Commenting on online book reviews

Julie Van de Vyver, e-lang citizen team

Teacher Sheet

Task

Your students will be given the following task.

> You are going to join and contribute to an online book community by sharing your opinion on a topic of your interest in any way you choose. To do so, you need an account on Instagram.
>
> You will comment on the existing content, ask questions, react to or evaluate content on the site. If you wish, you can also write your own review.

Website

https://instagram.com (#bookstagram; #bookstagrammer, #bookreview, #booklover, etc.)

Instagram is an online social network available in many languages. It uses hashtags and there are specific # for reviews in different languages, like #bookstagramfrance.

You can also use other platforms instead of Instagram according to your needs and their relevance to the learners.

- https://www.goodreads.com/ (Website available in English);

- https://tiktok.com (Website available in many languages, community: BookTok)

CEFR level - For A2 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

	Dimensions covered in task	(Potential) specific objectives
Digital citizenship	Ethical and responsible	When expressing your own opinions, be aware of ethical and responsible viewpoints.
	Critical	Keep a critical eye when reading the review and the comments.
Meaning-making literacy	Media literacy	Analyse the importance of the picture and of visual elements in the post and comments.
	Multimodal literacy	Make use of the features offered by the platform for interaction (emojis, likes, #, etc.).

Main language activity

- Written reception: reading reviews, analysing reviews.
- Written interaction: comment on the platform using different modalities.

Possible steps

- Based on the reading of a book (or several books), the learners can discuss their potential participation in online communities of book lovers.
- In groups, they can discover some popular book reviews' hashtags and reflect on the different kinds of reviews they come across from this first exploration phase.
- Reviews can be analysed with students. Discuss and highlight different elements (false information, well thought-out arguments, importance of emojis and hashtags, positive interactions, etc.)
- You can invite learners to analyse a review of their choice and share their analysis.
- Learners can be invited to find a book review of their choice in the target language and to write a comment on Instagram.
- One week after writing the comment, the learners can check their account and see if they have received an answer to their post. In class, they can discuss the activity and what they have learnt from the task.

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Student Sheet

Task

> You are going to join and contribute to an online book community by sharing your opinion on a topic of your interest in any way you choose. To do so you need an account on Instagram.
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CEFR level - For A2 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

While completing this task, you can:

- learn how to express your own opinions while respecting others;
- learn to keep a critical eye when reading interactions in online communities;
- learn to follow the genre characteristics of these online posts;
- learn to actively participate in an online community and to act as a digital citizen while doing so.

Hints

Keep in mind who you are addressing

In a multimodal text, pay attention to aspects other than language used in the post. Reflect on the power of pictures and on the value of other elements included in the post.

Work on the language-related aspects

Have a look at different reviews and comments before choosing the one you wish to comment on.

When looking at the language used in the initial post or in the comments, pay particular attention to the typical words used to express an opinion, persuade the audience, or respond to a post. Reflect on the register (familiar, formal, etc.) used.

For you to think about

While completing the task, you can reflect on the following:

- Is the content of the post ethical and how do you know?

- Is any comment inappropriate and why?

- Did you use tools to help you with the language aspect?

- Are you planning on repeating the task when you next read a book?

- Would you like to write your own review?