

#Hashtag 101



What is a hashtag?

hashtag: A word or phrase preceded by a pound symbol (#) used within a post on social media to identify a topic or keyword and facilitate a search for it.

Whenever a social media user includes a hashtag in their message, it can become indexed and discoverable on the social network by other users. When users click on a hashtag, they are directed to a page that aggregates use of that hashtag in real-time. This gives users access to other ongoing conversations surrounding the topic in question.

Including a hashtag in a post is as easy as typing a hash mark or pound sign (#) before a word or phrase (without spaces or punctuation). Hashtags are not case sensitive. The most important thing is to include the pound/hash sign!

Remember, the primary functions of a hashtag are categorization and discoverability. If your account is public, anyone on the social network can find your post when searching the hashtag. Likewise, to ensure that other accounts (including the AMA's) can see your message, make your Twitter, Instagram or Facebook account(s) public.

How to use a hashtag in social media posts

To demonstrate how hashtags can be used in social media posts, here are a couple examples of how you can use **#MembersMoveMedicine** and **#AMAMtg**—two common hashtags used by the AMA. These are by no means the only ways to use hashtags. So, get creative!

Example 1: When you're directly discussing the topics

"Looking forward to joining my colleagues at #AMAMtg, one of the clearest examples of how #MembersMoveMedicine."



Pro tip: If you're using the phrase "AMA meeting" or "members move medicine" in your post, swap it out with the hashtag!

Example 2: To add punctuation

"Over 350 @AmerMedicalAssn physicians are on their way to D.C. to advocate and speak directly with lawmakers. #MembersMoveMedicine"

Facebook vs. Instagram vs. Twitter

While the purposes of hashtags remain the same on all three of these platforms (categorization and discoverability), the differences lie in privacy settings. Facebook defaults to "friends-only," so you'd need to update the post settings to be "public" in order for your posts to show up in a hashtag search.

For Twitter and Instagram, as long as your Instagram account is public and your tweets aren't protected, your posts will show up in a hashtag search.