media has had a negative effect on people their age than on them, personally

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on ...

	Mostly positive	Neither positive nor negative	Mostly negative
People their age	24	45	32
Them, personally	32	59	9

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Teens reflect on parents' concerns and assessments of teen life on social media

Parents are often on the front lines in navigating challenges their children may face when using social media. While [previous Center surveys](#) reflect parents' anxieties about social media, only a minority of teens in this survey describe their parents as being highly concerned about their use of these sites.

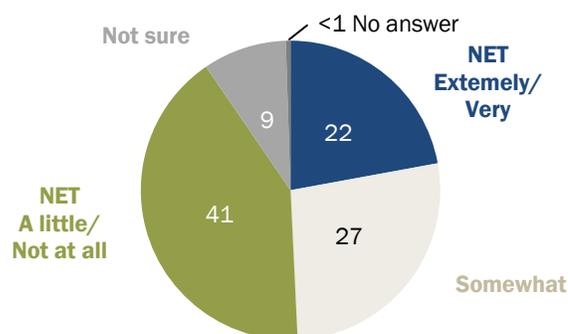
Some 22% believe their parents are extremely or very worried about them using social media, while another 27% say their parents are somewhat worried. However, many teens – 41% – say their parents are worried only a little or not at all. And 9% say they aren't sure about the level of concern their parents have over their social media use.

These youth also weighed in on whether parents overall – not just their own – have an accurate picture of what it's like to be a teenager on social media. Some 39% say teens' experiences are better than parents think, while 27% say things on social media are worse for teens than parents think. Still, one-third believe parents' assessments are about right.

Teens who have a more positive outlook about social media are more likely to say these platforms benefit them

Only a minority of teens say their parents are extremely or very worried about their social media use

% of U.S. teens who say they think their parents are ___ worried about them using social media



About four-in-ten teens say teens' experiences on social media are better than what parents think

% of U.S. teens who say they think teens' experiences on social media are ...



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Teens who see social media as having a mostly positive effect on people their age are more likely than teens who see mostly negative effects to say teens' experiences on social media are better than parents think. They are also more likely to say they have had positive experiences while personally using these platforms.

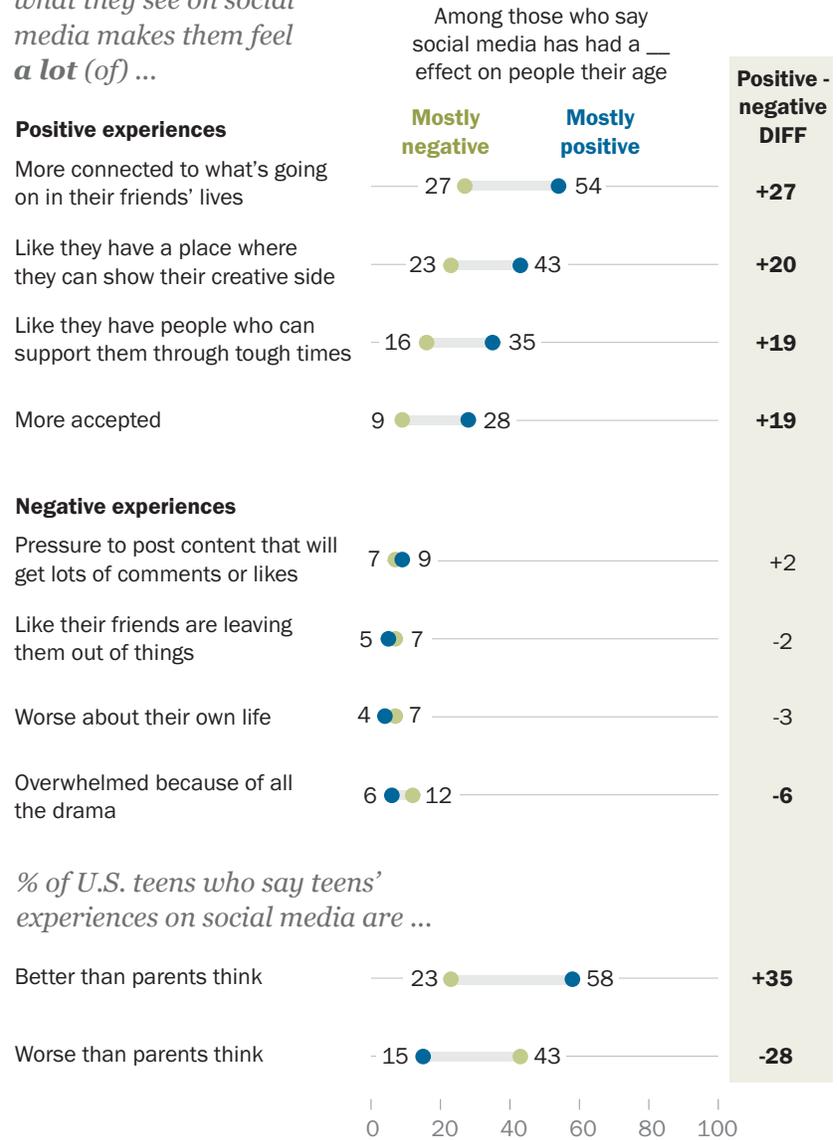
Whether teens see social media's effects as positive or negative relates to their perspective on whether parents' views stack up to reality. About six-in-ten teens who say that social media has had a mostly positive effect on people their age say teens' experiences on social media are better than parents think, while a plurality of teens who say social media has been mostly negative for people their age say teens' experiences on social media are worse than parents think.

Teens who have a more positive view of social media's effect on their peers report more positive personal experiences with these platforms. More than half (54%) of teens who see social

media as having a mostly positive effect on people their age say that what they see on social media

Teens who see social media as a positive for all teens more likely to report positive personal experiences

% of U.S. teens who say what they see on social media makes them feel a lot (of) ...



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Statistically significant differences in DIFF column are in **bold**. The DIFF values shown are based on subtracting the rounded values in the chart. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown. Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

makes them feel a lot more connected to what's going on in their friends' lives. About four-in-ten say they feel a lot like they have a place where they can show their creative side. Some 35% of teens who see the effect as mostly positive say social media makes them feel a lot like they have people who can support them through tough times, and 28% say it makes them feel a lot more accepted. By comparison, much smaller shares – about or quarter or fewer – of teens who see social media as having a negative effect say what they see on social media makes them feel each of these positive experiences a lot.

While teens who have a positive outlook on the impact of social media are more likely to report personally benefiting from these sites, they tend to say they've experienced the more negative side in similar proportions as those who rate these sites' effect on teens negatively. There is one exception: 12% of teens who believe social media has a mostly negative effect on teens say they feel overwhelmed by all of the drama on these platforms a lot, compared with 6% of those who see its impact as mostly positive.

Online activism is not common on social media among teens; only a minority of teens are highly concerned about digital privacy

Beyond broad measurement of social media, this survey also tackled two popular topics in the debates around social media: [online activism](#) and [digital privacy](#).

Only small shares of teens are engaging in online activism on social media, but experiences and views vary by political affiliation

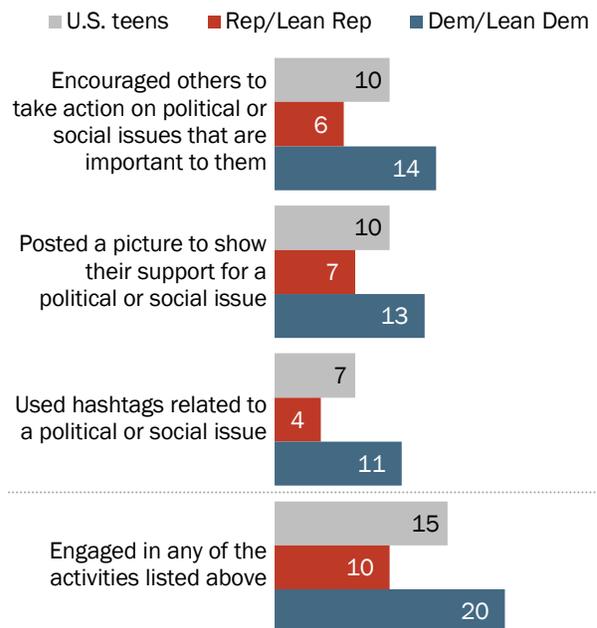
On topics from [MAGA to Black Lives Matter](#), social media platforms have become an important way for people of all ages to share information, mobilize and discuss issues that are important to them.

But this survey reveals that only a minority of teens say they have been civically active on social media in the past year via one of the three means asked about at the time of the survey. One-in-ten teens say they have encouraged others to take action on political or social issues that are important to them or have posted a picture to show their support for a political or social issue in the past 12 months. Some 7% say the same about using hashtags related to a political or social cause on social media during this period. Taken together, 15% of teens have engaged in at least one of these activities on social media in the past 12 months.

While majorities of both Democrats and Republicans have not used social media in this way, there are some notable partisan differences among those who engage in activism. For example, 14% of teens who identify as Democrats or who lean toward the Democratic Party say they have used social media to encourage others to take action on political or social issues that are important to them in the past 12 months, compared with 6% of teens who are Republicans or GOP leaners. And larger shares of Democrats than Republicans

Few teens engaged in online activism in past year; Democratic teens are more likely to have done so than Republicans

% of U.S. teens who say they have ___ on social media in the past 12 months



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give a response are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

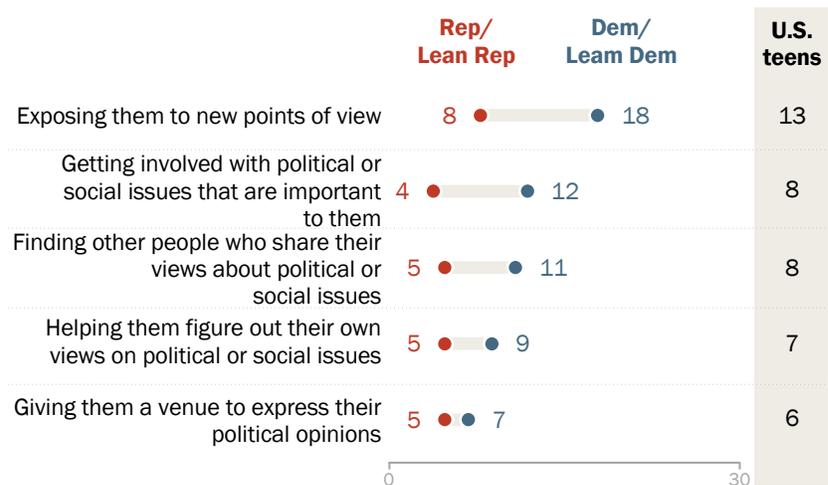
say they have posted pictures or used hashtags to show support for a political or social issue in the past year. In total, Democratic teens are twice as likely as Republican teens to have engaged in any of these activities during this time (20% vs. 10%).

Not only do small shares of teens participate in these types of activities on social media, relatively few say these platforms play a critical role in how they interact with political and social issues.

About one-in-ten or fewer teens say social media is extremely or very important to them personally when it comes to exposing them to new viewpoints, getting involved with issues that are important to them, finding other people who share their views, helping them figure out their own views on an issue or giving them a venue to express their political opinions.

Among teens, Democrats more likely than Republicans to see social media as extremely or very important for finding new viewpoints

% of U.S. teens who say social media is extremely or very important to them personally when it comes to each of the following



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Just as Democratic teens are more likely than Republican teens to engage in these forms of online activism, they also see social media as a more integral tool for civic engagement. For example, 18% of Democratic teens say social media is extremely or very important to them when it comes to exposing them to new points of view, compared with 8% of Republican teens. Democrats are also more likely than Republicans to say these platforms are at least very important to them for getting involved with issues that are important to them, finding others who share their views or helping them figure out their own way of thinking.

And when asked about what people should do more broadly, Democratic teens (22%) are more likely than Republican teens (12%) to say that regardless of whether they engage in online activism themselves, it is very or extremely important for people to speak out about political or social issues on social media.

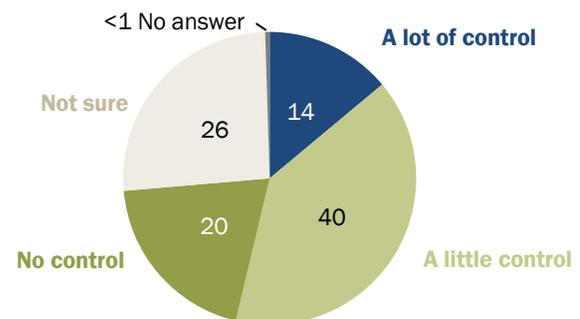
Teens feel a lack of control over their personal data but aren't too concerned about social media companies having this information

Amid the continued privacy discussions in [the media](#) and [among policymakers](#), teens have nuanced views on the topic. Just 14% of teens report feeling a lot of control over the personal information that social media companies collect about them. Meanwhile, 60% of teens feel like they have little to no control. A further 26% say they are not sure how much control they have over companies' collection of this information.

Despite feeling a lack of control over their data being collected by social media companies, teens are largely unconcerned. A fifth of teens (20%) say they feel very or extremely concerned about the amount of their personal information social media companies might have. Still, a notable segment of teens – 44% – say they have little or no concern about how much these companies might know about them.

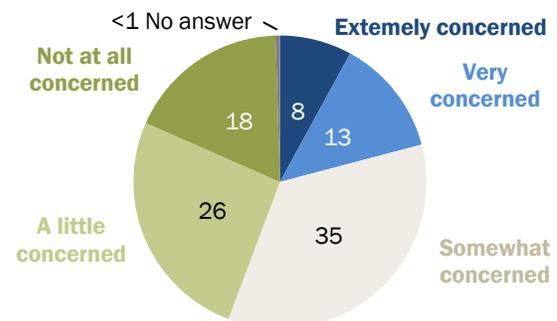
A majority of teens feel as if they have little to no control over their data being collected by social media companies ...

% of U.S. teens who say they think they have ___ over the personal information that social media companies collect about them



... but only one-in-five are extremely or very concerned about the amount of information these sites have about them

% of U.S. teens who say they are ___ about the amount of personal information social media companies might know about them



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Values may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Figures may not add up to NET values due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In their own words, teens share their thoughts about social media and the challenges and benefits of using it

To inform and supplement this survey, the Center conducted a series of teen focus groups to better understand how teens were using social media and thinking about topics related to it. These focus groups highlight how nuanced teens' views on social media truly are.

"TikTok is more of a place to watch videos ... then Instagram [is] more to see what my friends are up to and then Snapchat [is] a way of more direct communication." – Teen girl

Teens share how different platforms serve different purposes as they navigate online life and that using these platforms can lead to a variety of emotions and experiences, from anxiety to excitement and from improved social connections to bullying:²

"I've liked, especially during the pandemic, being able to communicate with my friends more, since I couldn't see them in person. And then also, having something to watch to entertain me, which was good, because we were just stuck at home."

– Teen girl

"Okay, for me, it is like bullies or like negative comments or stuff like that, you just see a lot of people hating under the comments, under your posts and stuff like that." – Teen boy

As teens walk us through their perspectives, they also share how the pandemic changed (and didn't change) their social media habits and what they think their lives would be like if social media disappeared overnight:

"During the pandemic, I feel like less people were using social media in certain ways, because there wasn't much to post, like going out. You're just staying at home. But TikTok, everyone was on it, because it was their source of entertainment." – Teen girl

"I think it would be a little bit [messed up if social media disappeared]. I spend 99% of my time indoors in front of my computer, if I'm not playing games, I'm watching pirated videos. If I'm not watching videos, maybe I'm reading an article. I'm always online. And I hardly step out of my room. I have had issues with my dad. He said my room is too creepy. I should come outside and play with people but I'm not really good at making friends. So, it's a bit hard on me." – Teen boy

² Quotations in this report may have been lightly edited for grammar, spelling and clarity.

“[When] we were younger, [social media] didn’t have an effect on us and social media wasn’t as big as it is now. I feel like we were more free and more happy, and no stress or overthinking or insecure.” – Teen girl

For more quotes and themes from the focus groups, [see Chapter 3](#).

1. What teens post on social media

Social media has become a key way young people share what’s going on in their lives – from family life to their successes and the ups and downs of being a teenager. Teens must also navigate how they present themselves to the world as they deliberate about what, when and on which platform they should share facets of their lives.

In addition to exploring the types of things teens post – or don’t post – on social media, this chapter examines teens’ experiences with online activism and covers a range of political activities they may engage in on these platforms. Overall, only a small portion of teens report taking part in these types of civic engagement, but those who do are more likely to identify as Democrats.

Teens are far more likely to post about their accomplishments and family than their religious or political beliefs

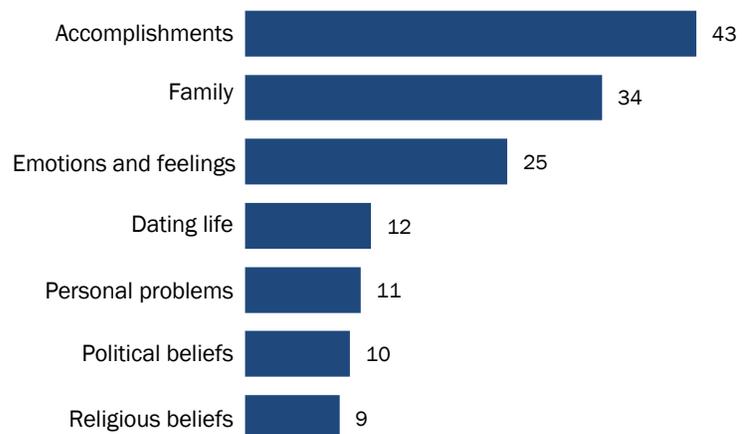
When it comes to the types of things young people post on social media, accomplishments and family life top the list of topics measured in this survey.

About four-in-ten teens (43%) say they post about their accomplishments on social media, 34% say they post about their family and 25% report sharing things related to their emotions and feelings. Smaller shares of teens – about one-in-ten – say they ever post about their dating life, their personal problems or their religious or political beliefs.

Older teen girls stand out in sharing a host of things on social media. Some 49% of 15- to 17-year-old girls say they ever post about their family, compared with a third or fewer of younger girls or of older or

Teens are more likely to post on social media about their accomplishments and family life than their religious or political beliefs

% of U.S. teens who say they ever post about their ___ on social media



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

younger boys. And older girls are also more likely than their counterparts to post about their accomplishments, family, emotions, personal problems or dating lives. For further details about this, please, [see Appendix C](#).

Some teens – especially older girls – forego posting things on social media because it could be used to embarrass them

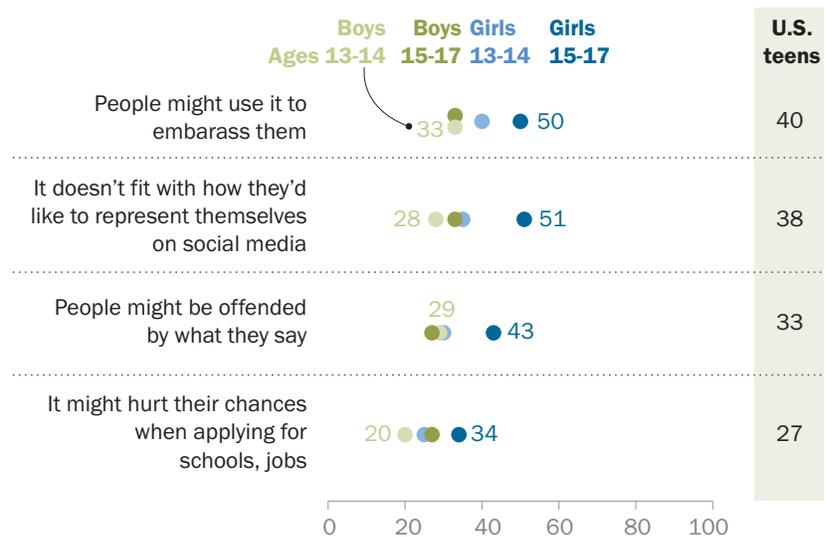
Teens may consider a variety of factors as they decide about whether or not to post on social media. This includes calculations about how they want to present themselves on these platforms and their judgments about potential consequences that may come with posting.

Some youth avoid sharing altogether because of fear of embarrassment: 40% of teens say they often or sometimes decide not to post something on social media because they worry people might use it to embarrass them. A similar share (38%) says the same about not posting something because it does not align with how they like to represent themselves on these platforms.

Additionally, one-third of teens say they at least sometimes do not share things on social media out of concern of offending others by what they say, and 27% say they forego posting to social media because it could hurt their chances when applying for schools or jobs.

Older teen girls more likely than younger girls or boys to say they don't post things on social media because they're worried it could be used to embarrass them

% of U.S. teens who say they often or sometimes decide not to post something on social media because they worry ...



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or gave other response are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

These concerns are more prevalent among older teen girls. Roughly half of 15- to 17-year-old girls say they often or sometimes decide not to post something on social media because they worry it

doesn't fit with how they'd like to represent themselves on these sites, compared with about one-third or less of younger girls or boys overall. Older girls are also more likely than younger girls or their male counterparts to report they at least sometimes don't share something on social media because others might use it to embarrass them or because people might be offended by what they say.

Most teens are not politically active on social media, but their experiences and views related to online activism vary across parties

Involvement with political issues on social media can take many forms. Teens were asked about three ways they may engage with issues or causes on these platforms; only a small portion of them are actively engaging in activism on social media.

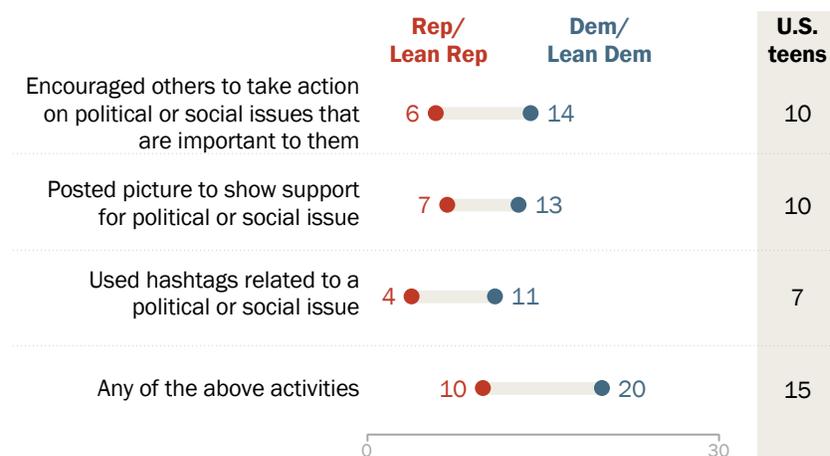
One-in-ten teens say that in the past 12 months they have used social media to encourage others to take action on political or social issues that are important to them or have posted a picture to show their support for a political or social issue, while a somewhat smaller share (7%) say they have used hashtags related to a political or social cause during this period. Taken together, 15% of teens have engaged in at least one of these activities on social media in the past year.

Majorities of teens across political parties are not engaging with political or social issues on social media in this

way. Still, teens identifying as Democrats are more likely than their Republican counterparts to report participating in each of these activities.

Most teens have not engaged in certain forms of online activism on social media over the past year; doing so is more common among Democrats

% of U.S. teens who say they have done the following activities on social media in the past 12 months



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Some 14% of Democratic teens – including independents who lean toward the Democratic Party – say they have used social media in the past year to encourage others to take action on issues they care about, compared with 6% of Republican and Republican-leaning teens. Democratic teens are also more likely than Republican teens to say that in the past year they have posted a picture to show support for a cause or used issues-related hashtags on social media. In total, Democrats are twice as likely as Republicans (20% vs. 10%) to have participated in this type of activism on social media in the past 12 months.

There are also some differences by age and gender, with older girls standing out as being more politically active on these platforms. One-in-five 15- to 17-year-old girls have engaged politically on social media in the past 12 months, compared with about one-in-ten younger girls (12%) or teen boys of any age (11%).

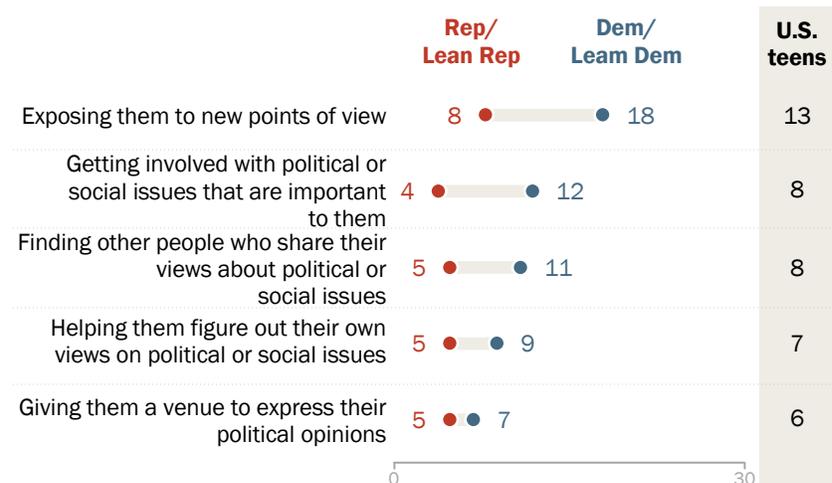
Only a minority of teens see social media as extremely or very important to them – or other people – for getting involved in key issues

Most teens do not place a high level of personal importance on social media as a venue for political and civic engagement.

Overall, 13% of teens say social media is extremely or very important to them personally when it comes to exposing them to new points of view. Fewer than one-in-ten say these platforms are at least very important for finding others who share their view (8%), getting involved with political or social issues that are important to them (8%), figuring out their own views on an issue (7%) or giving them a venue to express their political opinions (6%).

Few teens view social media as extremely or very important to them personally when it comes to finding new viewpoints, but this varies by political affiliation

% of U.S. teens who say social media is extremely or very important to them personally when it comes to ...



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

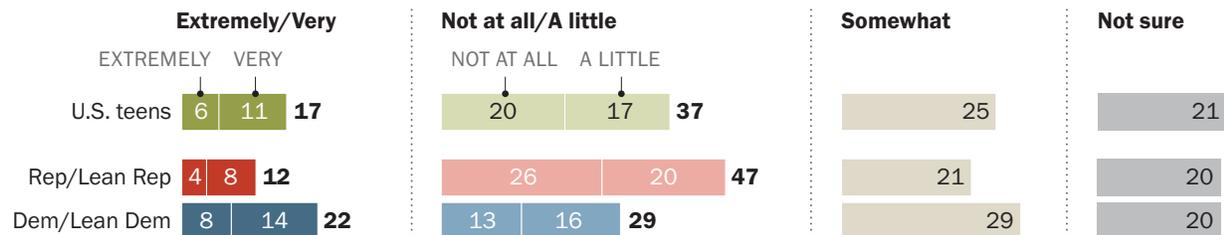
Clear majorities do not view these platforms as personally important for engaging in these types of activities. For example, 65% of teens say social media is not at all important to them personally for giving them a place to express their political opinions.

The personal value that teens place on these platforms varies by political affiliation. Some 18% of Democratic teens say social media is extremely or very important to them when it comes to exposing them to new points of view, compared with 8% of Republican teens. Democrats are also more likely than Republicans to say these platforms are at least very important to them for getting involved with issues that are important to them, finding others who share their views or helping them figure out their own way of thinking.

Although social media has become a go-to tool for political engagement for some segments of the population, relatively few teens think it's vital for people to use this medium for speaking out. Regardless of whether they do this, 17% of teens it is extremely or very important for people to speak up about political and social issues on social media, but a larger share – about four-in-ten – believe doing so is only a little (17%) or not at all (20%) important.

Democratic teens see speaking out about issues on social media as more important than their Republican counterparts

% of U.S. teens who say they think it is ___ important for people to speak out about political or social issues on social media, regardless of whether they themselves do this



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

There is also a segment of this population who are uncertain about this subject: 21% of teens say they are not sure if speaking out in these ways on social media is important.

Not only are there partisan differences in being politically active on social media, Democrats and Republicans place varying degrees of importance of anyone speaking out on these platforms. Roughly half of Republican teens say it is only a little or not at all important for people to speak up

about political and social issues on social media, compared with 29% of Democratic teens. Conversely, Democrats are about twice as likely as Republicans to believe it's extremely or very important for people to speak up in this way (22% vs. 12%).

2. Teens' views about social media

Social media use by teens has drawn significant attention from parents, journalists and lawmakers in recent years. The harmful things that stoke concerns include the amount of time teens [spend on their screens](#), the ways teens may use social media to [compare themselves](#) with others, [cyberbullying](#), and social media's ability to lead some teens to [radical views and actions](#).

Despite the concerns that have been raised about [teens' experiences online](#), teens largely see the time they spend on social media in a neutral or positive light. Indeed, teens are more likely to say that social media has a mostly positive – rather than negative – effect on their lives. And majorities say social media makes them feel more connected with friends, more accepted, like they have a support network, and like they have a creative outlet.

Teens across major demographic groups express these sentiments.

“Social media has definitely had some negative influence on me, but overall, it has been an overwhelmingly positive effect. It allows me to connect with my friends in ways that would otherwise be impossible and has introduced me to many of my favorite books, movies, and games. I’ve also learned a lot from some platforms, like YouTube, which can be used for educational purposes too.” – Teen girl

However, teens' experiences are not uniformly positive. About four-in-ten teens (38%) say they have felt overwhelmed by the drama they see on social media, while roughly three-in-ten (31%) say it's made them feel excluded by their friends. There is also evidence that experiencing some of the negative sides of social media varies by gender, with teen girls being more likely than teen boys to report that things they come across on these platforms make them feel overwhelmed because of all the drama, like their friends are leaving them out of things, and worse about their own lives.

And while more teens say social media has had a mostly positive effect on their lives than say the opposite, teens' views are different when the question involves the impact of social media on *all* teens. About a third of teens (32%) say social media is mostly negative for people their age, compared with about a quarter (24%) who think the effect has been mostly positive.

Another key dimension surrounding social media is digital privacy. Despite a majority of teens saying they feel like they have little to no control over the information social media companies collect about them, teens by and large are not too concerned about the amount of their personal information social media companies might have.

This rest of this chapter covers the range of teens' views about the role of social media in their lives.

Teens more likely to view social media as having a negative effect on others than themselves

The effects of social media on young people has been a major topic of concern for years [in the media](#), by [lawmakers](#), from [parents](#) and from [teens themselves](#). This survey shows that teens have a somewhat split sense of the kind of impact social media has: As a group, they are more downbeat about social media's effect on teens in general than they are about its impact on their own lives.

Specifically, when asked to

reflect on the effects of social media on people their age, 45% of teens say these platforms have had neither a positive nor negative effect on people their age and 24% say that it has been mostly positive for teens. About a third of teens say social media has had a mostly negative effect on people their age.

When teens are asked to reflect on their personal experiences with social media, again, the largest share (59%) say social media has had a neither positive nor negative effect on them personally. Just 9% of teens say social media has had a mostly negative effect on them personally, and 32% say it has been mostly positive in their experience. These patterns are consistent across demographic groups.

Connectedness tops the positive outcomes teens report for using social media

The benefits and potential pitfalls of teen social media use have been [hotly contested](#) in the public arena, with debates surfacing about how it may affect [social development](#), [mental health](#) and [education](#). To better understand the kinds of experiences youth have on social media, the survey asked teens to explain why they feel social media has a mostly positive or mostly negative effect on them.

Teens more likely to see potential negative effects of social media for other teens than for themselves

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on each of the following

	Mostly positive	Neither positive nor negative	Mostly negative
People their age	24	45	32
Them, personally	32	59	9

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Those who say social media has a mostly positive impact give a range of reasons for why that's the case. Nearly half describe the benefits of socializing on these platforms or the ability to build or maintain connections with others while using social media:³

“I get to talk to my friends that I can’t spend time with because of this virus, and I no longer live in the same area or go to the same school as my friends that I grew up with.” – Teen girl

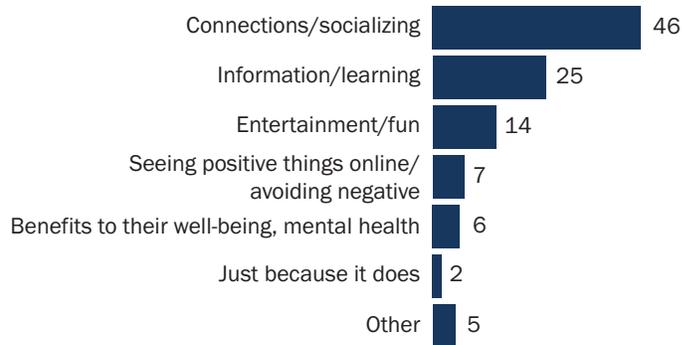
“I am kind of socially awkward and making friends in person has often been difficult. Currently, I have a couple long time friendships online and talk with them practically daily.” – Teen boy

Nearly half of teens who say social media has had a mostly positive effect on them cite connecting with others as the main reason why

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on them, personally



Among those who say mostly positive, % who give each of the following as the main reasons why



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Verbatim responses have been coded into categories. The 13% who received this question but did not give an answer are not shown. Including this group, figures may end up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A quarter of those who say social media has had a mostly positive effect on them personally mention how social media helps them learn or find information:

“On YouTube, I can easily access helpful videos and news alongside entertainment. YouTube has actually been an integral part of several of my classes as it helped people learn how to use software ... or even had resources I used to complete projects.” – Teen boy

³ Quotations in this report may have been lightly edited for grammar, spelling and clarity.

“You can experience things that you don’t have the time or ability to experience, it also passes time and can teach you many important life skills that you may not learn until much later.” – Teen girl

Meanwhile, 14% of teens who say social media has been mostly positive for them point to the entertainment value they see in social media:

“I enjoy looking at memes and funny videos. I don’t watch things that would make me feel bad about myself. I only look at the funny things.” – Teen girl

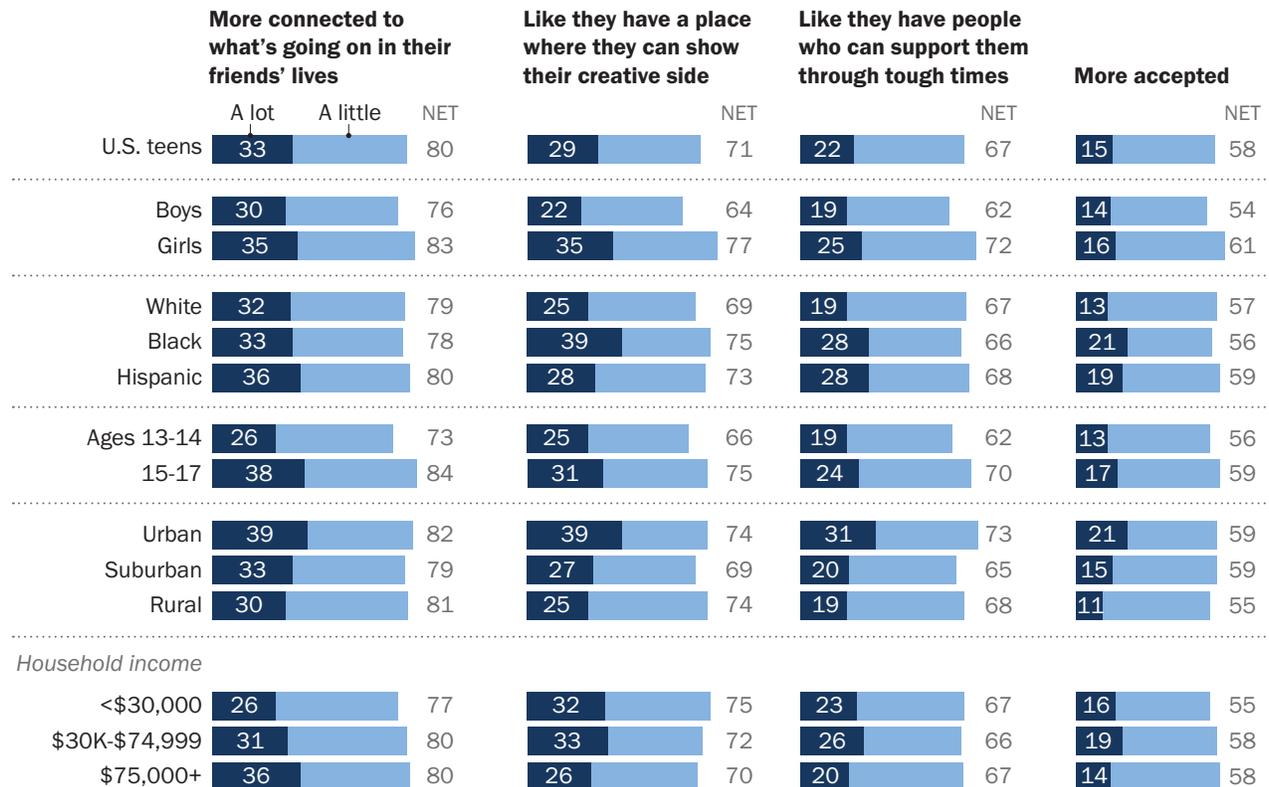
“I just like to watch videos and be entertained. I don’t really let it affect me if someone is mean or something because that is something that just happens sometimes.” – Teen boy

Smaller shares of teens who see the personal effects of social media as positive explain that it is because they curate their social media experiences to focus on positive things or avoid negative things on these platforms, it benefits their well-being, or it just does have a positive effect on them.

The survey also covered more general questions about the possible positive and negative effects teens may have experienced while using social media, regardless of whether they had an overall positive or negative view about social media in their lives. In response to those questions, teens in general report feeling a variety of positive things when using social media, with connectedness to others topping the list. Eight-in-ten teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel more connected to what is going on in their friends’ lives, with a third saying they feel this a lot. About seven-in-ten teens (71%) say what they see makes them feel like they have a place where they can show their creative side, and roughly two-thirds (67%) say it makes them feel like they have people who can support them through tough times. Overall, 58% of teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel more accepted.

Black or Hispanic teens are more likely than White teens to say what they see on social media makes them feel a lot of support and a lot more accepted

% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel **a lot or a little ...**



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. White and Black teens include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic teens are of any race. Figures may not add up to NET values due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Roughly half or more of teens across demographic groups say they feel each of these four things. There are only a few demographic differences in the shares of teens who say they feel these things at least a little. Differences are more common when looking at teens who say they feel certain positive experiences a lot.

While teens' experiences with feeling a lot more accepted and connected with their friends do not statistically differ across genders, teen girls are more likely than teen boys to say that what they see on social media makes them feel a lot like they have a place to express their creativity or like they have people who can support them.

In higher shares than White teens, Black or Hispanic teens say what they see on social media makes them feel a lot like they have support and a lot more accepted.⁴ Furthermore, Black teens are particularly likely to feel like social media gives them a creative outlet – with about four-in-ten saying that what they see on social media makes them feel a lot like they have a place where they can show their creative side, compared with about a quarter of White or Hispanic teens.

There are also age differences. Teens ages 15 to 17 are more likely than those 13 to 14 to say the things they see on social media make them feel a lot more connected to their friends' lives (38% vs. 26%) and like they have a place where they can show their creative side (31% vs. 25%).

Urban teens stand out from suburban and rural teens when it comes to feeling a lot like social media provides them with a creative outlet and a solid support system. Urban teens are also more likely than rural teens to say what they see on social media makes them feel a lot more accepted.

⁴ There were not enough Asian American teen respondents in the sample to be broken out into a separate analysis. As always, their responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout the report.

Teen girls more likely than teen boys to cite certain negative experiences on social media

About one-in-ten teens (9%) see their experiences with social media as mostly negative. In their open-ended explanations for why they feel this way, these teens describe several kinds of struggles. Some 23% of these teens say concerns about the time spent on social media is the main reason why they feel this way:⁵

“I think social media has had a negative effect on me because the more I’m on it the less I’m socially active. I feel like social media has become something I cannot live without, almost like a second limb.” – Teen boy

“I can do better things with my time and go out with my friends and not talk to people over a screen.” – Teen girl

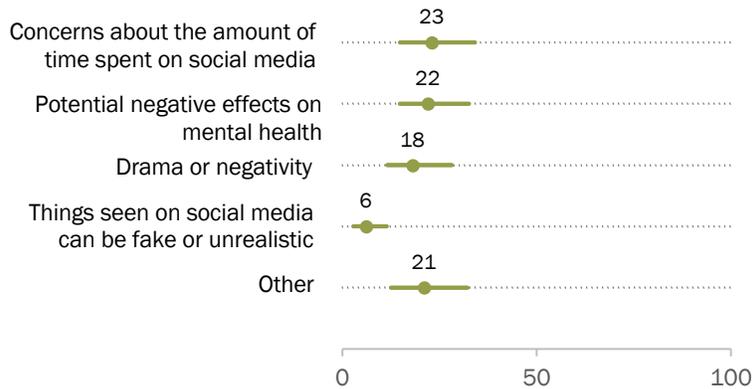
“It causes me to procrastinate on homework or other tasks.” – Teen boy

Teens who say social media has been mostly negative for them cite screen time issues, mental health concerns and online drama as the main reasons why

% of U.S. teens who say social media has had a ___ effect on them, personally



Among those who say mostly negative, % who give each of the following as the main reasons why



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Lines surrounding data points represent the margin of error of each estimate, which have been added due to small sample size. Verbatim responses have been coded into categories. The 14% who received this question but did not give an answer are not shown. Including this group, figures may end up to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁵ Due to the small sample size of teens who said social media was mostly negative for them personally, all the percentages for the themes derived from the follow-up question about why they feel this way are best understood with their margin of error accounted for. Here are the point estimates and lower and upper bounds for each of the themes: concerns about the amount of time spent on social media – 23% (14.81%–34.11%), potential negative effects on mental health – 22% (14.78%–32.57%), drama or negativity – 18% (11.53%–28.15%), things seen on social media can be fake or unrealistic – 6% (2.82%–11.39%), and other – 21% (12.51%–32.17%).

A similar share (22%) says the potential negative effects on mental health are the main reason why social media's effect on them personally has been mostly negative:

"I used to spend a lot of time comparing myself to people online. It was a huge distraction and made me feel bad about myself." – Teen boy

"Pressure, comparing myself, cyberbullying, stuck in a loop of social media, having an empty-feeling effect after use, going down rabbit holes of comparing myself, overwhelming." – Teen girl

About a fifth of teens who say the effect of social media has been mostly negative for them say drama or negativity is the primary reason for their answer:

"Too much negativity from many people complaining or being aggressive towards different topics." – Teen boy

"People try to make you feel bad about what you're doing or how you look." – Teen girl

"I have gotten bullied on social media ... people are rude." – Teen girl

A small share of these teens (6%) point to some things seen on social media being fake or unrealistic as the main reason they think social media has been mostly negative for them personally:

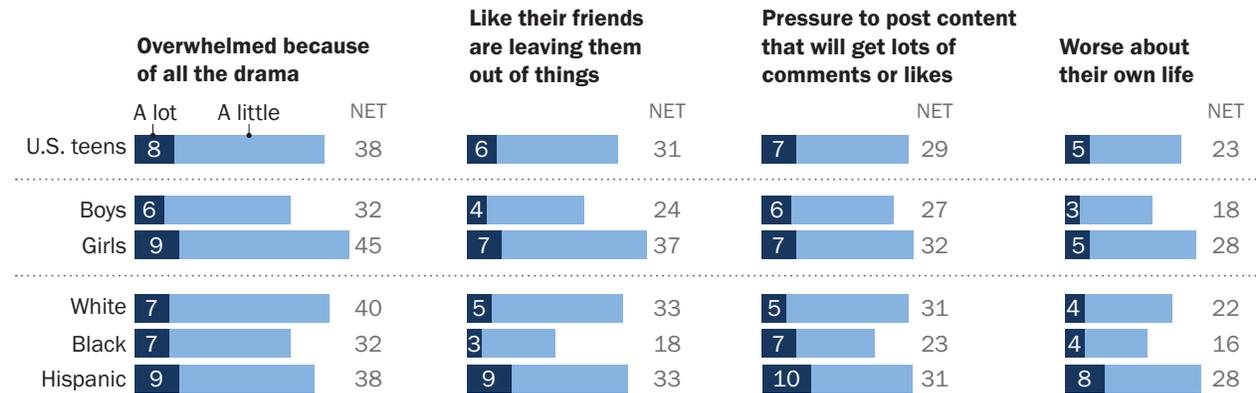
"It leads to you comparing yourself to unrealistic standards." – Teen boy

"Things are in a perfect world in social media, false." – Teen girl

When asking teens in general about possible negative experiences on the platforms, about four-in-ten say that what they see on social media makes them ever feel overwhelmed because of all the drama (38%). Roughly three-in-ten say it makes them feel at least a little pressure to post content that will get lots of comments or likes (29%) or like their friends are leaving them out of things (31%). And 23% say what they see on social media makes them feel at least a little worse about their own life. Only about one-in-ten or fewer teens say they feel each of these four things *a lot*.

Teen girls more likely than teen boys to say what they see on social media makes them feel overwhelmed by drama, excluded by friends or worse about their life

% of U.S. teens who say that in general, what they see on social media makes them feel **a lot or a little ...**



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. White and Black teens include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic teens are of any race. Figures may not add up to NET values due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Compared with teen boys, teen girls more frequently say that what they see on social media makes them feel overwhelmed because of all the drama (45% vs. 32%), like their friends are leaving them out of things (37% vs. 24%), and worse about their own lives (28% vs. 18%).

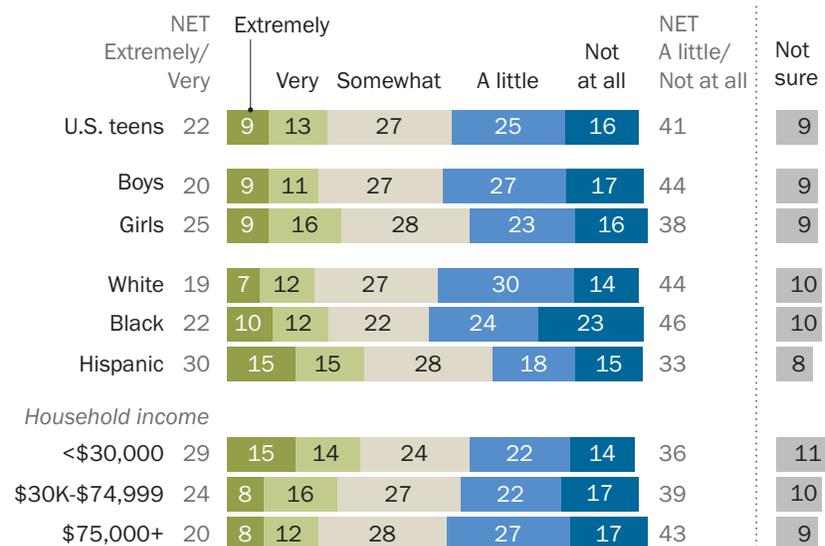
White or Hispanic teens are roughly twice as likely as Black teens to report that what they see on social media makes them feel excluded by their friends (33% vs. 18%). In addition, Hispanic teens are more likely than Black teens to say social media makes them feel worse about their lives (28% vs. 16%).

Pluralities of teens say teen experiences on social media are better than parents think and believe their parents aren't too worried about their use

Prior Center research has found that majorities of parents express a [variety of worries](#) when it comes to teen social media use. However, only a minority of teens think their parents are extremely or very worried. Some 22% of teens say they think their parents are extremely or very worried about them using social media, including 9% who say their parents are extremely worried. But larger shares of teens – about four-in-ten – think their parents are not at all (16%) or a little worried (25%) about them using social media. About quarter of teens (27%) fall more in the middle, saying they think their parents are somewhat worried. An additional 9% say they are not sure.

Hispanic teens more likely than White teens to think their parents are extremely worried about them using social media

% of U.S. teens who say they think their parents are ___ worried about them using social media



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. White and Black teens include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic teens are of any race. Figures may not add up to NET values due to rounding. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Teens' perceptions about the way their parents view their social media use vary somewhat by race and ethnicity as well as household income. White and Black teens are more likely than Hispanic teens to say they think their parents are not at all or a little worried about their social media use. In addition, Hispanic teens stand out from White teens in saying they think their parents are extremely worried (15% vs. 7%).

Teens from lower-income households are more likely than more affluent teens to characterize their parents as being extremely worried about their use of social media. Some 15% of teens from families with household incomes less than \$30,000 a year say their parents are extremely worried

about them using social media. By comparison, smaller shares from households making \$30,000 to \$74,999 annually or \$75,000 or more say their parents are extremely worried (8% each).

Teens overall may not see their own parents as particularly worried about their social media use, but many teens believe there is a disconnect between parental perceptions of teen experiences on social media and their lived realities. Some 39% of teens say teens' experiences on social media are better than parents think, and 27% say they are worse. A third of teens say parents' views are about right when it comes to teens' experiences on these platforms.

Roughly four-in-ten teens say teens' experiences on social media are better than parents think

% of U.S. teens who say they think teens' experiences on social media are ...



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Teen opinions on this topic do not differ across most key demographic breaks, but they do vary based on teens' perceptions of social media's effect on people their age. Fully 58% of teens who say that social media has had mostly positive effects on people their age say teens' experiences on social media are better than parents think, compared with 39% of those who say social media has been neither positive nor negative who say the same. Teens who say social media has had mostly negative effects on teens in general are even less likely to say teens' experiences on social media are better than parents think, with 23% saying this.

Conversely, teens who say social media has been mostly negative for people their age (43%) are more likely to say teens' experiences on social media are worse than parents think when compared with those who say the effects have been neither positive nor negative (22%) or mostly positive (15%).

Majority of teens feel little to no control over their data being collected by social media, but just a fifth are extremely or very concerned about it

Today's youth have [grown up](#) in a world where [online data collection is the norm](#). In this survey, a majority of teens say they feel like they have little to no control over their personal information being collected by social media companies. However, a plurality of teens say they are not too concerned about this information being collected by these companies.

Many do not feel they are in the driver's seat when it comes to controlling what information social media companies collect about them. Fully 60% of teens say they think they have little (40%) to no control (20%) over the personal information that social media companies collect about them. Another 26% express that they do not know how much control they have. Just 14% of teens think they have a lot of control over the personal information that social media companies collect about them.

Majority of teens feel little to no control over the information social media companies collect about them or are uncertain about this

% of U.S. teens who say they think they have ___ over the personal information that social media companies collect about them



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022"

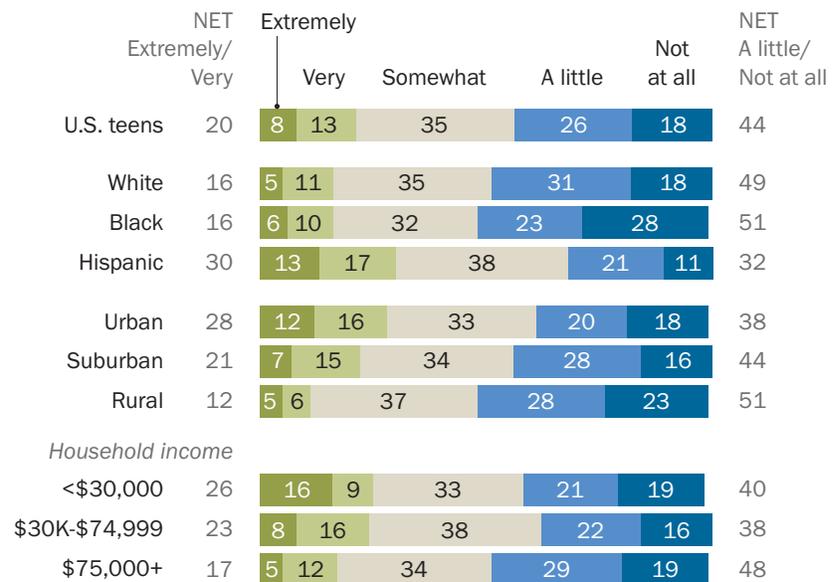
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While a fifth of teens say they are extremely or very concerned about the amount of personal information social media companies might know about them, more than twice as many teens (44%) express little to no concern. Some 35% of teens fall in the middle, reporting that they are somewhat concerned about how much of their personal information is in the hands of social media companies.

Hispanic teens are more likely than White or Black teens to say they are extremely or very concerned about how much social media companies know about them. In addition, teens from households making under \$30,000 annually are more likely than teens from households making \$75,000 or more to say they are at least very concerned.

Hispanic teens more likely than Black, White teens to be highly concerned about the amount of information social media companies might know about them

% of U.S. teens who say they are ___ about the amount of personal information social media companies might know about them



Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. White and Black teens include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic teens are of any race. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Teens who live in different types of communities have different feelings about how much data social media companies have on them. Urban and suburban teens are more likely to express higher levels of concern compared with their rural counterparts. The difference between urban and rural teens is notably stark, with about three-in-teen urban teens being very or extremely concerned about the amount of personal information social media companies might know about them versus roughly one-in-ten rural teens who report feeling this way.

In their own words: Teens explain what they think social media companies do with their data

While the survey focuses on companies' access to teens' data, teens in our supplementary focus groups explain how they primarily view privacy issues through the lens of needing to protect their information from other people. This [person-focused emphasis on privacy](#) is in line with academic research which finds that teens are more likely to take steps to protect their information from other people rather than from companies.

When asked to reflect on what they think companies might do with their data, a few teens share that they haven't given it much thought. However, several mention thinking that social media companies are likely tracking them:

“Social media groups use [data] to get insight on what people are into, or what they think users spend most of their time doing. So, it's more like they still use it to get better data on people, on what people spend most of your time doing, searching online and that's just what I think. I'm not really sure.” – Teen boy

“Something that I always felt was kind of weird about social media is, let's say you search up one thing on a platform and then it appears on another. So, that does show that social media does use that information. ... It's weird to know that they're tracking certain things. Like, let's say I'm shopping for something on one account and then it pops up as an ad for something else. It makes me a little uncomfortable almost.” – Teen girl

Other teens note that they know companies sell their data and use it for targeted advertising:

“I've seen some things like about it. I'm pretty sure they take the information about what you're interested in and things like that. And then they sell that to advertisers to try and get you to buy their products and things like that.” – Teen boy

“In grade school, I'm pretty sure one of my teachers did a study [where] she posted something online and then on her Amazon account she was getting recommended stuff [based] on what she posted. So I think they try to get you to buy things off what your interests are.” – Teen boy

For more quotes and themes from the focus groups, [see Chapter 3](#).

3. Focus groups: Social media stirs a range of emotions and reactions in teens

Teens can have a wide spectrum of experiences on social media and an extensive range of feelings about what happens to them on these platforms. A [variety of studies](#) have explored the impact of social media and the internet on teens, including articles about technology's possible links to teens' [mood disorders](#) and other [mental health](#) issues. To understand the ways teens think about these matters, Pew Research Center conducted four focus groups that covered the purposes and contexts of their use of social media. Some of the main takeaways from the groups are highlighted in the box on the right.

Teens' reactions to what they see on social media and how they feel about posting run the emotional gamut from anxiety to excitement

The teens in the focus groups generally do not report they have uniformly bad or good experiences with social media. They say they have several kinds of social and educational experiences, and their responses to questions about their use of social media and its impact vary depending on the context.

Several parts of the focus group encounters touch on some possible emotions teen might have as they use social media. Here are some of the highlights:⁶

Anxious: *“People try to be social-media perfect. They live outside the real world and live more in social media. Is this [moment in my life] social media-worthy? Everything is gauged with that. So, that’s*

Key themes in focus group discussions among teens about the role of social media in their lives

- Teens' reactions to what they see on social media and how they feel about posting run the emotional gamut from anxiety to excitement
- Teens have appreciation for social connectivity on these platforms but also concerns about drama, unrealistic expectations and bullies
- Different social media platforms serve different purposes for teens like general socializing, entertainment and direct personal communication
- Teens acknowledge the tensions of “cancel culture” on social media
- Teens have a range of definitions for digital privacy
- Activism is a draw for some teens on social media
- Some teens say their use of social media changed during the pandemic
- Teens detail how their lives would change if social media disappeared overnight

⁶ Quotations in this report may have been lightly edited for grammar, spelling and clarity.

something I feel, people are no longer as real as they're supposed to be. They just want to be picture perfect.” – Teen girl

Sad: *“One time, my friends posted without me and I felt excluded, which made me sad. ... They all hung out without me and were posting on social media.” – Teen girl*

Jealous: *“People who are actually making money off social media and you're like, I'm so broke and they have a lot of money. So, sometimes you can feel jealous.” – Teen girl*

And on the positive side:

Excited: *“Sometimes I'll find out news when I'm on social media. Like, something good that happened ... whether it's something personal, or if it's something public for the world and it makes me excited.” – Teen girl*

Happy: *“Yes, so I'll be scrolling through TikTok, and then I see a wholesome moment or something like that like someone being kind to one another, that just makes me happy.” – Teen boy*

These observations come from four virtual focus groups conducted Jan. 12-13, 2022, that were managed by PSB Insights. Each group was convened with a moderator and four participants for a total of 16 participants overall. The groups were split by gender and age group. Recruitment aimed at getting insights from a diverse range of teens from different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. For details on how the discussions were facilitated, [see Appendix B](#).

Teens have appreciation for social connectivity on these platforms but also concerns about drama, unrealistic expectations and bullies

Teens have been asked by the Center and others about the [good](#) and [bad sides of social media](#) for years. In these focus groups they are fluent about the difficult and delightful parts of connectivity. Some started their overview of the role of social media in their lives by highlighting their ability to communicate with others on social platforms:

“I love the fact that social media has no boundaries. The fact you can communicate with people around the world is something really, really amazing, because you can just be at the comfort of your home and you could talk to someone that's in Italy, in Rome, anywhere in this world – as long as they have access to social media.” – Teen girl

“I’ve liked, especially during the pandemic, being able to communicate with my friends more, since I couldn’t see them in person. And then also, having something to watch to entertain me, which was good, because we were just stuck at home.” – Teen girl

In addition to mentioning social media as a means of communication, some teens also discussed how educational social media can be, specifically noting how social media can help them learn about others’ cultures and their perspectives.

“What I like about TikTok and YouTube and Instagram and stuff like that [is that] you get to see other people’s perspectives and how they think, instead of just always listening to your thoughts.” – Teen girl

“So, what I like about social media is it makes it easy to connect with the people from different parts of the world ... it helps you to experience cultures from around the world, such as people’s dressing, what they eat, and you also get a chance to know that, oh, I have to visit this place.” – Teen girl

What don’t they like about social media? Peer pressure or cultural expectations that people should look and act a certain way. One older girl offers this concern:

“I also feel like social media sets up unhealthy expectations for your body or your lifestyle. I know a lot of people feel [insecure because] of Instagram influencers or celebrities, of having a dream body or something, or their lifestyles. That they’re always at parties, or drinking.” – Teen girl

Beyond the issue of teens trying to live up to their own and others’ expectations, some teens talked about their anxiety from seeing drama and negativity on social media and watching bullies go after others.

“Sometimes there can be drama or some problems on social media that I’ve seen. And sometimes it can cause drama with my friends, but also drama with influencers and stuff.” – Teen girl

“Sometimes it could be really anonymous, and people can say stuff about ... you or other people and you don’t know who it is.” – Teen boy

“I agree with the negativity part. It’s just all over at this point. And sometimes the pettiness of some people. Some so-called influencers will have one person that got on their

bad side ... and they have their followers just attack on that person for no apparent reason.” – Teen girl

“Okay, for me, it is bullies or negative comments or stuff like that, you just see a lot of people hating, under the comments, under your posts and stuff like that.” – Teen boy

There were other negative aspects of social media that emerged in these teens’ conversations. Here are examples of safety concerns and an encounter with a fake profile on social media:

“Like people just messaging you, and you find out that they aren’t real, like fake people. Fake people are out so much on social media.” – Teen boy

“So, what I don’t like is it’s not really safe to use, because, for instance, you’ll just be there and someone messages you, like a stranger. And I’ve read stories about social media being used to track people and killing them.” – Teen girl

Different social media serve different purposes for teens like general socializing, entertainment and direct personal communication

When asked to think about the role of social media in their communications and information gathering, some of these teens talked about distinctions among platforms when it comes to the tone of the sites, varying purposes and the audiences that different platforms offer them. For some, the breakdown was this: They used Snapchat for communicating with others; TikTok for learning, entertainment and discovering trends; and Instagram for pictures and seeing what others are doing.

More generally, they reported there are times when they hoped to gain an audience for their ideas and creations and times they wanted to share small-scale, intimate encounters with close friends. They described a communications and media world full of challenging calculations about what they want to share and with whom they want to share it. Here’s how a few teens speak to these themes:

“For me, TikTok is more of a place to watch videos and then Instagram more to see what my friends are up to, and then Snapchat as a way of more direct communication.” – Teen girl

“Yes, I mainly use Snapchat to text my friends during school and Snapchat them and after school, just communicate with them. And I use mainly Instagram to just send pictures and stuff to my friends like memes or like clothes.” – Teen boy

While Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram were mentioned often throughout the conversations, other social media platforms were part of the mix for some participants:

“I use Snapchat to communicate with my friends, and I use it every day, just [to] keep in touch with them and I use Instagram to post pictures and show them. And YouTube, I just do it to watch videos and pass time.” – Teen boy

“I use WhatsApp for chatting a lot; then TikTok I chatted about a bit less, I just do a lot of challenges on TikTok. Instagram, I just watch videos and check the latest trends or just check pictures like that. I think chat will be a bit less, but like WhatsApp is just a full chat service.” – Teen boy

“I would say Instagram is my home for fashion sense. If I’m trying ... to match up an outfit or come up with something unique to wear, I go on the Explore page on Instagram and you see a lot of content there. So, you can get fashion inspired with nice outfits to put on for events. I feel Snapchat for me, it’s more intimate. People just show off, ‘Oh, I’m here.’ ‘If you’re at this location, we could meet,’ and stuff like that.” – Teen girl

Teens acknowledge the tensions of ‘cancel culture’ on social media

As a concept, [cancel culture](#) is relatively well known to the teens in our focus groups. One comment summarizing the mixed views on the subject among some focus group participants comes from an older boy:

“I think it has its pros and cons. A lot of the time, I feel like they could be very harsh to people who are not deserving of all of the hate. But in some instances, I also find that it points out flaws and people who tend to have lots of followers and, like, aren’t very good people.” – Teen boy

When asked about people calling out others on social media for something they did not like, some teens voiced a preference for calling out friends in person rather than on a social media platform.

“I want to see their reactions and stuff like that, and sometimes I don’t do posts [that] make it a bit more embarrassing and stuff like that, so just want to just sit down some person.” – Teen boy

“Yes, I think I can agree with that. I don’t want to put them on blast, but I want to let them know that what they’re doing is wrong.” – Teen boy

And a few teens shared their thoughts on the prospect of getting “canceled” themselves:

“I don’t think I have that fear, because I accept the fact that I’m human. I’m not perfect. So, if people cannot face that, I think it’s actually their loss and not mine.” – Teen girl

“I feel like I’m very mindful of what I say or what I do. I don’t use racial slurs, I don’t make jokes about assault or harassment. I would never do that. It’s just not in my mindset to treat people that way or talk in that way.” – Teen girl

Teens have a range of definitions for digital privacy

Some previous research by the Center has shown that [privacy is on teens’ minds](#) as they use social media. The teens in these focus groups tended to think about privacy in the context of their social lives – such as keeping their personal information and feelings to themselves, rather than having it shared with others. They did not usually volunteer answers concerning surveillance by corporations or governments, issues that are often part of [adults’ thinking about privacy](#). Asked to define privacy in their own words, here are some of their comments:

“What do you mean by digital privacy? ... I feel like all of my social media accounts personally are privated, so only the people I let follow me can see the stuff I post. I would feel weird if anyone could see my videos and stuff, I don’t know.” – Teen girl

“I would describe it as keeping your personal life separate from your online identity and keeping that information off the internet.” – Teen boy

“Okay, what do you mean by digital privacy? You mean that any information I use on a social media platform does not go out to people, my phone number, my pictures, my videos are safe on that platform. ... My data [is] not being shared with anyone, that’s what I understand by privacy.” – Teen boy

Several social media companies have added a feature for users to share posts that are only visible to a select group of their followers that they choose. On platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram, these are known as [private stories](#). Some of these teens described how they used private stories across their respective social media platforms.

“I have private stories. I have a normal story where everybody can see it and then I have a private story just for my personal friends that I hang out with all the time and talk to all the time.” – Teen boy

“I don’t like to post – say it’s a funny picture or something – on my main story. Private story is more [for] like your close friends, the people you talk to. Not really family. Unless it’s a cousin you’re close with.” – Teen girl

Activism is a draw for some teens on social media

In their comments during the focus groups, teens showed they are aware that observers on social media – both people they know and strangers – could be carefully watching what they say and do. They reported there are ways in which this inhibits the kinds of things they do and other ways in which this can be helpful, for instance, in promoting causes they care about. When the older teens were asked about using social media for the purposes of political and social activism, some said they appreciate the capacity of the platforms to spread awareness about a cause or use popular hashtags to draw attention to an important movement.

“I’m Black and I say [on social media] to stand up for the Black community, to say no to racism. So, that’s my focal point – and police brutality. So, those are [the issues] I speak on, because I feel a lot of people in my race, we face that every single day. Even at school, when coming back from school, at malls and places like that.” – Teen girl

“I come from an Armenian background, and I don’t know if any of you know, but Armenia has been through a genocide and it had a war recently that a lot of people don’t talk about. It’s not in history books. It’s not really looked at as important, but through social media I’m able to post about it, because I have a lot of followers that aren’t Armenian from school, and like this, they can get some knowledge about what’s going on.” – Teen girl

And while one boy also posts in support of certain causes, he says he is mindful of avoiding repetition. If others already made the exact same post, he said that he wouldn’t post it because he felt he had little new to share.

“Yes, I posted in support of [Black Lives Matter] and things like that. But I don’t usually post about spreading awareness for causes unless it’s something that’s personal to me. And like, I think it’s not out there because I feel like a lot of the time people will just get caught up posting the exact same post and like, anyone who will see it from me will have already seen it from somewhere else.” – Teen boy

In the focus groups, younger teens were not explicitly asked about their engagement with online activism, but the subject emerged during the conversation in one of their groups.

“Well, sometimes there have been some things about COVID-19, about saving some endangered animals and also when the Black Lives Matter movement was at its peak probably, that’s when I would post a lot of that.” – Teen girl

Some teens say their use of social media changed during the pandemic

Some researchers have observed the [changes in teens’ social media use](#) since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A part of our focus group conversations centered on questions related to whether teens’ use of social media changed during the pandemic. Several participants say they began to use social media more. As a teen girl put it, “I think the disconnect from my peers socially made me want to engage more with social media.” Others described how they started increasing their use of some platforms. “I started using Snapchat and TikTok a lot more,” noted a teen boy.

In response to a follow-up question about why he thought he used social media apps more, another boy said:

“Probably because I had more free time and I didn’t have to deal with [other issues] at the beginning [of the pandemic], a lot of work and it just caused me to be on my phone more and stuff.” – Teen boy

The older teens were asked a broad question about the degree to which their lives have changed since the beginning of the pandemic. These are some of the changes they described:

“Well, I can say because of the pandemic I was not really, can I say, acquainted that much with social media and I really thought that I could never have this virtual communication with people. I felt that it has to be face to face. But with this, I can see that life can go on without you seeing that person every day. So, it kind of showed me an innovative way of how the world works, so you can still move even without seeing each other.” – Teen girl

“During the pandemic, I feel like less people were using social media in certain ways, because there wasn’t much to post, like going out. You’re just staying at home. But TikTok, everyone was on it, because it was their source of entertainment.” – Teen girl

At the same time, some of these teens mentioned abandoning certain platforms that they lost interest in during the pandemic.

“I stopped going on Reddit and Tumblr, and Pinterest became a lot less used. ... It was either I got distracted with other apps, or I lost interest in what I was looking on there in the first place.” – Teen girl

“I think I kind of stopped using Twitch. I didn’t really go back to it. I just saw it and I decided to put it on, but I never went back to it at all.” – Teen girl

Teens detail how their lives would change if social media disappeared overnight

Social media “[sabbaticals](#),” “[fasts](#)” and “[sabbaths](#)” have been embraced in some circles for years, and prior research has shown that from time to time some teens also [take breaks](#) from social media. Our survey also asked teens how hard it would be to give up social media and found that [54% said it would be very or somewhat hard](#), compared with 46% who said it would be very or somewhat easy.

In the focus groups we asked a related question: “What would happen if social media disappeared overnight?” Other research that looked at adults has found that the prospect of the sudden disappearance of social media might have a varying impact, for some raising the prospect of [positive outcomes](#), such as more happiness and privacy, and for others [negative outcomes](#), such as difficulty connecting with others.

Our focus group participants had a range of reactions, too: Some considered the potential loss of social media an inconvenience, while others said it would be good for them mentally to spend less time in a “toxic” place, and yet others said their lives would not change.

“I feel like I would get bored a lot quicker. I spend most of my time on TikTok and YouTube and stuff and if that just suddenly disappeared overnight, I feel like I’ll have to search deeper for stuff that I like and miss the content that I used to watch previously.” – Teen girl

“I think it would be a little bit [messed up if social media disappeared]. I spend 99% of my time indoors in front of my computer, if I’m not playing games, I’m watching pirated videos. If I’m not watching videos, maybe I’m reading an article. I’m always online. And I hardly step out of my room. I have had issues with my dad. He said my room is too creepy. I should come outside and play with people but I’m not really good at making friends. So, it’s a bit hard on me.” – Teen boy

“[When] we were younger, [social media] didn’t have an effect on us and social media wasn’t as big as it is now. I feel like we were more free and more happy, and no stress or overthinking or insecure.” – Teen girl

“I’d probably not be able to make plans with my friends as easily. Whenever we want to go out, we just text each other in our group chat, but if not then making friends would be really hard, because if someone wasn’t able to make it or if we planned something and there’s a person that was meant to pick us up that couldn’t make it, we wouldn’t know.” – Teen boy

“[Life] kind of wouldn’t [change] because I usually play outside.” – Teen boy

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at pewresearch.org/internet.

Primary researchers

Monica Anderson, *Associate Director, Research*
Emily A. Vogels, *Research Associate*
Andrew Perrin, *Former Research Analyst*
Lee Rainie, *Director, Internet and Technology Research*

Research team

Michelle Faverio, *Research Analyst*
Risa Gelles-Watnick, *Research Assistant*
Colleen McClain, *Research Associate*

Editorial and graphic design

Margaret Porteus, *Information Graphics Designer*
David Kent, *Senior Copy Editor*

Communications and web publishing

Haley Nolan, *Communications Manager*
Kelsey Beveridge, *Communications Associate*
Sara Atske, *Associate Digital Producer*

In addition, the project benefited greatly from the guidance of Pew Research Center's methodology team: Courtney Kennedy, Andrew Mercer, Dorene Asare-Marfo, Ashley Amaya and Arnold Lau. This project also benefited from feedback by the following Pew Research Center staff: Juliana Horowitz and Justin Nortey, as well as former Pew Research Center staff: Nick Bertoni and Ruth Igielnik. The Center gained invaluable advice in developing the questionnaire from Amanda Lenhart, Program Director of Health and Data Research at the Data & Society Research Institute, and Bobby Duffy, Professor of Public Policy and Director of the Policy Institute at King's College London.

Appendix A: Survey methodology

The analysis in this report is based on a self-administered web survey conducted from April 14 to May 4, 2022, among a sample of 1,316 dyads, with each dyad (or pair) comprised of one U.S. teen age 13 to 17 and one parent per teen. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 1,316 teens is plus or minus 3.2 percentage points. The survey was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs in English and Spanish using KnowledgePanel, its nationally representative online research panel.

The research plan for this project was submitted to an external institutional review board (IRB), Advarra, which is an independent committee of experts that specializes in helping to protect the rights of research participants. The IRB thoroughly vetted this research before data collection began. Due to the risks associated with surveying minors, this research underwent a full board review and received approval (Pro00060166).

KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability sampling methods and include both those with internet access and those who did not have internet access at the time of their recruitment. KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel. KnowledgePanel's recruitment process was originally based exclusively on a national random-digit-dialing (RDD) sampling methodology. In 2009, Ipsos migrated to an address-based sampling (ABS) recruitment methodology via the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. The Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.⁷

Panelists were eligible for participation in this survey if they indicated on an earlier profile survey that they were the parent of a teen age 13 to 17. A random sample of 5,580 eligible panel members were invited to participate in the study. Responding parents were screened and considered qualified for the study if they reconfirmed that they were the parent of at least one child age 13 to 17 and granted permission for their teen who was chosen to participate in the study. In households with more than one eligible teen, parents were asked to think about one randomly selected teen; that teen was instructed to complete the teen portion of the survey. A survey was considered complete if both the parent and selected teen completed their portions of the questionnaire, or if the parent did not qualify during the initial screening.

Of the sampled panelists, 1,607 (excluding break-offs) responded to the invitation and 1,316 qualified, completed the parent portion of the survey, and had their selected teen complete the

⁷ AAPOR Task force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. ["AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."](#)

teen portion of the survey, yielding a final stage completion rate of 29% and a qualification rate of 82%.⁸ The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 1%. The break-off rate among those who logged on to the survey (regardless of whether they completed any items or qualified for the study) is 37%.

Upon completion, qualified respondents received a cash-equivalent incentive worth \$10 for completing the survey.

Panelists were assigned to take the survey in batches. Email invitations and reminders were sent to panelists according to a schedule based on when they were assigned this survey in their personalized member portal, shown in the table below. The field period was closed on May 4, 2022, and thus no further email contacts past the invitation were sent for the final set of panelists.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Panelists assigned April 14, 2022	Panelists assigned April 15, 2022	Panelists assigned April 29, 2022
Invitation	April 17, 2022	April 18, 2022	May 2, 2022
First reminder	April 20, 2022	April 21, 2022	
Second reminder	April 23, 2022	April 24, 2022	
Third reminder	April 26, 2022	April 27, 2022	

Weighting

The analysis in this report was performed using a teen weight. A weight for parents was also constructed, forming the basis of the teen weight. The parent weight was created in a multistep process that begins with a base design weight for the parent, which is computed to reflect their probability of selection for recruitment into the KnowledgePanel. These selection probabilities were then adjusted to account for

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2021 March Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS)
Race/Ethnicity	
Census Region	
Metropolitan Status	
Education (Parents only)	
Household Income	
Household Income x Race/Ethnicity	
Total Household Size	
Language proficiency	2019 American Community Survey (ACS)

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁸ The 1,316 qualified and completed interviews exclude seven cases that were dropped because respondents did not answer one-third or more of the survey questions.

the probability of selection for this survey, which included oversamples of Black and Hispanic parents. Next, an iterative technique was used to align the parent design weights to population benchmarks for parents of teens ages 13 to 17 on the dimensions identified in the accompanying table, to account for any differential nonresponse that may have occurred.

To create the teen weight, an adjustment factor was applied to the final parent weight to reflect the selection of one teen per household. Finally, the teen weights were further raked to match the demographic distribution for teens ages 13 to 17 who live with parents. The teen weights were adjusted on the same teen dimensions as parent dimensions with the exception of teen education, which was not used in the teen weighting.

Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The following tables show the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted percentage	Plus or minus ...
Teens (ages 13-17)	1,316		3.2 percentage points
Boys	686		4.4 percentage points
Girls	596		4.7 percentage points
White, non-Hispanic	599		4.5 percentage points
Black, non-Hispanic	138		9.2 percentage points
Hispanic	407		6.0 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	542	42	5.0 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	666	50	4.4 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of Black and Hispanic respondents. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the sections above for details.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

Dispositions and response rates

The tables below display dispositions used in the calculation of completion, qualification and cumulative response rates.⁹

Dispositions	
Total panelists assigned	5,580
Total study completes (including nonqualified)	1,607
Number of qualified completes	1,316
Number of study break-offs	949
Study Completion Rate (COMPR)	29%
Study Qualification Rate (QUALR)	82%
Study Break-off Rate (BOR)	37%
Cumulative response rate calculations	
Study-Specific Average Panel Recruitment Rate (RECR)	8.4%
Study-Specific Average Household Profile Rate (PROR)	58.5%
Study-Specific Average Household Retention Rate (RETR)	80.9%
Cumulative Response Rate	1.4%

© Pew Research Center, 2022

⁹ For more information on this method of calculating response rates, see Callegaro, Mario & DiSogra, Charles. 2008. "[Computing response metrics for online panels.](#)" Public Opinion Quarterly.

Appendix B: Focus groups methodology

Pew Research Center worked with PSB Insights to conduct four live, online focus groups with a total of 16 U.S. 13- to 17-year-olds. The focus groups were conducted online Jan. 12-13, 2022.

The research plan for these focus groups was submitted to an external institutional review board (IRB), Advarra, which is an independent committee of experts that specializes in helping to protect the rights of research participants. The IRB thoroughly vetted this research before recruitment for the focus groups began. Due to the risks associated with doing research with minors, this research underwent a full board review and received approval (Pro00059721).

The focus groups included two groups of eighth graders (ages 13 to 14 years old) lasting 60 minutes and two groups of 10th to 12th graders (ages 15 to 17) lasting 90 minutes. The two groups for each age group were separated by gender (i.e., one group of boys and one of girls for each age group). Each group included four participants and was led by an experienced moderator using a discussion guide developed by Pew Research Center. The focus groups were conducted over a secure, online research platform with video and audio capabilities.

As part of recruitment efforts, the vendor pre-screened parents by phone to gain their consent before screening the teenage research participants. Once eligible participants were identified, their parents confirmed whether they were available for the focus group and both parents and the respondents signed an informed consent form. All participants were paid for their time.

Participants had to meet several criteria to be eligible. First, potential participants had to be living in the United States and meet one of our age group criteria (i.e., 13 to 14 years old and in eighth grade, or 15 to 17 years old and in 10th to 12th grade). Second, participants were screened for their involvement in extracurricular activities to ensure they were accustomed to participating in group activities.¹⁰ Third, the group discussions were centered on technology and social media usage, so all respondents were also required to have access to a smartphone and use social media. Fourth, they had to have access to the internet and a device with a working webcam. And finally, participants had to be willing to attend the online focus group on a particular date and time. The vendor used these criteria to identify potential participants for the focus groups. In order to ensure a diverse mix of participants among all who qualified, the research team also collected

¹⁰ During the screening process, the vendor spoke with parents and guardians of all respondents first. Parents and guardians confirmed sensitive demographic details and their child's ability to actively participate in a discussion before the phone was handed to the teens for screening.

demographic information such as household income, education level, urbanicity, ethnicity and race. See below for a demographic breakdown of the participants:

Demographic characteristics of focus group participants

Number of participants, out of 16 total

Gender	#	Age	#	Race/Ethnicity	#
Girl	8	13-14	8	White, non-Hispanic	8
Boy	8	15-17	8	Black, non-Hispanic	6
				Hispanic	2

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The findings of the focus groups are not statistically representative and cannot be extrapolated to wider populations. Instead, these findings provide color, context and clarity to the larger conversation of teens' views of and experience with social media and helpful insight as researchers develop the survey instrument.

Some quotes from these focus groups have been lightly edited for clarity or to remove identifying details.

Moderator guide for 13- to 14-year-olds

- Section 1: Welcome/Ground rules/Introduction
- Section 2: Technology overview
- Section 3: COVID-19 and tech
 - Online learning
 - Changes in tech use
- Section 4: Social media
 - Things teens do on social media
 - Attitudes about social media
 - Teens and their connections, relationships on social media
 - Conflict on social media
 - Privacy
- Section 5: Closing

Moderator guide for 15- to 17-year-olds

- Section 1: Welcome/Ground rules/Introduction
- Section 2: Technology overview

- Section 3: COVID-19 and tech
 - Online learning
 - Changes in tech use
- Section 4: Social media
 - Things teens do on social media
 - Attitudes about social media
 - Teens and their connections, relationships on social media
 - Conflict on social media
 - Dating and social media
 - Online activism
 - Cancel culture
 - Privacy
- Section 5: Closing

© Pew Research Center, 2022

Appendix C: Supplementary table

Older teen girls particularly likely to post about their accomplishments, family and emotions

% of U.S. teens who say they ever post about their ___ on social media

	Boys		Girls	
	Ages 13-14	15-17	13-14	15-17
Accomplishments	32	41	42	54
Family	28	25	35	49
Emotions and feelings	13	14	27	41
Dating life	8	10	7	20
Personal problems	9	4	10	18
Political beliefs	6	10	7	12
Religious beliefs	9	7	11	11

Note: Teens are those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

“Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Topline questionnaire: Teens Survey

**2022 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S TEENS SURVEY
APRIL/MAY 2022
FINAL TOPLINE
APRIL 14-MAY 4, 2022
TEENS AGES 13-17 N=1,316**

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW ARE PART OF A LARGER SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE IPSOS KNOWLEDGEPANEL. OTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS SURVEY HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR ARE BEING HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). ROWS/COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. teens ages 13-17	1,316	+/- 3.2 percentage points

ASK ALL:

SOC1 Overall, what effect would you say social media has had on people your age?

April 14-May 4, 2022

24	Mostly positive	
32	Mostly negative	
45	Neither positive nor negative	
0	No answer	

ASK ALL:

SOC1b Overall, what effect would you say social media has had on YOU, PERSONALLY?

April 14-May 4, 2022

32	Mostly positive	
9	Mostly negative	
59	Neither positive nor negative	
*	No answer	

ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA HAS HAD A MOSTLY POSITIVE EFFECT ON THEM (SOC1b=1) [N=442]:

SOC1aPOS What is the main reason you think social media has a mostly positive effect on YOU, PERSONALLY? [OPEN-END RESPONSE, CODED ANSWERS SHOWN BELOW]

April 14-May 4, 2022

46	Connections and socializing	
25	Information and learning	
14	Entertainment and fun	
7	Seeing positive things online and/or avoiding negative things	
6	Benefits to their wellbeing, mental health	
2	Just because it does	
5	Other	
13	No answer	

ASK IF SOCIAL MEDIA HAS HAD A MOSTLY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEM (SOC1b=2) [N=110]:

SOC1aNEG What is the main reason you think social media has a mostly negative effect on YOU, PERSONALLY? [OPEN-END RESPONSE, CODED ANSWERS SHOWN BELOW]

April 14-May 4, 2022

23	Concerns about the amount of time spent on social media
22	Potential negative effects on mental health
18	Drama or negativity
6	Things seen on social media can be fake, unrealistic
21	Other
14	No answer

ASK ALL:

TPRIVCNCRN How concerned are you about the amount of personal information social media companies might know about you?

April 14-May 4, 2022

8	Extremely concerned
13	Very concerned
35	Somewhat concerned
26	A little concerned
18	Not at all concerned
*	No answer

ASK ALL:

TPRIVCTRL How much control do you think you have over the personal information that social media companies collect about you?

April 14-May 4, 2022

14	A lot of control
40	A little control
20	No control
26	Not sure
*	No answer

[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF SOC2POS AND SOC2NEG]**ASK ALL:**

SOC2POS In general, does what you see on social media make you feel... **[RANDOMIZE OPTIONS]**

	<u>Yes, a lot</u>	<u>Yes, a little</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. NO ITEM a				
b. Like you have a place where you can show your creative side April 14-May 4, 2022	29	42	29	*
c. More connected to what's going on in your friends' lives April 14-May 4, 2022	33	47	20	*
d. Like you have people who can support you through tough times April 14-May 4, 2022	22	45	33	*
e. More accepted April 14-May 4, 2022	15	42	42	*

ASK ALL:

SOC2NEG In general, does what you see on social media make you feel... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Yes, a lot</u>	<u>Yes, a little</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Worse about your life April 14-May 4, 2022	5	19	77	*
b. Overwhelmed because of all the drama April 14-May 4, 2022	8	31	61	*
c. Pressure to post content that will get lots of comments or likes April 14-May 4, 2022	7	23	71	*
d. NO ITEM d				
e. Like your friends are leaving you out of things April 14-May 4, 2022	6	25	69	*

ASK ALL:

POST2

Which of the following things, if any, do you ever post about on social media?

[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

	<u>Yes, I ever do this</u>	<u>No, I never do this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Your accomplishments April 14-May 4, 2022	43	57	*
b. Your dating life April 14-May 4, 2022	12	87	*
c. Your family April 14-May 4, 2022	34	65	*
d. Your political beliefs April 14-May 4, 2022	10	90	*
e. Personal problems you're having April 14-May 4, 2022	11	89	*
f. Your religious beliefs April 14-May 4, 2022	9	90	*
g. Your emotions and feelings April 14-May 4, 2022	25	75	*

ASK ALL:

TNOTPOST

When it comes to social media, how often do you decide NOT to post something because you worry... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. People might use it to embarrass you April 14-May 4, 2022	13	27	20	39	1
b. It might hurt your chances when you are applying for schools or jobs April 14-May 4, 2022	9	18	21	51	*
c. People might be offended by what you say April 14-May 4, 2022	9	24	24	43	*
d. It doesn't fit with how you'd like to represent yourself on social media April 14-May 4, 2022	12	26	20	42	1

ASK ALL:

TPARWORRY How worried do you think your parents are about you using social media?

April 14-May 4, 2022

9	Extremely worried
13	Very worried
27	Somewhat worried
25	A little worried
16	Not at all worried
9	Not sure
*	No answer

ASK ALL:TSMPVIEWS Do you think teens' experiences on social media are... **[RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 AND 2 WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST]**April 14-May 4, 2022

39	Better than parents think
27	Worse than parents think
33	Parents' views are about right
1	No answer

ASK ALL:TSM10 Have you done any of the following activities on social media in the past 12 months? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, I have done this in the <u>past 12 months</u>	No, I have not done this in the <u>past 12 months</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a. Posted a picture to show your support for a political or social issue April 14-May 4, 2022	10	90	1
b. Used hashtags related to a political or social issue April 14-May 4, 2022	7	92	1
c. Encouraged others to take action on political or social issues that are important to you April 14-May 4, 2022	10	89	1

ASK ALL:

TSM11

How important is social media to you personally when it comes to the following things?

[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

		<u>Extremely important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>A little important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a.	Finding other people who share your views about political or social issues April 14-May 4, 2022	3	5	14	19	58	1
b.	Getting involved with political or social issues that are important to you April 14-May 4, 2022	2	5	15	17	59	*
c.	Giving you a venue to express your political opinions April 14-May 4, 2022	2	4	12	16	65	*
d.	Exposing you to new points of view April 14-May 4, 2022	4	9	24	22	40	*
e.	Helping you figure out your own views on political or social issues April 14-May 4, 2022	3	4	19	19	55	*

ASK ALL:

SMACTIMP

Regardless of whether you do this, do you think it's important for people to speak out about political or social issues on social media?

April 14-May 4, 2022

6	Extremely important
11	Very important
25	Somewhat important
17	A little important
20	Not at all important
21	Not sure
*	No answer