



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

B2 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 8 · 8B

Going viral

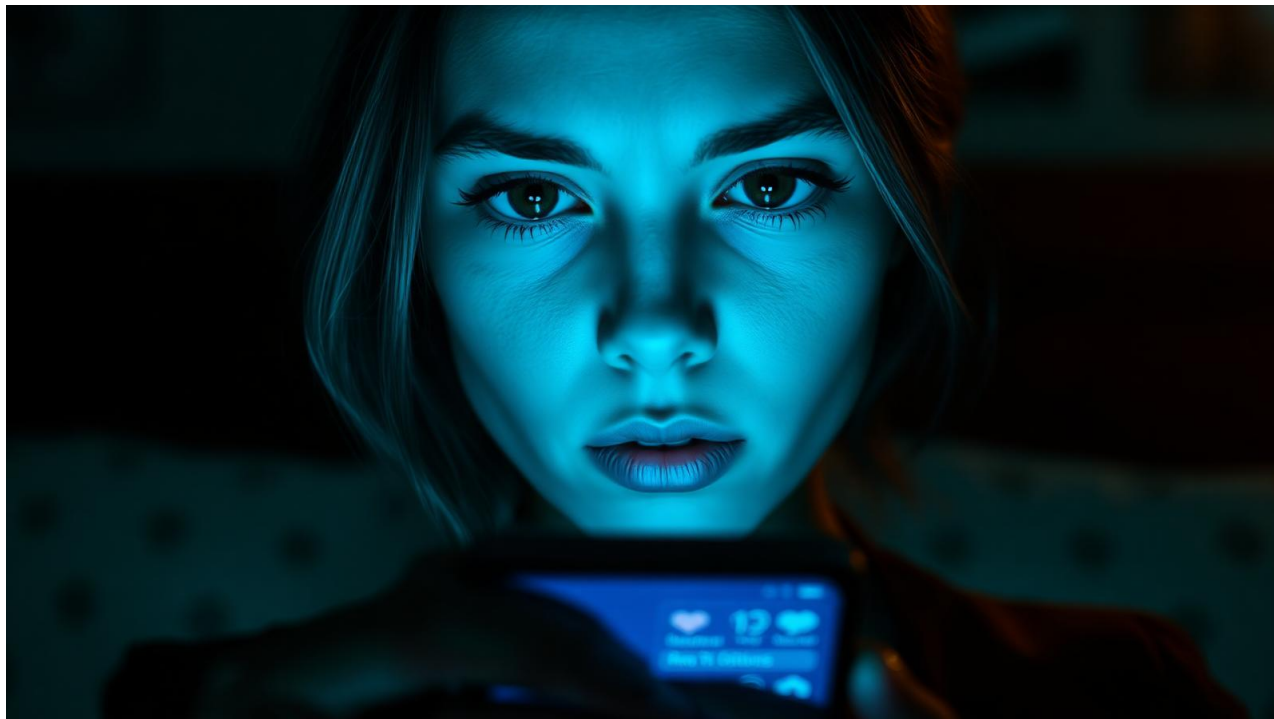
Theme · Digital Lives



Unit 8 · 8B

Going viral

Theme: Digital Lives



Learning objectives

- Use REPORTING VERBS (admit, deny, offer, refuse, promise, threaten, warn, accuse, apologise, suggest, insist, recommend, blame, congratulate) with the correct pattern.
- Choose between the main reporting-verb patterns: verb + to-infinitive / verb + object + to-infinitive / verb + gerund / verb + preposition + gerund / verb + THAT-clause.
- Talk about social media, viral content, influencers and online behaviour with B2 vocabulary.
- Hear and produce natural word stress on longer social-media nouns and verbs (INFLUENCER, algoRITHM, subSCRIBE).
- Report a piece of viral news to a partner using at least six different reporting verbs.
- Write a short comment thread reacting to a viral post using reported speech.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up · your last scroll

Answer any ONE prompt for your partner in full sentences — 30 seconds each. Try to include the name of whoever said or did the thing.

The last video I shared with someone was...

An influencer I actually follow (and why) is...

The most ridiculous thing I've ever seen go viral was...

A friend of mine admitted recently that they...

The last comment I wrote (or wanted to write) online said...

followUp: Listen for verbs like SAID, TOLD, ADMITTED, DENIED, PROMISED, WARNED, ACCUSED — those are today's grammar.

Lead-in: 'she said WHAT?'

Match each direct quote (1–6) to the reporting verb (a–f) that captures it best. Only ONE fits each quote.

1. 'OK, fine, I was the one who leaked the video.'

2. 'I've never even met that person in my life.'

3. 'Don't post that photo, or I swear I'll sue you.'

4. 'You're the reason my career is finished.'

5. 'I'm really sorry — I shouldn't have said it.'

6. 'Look, please just believe me — I did NOT write that comment.'

a) denied

b) admitted

c) threatened

d) accused

e) apologised

f) insisted

1 → b · ADMIT (+ -ing / that): 'She admitted leaking the video.'

2 → a · DENY (+ -ing / that): 'He denied ever meeting her.'

3 → c · THREATEN (+ to-inf): 'She threatened to sue them.'

4 → d · ACCUSE somebody OF (+ -ing): 'He accused her of ruining his career.'

5 → e · APOLOGISE (FOR + -ing / that): 'She apologised for saying it.'

6 → f · INSIST (+ THAT / + on + -ing): 'He insisted (that) he hadn't written it.'

followUp: Rule of thumb: after the reporting verb, the pattern is fixed — you either learn the pattern with the verb, or the sentence sounds wrong.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Reading: 'the tweet that ended a career'

In December 2013, a PR executive called Justine Sacco boarded a plane in London on her way to South Africa. Just before take-off, she sent a short, tasteless joke on Twitter to her 170 followers. She then switched her phone to flight mode and slept for eleven hours. By the time she landed in Cape Town, she was, without knowing it, the number-one trending topic in the world.

During the flight, strangers had shared her tweet tens of thousands of times. Some accused her of racism. Others congratulated each other on 'finding her employer'. A journalist admitted publicly to having refreshed her flight-tracker every few minutes. When she stepped off the plane and turned her phone back on, a message from a friend she hadn't spoken to in years appeared first: 'You need to call me right now. Something has happened.'

By the following morning, Sacco had been fired. She said, in an interview years later, that she had suggested to her employer that she resign herself, but they had already made the decision. She insisted that the joke had been badly worded and misunderstood, and apologised repeatedly. Very few people were listening. The story is now taught in universities as a case study in what has been called 'internet-scale shaming' — a punishment that once required a whole town, and now requires only one screenshot and a shared laugh.

It is often argued that going viral is a lottery no one buys a ticket for. Sacco herself has since warned younger colleagues never to post anything, no matter how private the account, that they wouldn't be prepared to defend on the front page of a newspaper. Whether that is realistic advice in 2026 is another question — but her story is a reminder that on the internet, a small audience and no audience are not the same thing.

1. Where was Justine Sacco going when she sent the tweet?
 - (A) From New York to London
 - (B) From London to South Africa
 - (C) From South Africa to New York
2. Roughly how many followers did she have when she posted?
 - (A) 17
 - (B) 170
 - (C) 1,700
3. How did she find out something had happened?
 - (A) A push notification from Twitter
 - (B) A message from an old friend
 - (C) An announcement on the plane
4. According to the article, what happened by the next morning?
 - (A) She had been fired
 - (B) She had apologised on TV
 - (C) She had deleted her account

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5. What is Sacco's warning to younger colleagues?

- (A) Never use social media
- (B) Assume any post could end up on a newspaper front page
- (C) Only post from private accounts

Social-media vocabulary in context

Match each expression to its closest meaning.

go viral — be shared very widely, very fast

trending topic — one of the most-discussed subjects on a platform

a screenshot — a saved image of what's on a screen

flight mode — phone setting that turns off all signal

internet shaming — collective public humiliation online

a case study — a real example studied in detail

Vocabulary: social media & online life

intro: At B2 you need the exact word: not 'a person online' but a FOLLOWER, an INFLUENCER, a SUBSCRIBER. Not 'a bad comment' but a TROLL / HATE COMMENT / PILE-ON.

1. **label:** People & accounts

2. **label:** Content & reach

3. **label:** Reactions & drama

4. **label:** Verbs of reporting drama

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word from the box (correct form).

1. My last post got over 10,000 shares — it went completely ____.

2. You can't say anything online anymore without being ____ for it.

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3. A ____ is somebody who reads everything but never posts a comment.
-
4. The video hit the trending page — pure ____, a title that tells you nothing.
-
5. The video reached 50 million people — huge ____.
-
6. She has 400,000 ____ on Instagram — most of them under 25.
-
7. He got a real ____ in the comments — hundreds of people attacking him at once.
-
8. The mysterious ____ decides what appears in your feed every morning.
-

Practice 2 — collocations & rewrite

Rewrite each sentence replacing the underlined phrase with ONE word from this lesson's vocabulary. Keep the meaning identical.

1. After the post, she was <u>publicly excluded

2. He received <u>hundreds of attacking comments at once

3. The title was pure <u>bait designed only to get clicks

4. The <u>software that decides what you see

5. Someone posting <u>just to upset people on purpose

Practice 3 — discursive writing

prompt: Reflect on the personal and social costs of a post 'going viral' — for better or worse.

Use at least FOUR of the target words from this unit.

Vary sentence length and use one relative clause.

Aim for a reflective, cohesive C1 register.

sample: Watching a friend go viral overnight taught me something I hadn't expected: visibility, which sounds like a gift, can turn into an onslaught within hours. What began as a harmless joke was picked

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up by an agitator with a large following, and by the following morning strangers were treating a single sentence as though it defined her entire character. She was briefly ostracised online, even though almost nobody had bothered to watch the full clip, only the clickbait headline attached to it. The algorithm, naturally, rewarded the outrage rather than the context, pushing the story further than the joke ever deserved. She recovered, eventually, but she now posts far less, and I understand completely why.



Grammar: reporting verbs

1. Why reporting verbs matter — SAID and TOLD are neutral. Reporting verbs (ADMIT, DENY, THREATEN, PROMISE, WARN, ACCUSE, INSIST, SUGGEST, RECOMMEND, APOLOGISE, BLAME, CONGRATULATE) give the same information + the ATTITUDE of the speaker. • 'She said she'd leaked the video.' (neutral) • 'She ADMITTED leaking the video.' (she confessed — stronger, more precise)

2. Pattern A — verb + TO-INFINITIVE — OFFER, REFUSE, PROMISE, THREATEN, AGREE, DECIDE, PRETEND. • 'He OFFERED to delete the tweet.' • 'She REFUSED to apologise.' • 'They THREATENED to sue the newspaper.' Rule: the same person does both actions.

3. Pattern B — verb + OBJECT + TO-INFINITIVE — TELL, ASK, ADVISE, WARN, REMIND, ORDER, PERSUADE, INVITE. • 'She TOLD ME to log out.' • 'They ADVISED HIM not to reply.' • 'The lawyer WARNED HER not to post again.' Rule: two different people — reporter tells someone else to act.

4. Pattern C — verb + GERUND (-ing) — ADMIT, DENY, SUGGEST, RECOMMEND, MENTION, REGRET, DENY, MISS. • 'He ADMITTED writing the comment.' • 'She DENIED sending the message.' • 'I SUGGESTED waiting a week before replying.' Rule: no direct object; the -ing form names the action.

5. Pattern D — verb + PREPOSITION + GERUND — APOLOGISE FOR, ACCUSE (sb) OF, BLAME (sb) FOR, INSIST ON, THANK (sb) FOR, CONGRATULATE (sb) ON, WARN (sb) AGAINST. • 'She APOLOGISED FOR posting the picture.' • 'They ACCUSED HIM OF stealing the idea.' • 'He INSISTED ON seeing the original video.' Rule: preposition is fixed — learn it with the verb.

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6. Pattern E — verb + THAT-clause — ADMIT / DENY / SUGGEST / INSIST / CLAIM / EXPLAIN / MENTION + THAT + clause. • 'He ADMITTED THAT he had written it.' • 'She INSISTED THAT she hadn't seen the post.' • 'I SUGGESTED THAT we should delete the account.' Tense usually shifts back one step (past → past perfect, will → would).

7. Common mistakes — ✗ She suggested me to delete it. → ✓ She suggested (that) I delete it. / She suggested deleting it. ✗ He denied to write the comment. → ✓ He denied writing it. / He denied that he had written it. ✗ They accused him to steal. → ✓ They accused him OF stealing. ✗ She apologised she posted it. → ✓ She apologised FOR posting it. ✗ He recommended me to wait. → ✓ He recommended (that) I wait. / He recommended waiting.

Exercise A — pick the correct pattern

Choose the correct continuation for each reporting verb.

1. She admitted ____ the video.
(A) to leak
(B) leaking
(C) leak
2. He offered ____ his post.
(A) deleting
(B) delete
(C) to delete
3. They accused her ____ the story.
(A) of inventing
(B) to invent
(C) for inventing
4. The lawyer warned him ____ again.
(A) to not post
(B) not to post
(C) of not posting
5. She apologised ____ the screenshot.
(A) to share
(B) for sharing
(C) sharing
6. He insisted ____ the original post.
(A) seeing
(B) on seeing
(C) to see

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7. I suggested ____ a week before replying.
(A) waiting
(B) her to wait
(C) to wait
8. They congratulated her ____ 100,000 followers.
(A) for reaching
(B) on reaching
(C) to reach

Exercise B — direct → reported

Rewrite each quote using the reporting verb in brackets. Change the tense where necessary.

1. 'I didn't write that comment.' (deny)

2. 'OK, I posted the screenshot.' (admit)

3. 'You should delete the whole account.' (recommend)

4. 'I'll never apologise.' (refuse)

5. 'Don't reply to the trolls.' (warn me)

6. 'Sorry — I shouldn't have shared it.' (apologise for)

7. 'You leaked my messages!' (accuse him of)

8. 'I'll sue you if you post that photo.' (threaten to)

Exercise C — spot & fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. She suggested me to log out.

2. He denied to write the comment.

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3. They accused him to steal the video.

4. I apologised her for the post.

5. The lawyer warned him don't post again.

6. He insisted to see the original.

Exercise D — a viral-tweet news bulletin

Complete the text using ONE reporting verb from the box (each used once).

Word bank: admitted · denied · apologised · threatened · accused · recommended · warned · insisted · refused · congratulated

The pop star Rio Sky (1) ___ this morning for a controversial post shared with her twelve million followers late last night. In the tweet, she (2) ___ a rival artist of copying her lyrics word for word, and (3) ___ to release private messages between them.

The rival artist, Kai Lorenz, (4) ___ any copying and (5) ___ that the songs had been written years earlier. His management team (6) ___ his fans not to reply to the tweet and (7) ___ everyone against sharing screenshots that could be edited.

In a video published this afternoon, Sky (8) ___ that the accusation had been made 'in the heat of the moment', but she (9) ___ to withdraw it completely, saying she would 'let the fans decide'. Her label, meanwhile, (10) ___ her on reaching a new streaming record — a message many viewers described as, at best, oddly timed.

apologised

accused

threatened

denied

insisted

warned

recommended

admitted

refused

congratulated

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Listening: 'my post went viral overnight'

Sam wakes up to find their harmless video has hit five million views. They ring their calmer friend Jess to panic. Notice how many reporting verbs appear — admit, deny, warn, suggest, apologise, threaten, accuse.

Before you listen

Predict: how does Sam feel — happy, terrified, or both?

Predict: what will Jess's very first practical advice be?

First listen — gist

1. What has happened to Sam's video?

2. What is Sam most worried about?

3. What is Jess's first piece of advice?

Second listen — detail

1. Roughly how many views did the video have when Sam went to bed?

2. What does Jess suggest doing with the account settings?

3. What has one commenter accused Sam of?

4. What does Jess warn Sam NOT to do?

5. What does Jess admit doing herself two years ago?

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6. What single step does Jess recommend before Sam does anything else?

A: Jess. Jess. My video's gone viral. FIVE MILLION VIEWS.

B: Wait — the dog one? From last night?

A: Yes. I went to bed on two hundred views. I woke up on five million. My phone hasn't stopped vibrating.

B: OK. First of all — congratulations. That's genuinely huge. Now, breathe. Have you read the comments yet?

A: That's the problem. There must be twenty thousand of them, and half of them are horrible. Someone's actually accused me of faking the whole thing for engagement.

B: Right. Stop reading them. I'm serious — close the app and turn notifications off for twenty-four hours.

A: But I want to defend myself. One person threatened to 'expose' me tomorrow. Whatever that means.

B: Do NOT reply. That is the number one rule. Even a polite reply gets screenshotted and shared, and suddenly the pile-on is twice the size.

A: How do you know all this?

B: Because two years ago I replied to a troll, and my apology was on three different meme accounts by lunchtime. I admit it — I made it much worse. I really regret it.

A: OK. So — practical things. What do I actually do?

B: One: screenshot the original post right now with the view count. That's your proof if anything gets deleted. Two: go into settings and restrict comments to your followers only, and mute a few keywords — you know the ones. Three: close the app and go and make a coffee.

A: Should I apologise? Publicly? For anything?

B: For what? You posted a dog. Don't apologise until you know exactly what you'd be apologising for.

A: You're right. I'm just panicking.

B: You're allowed to panic for ten minutes. Then screenshot, restrict, close, coffee. In that order.

A: Screenshot, restrict, close, coffee. Got it.

B: And when you can breathe — this could actually be really good for you. Just don't let the algorithm push you into a decision you'll regret.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Speaking: 'the drama I saw online this week'

In pairs, report one piece of online drama, viral news or influencer story from the last month (real or invented). You MUST use: (a) 6 different reporting verbs, (b) 3 social-media vocab words from section 4, (c) at least 1 THREAT and 1 APOLOGY.

1. **label:** The post · **hint:** 'It started when she posted...'

2. **label:** The reaction · **hint:** 'Within an hour, thousands accused him of...'

3. **label:** The defence · **hint:** 'He denied it, and insisted that...'

4. **label:** The threat · **hint:** 'She threatened to release / to sue...'

5. **label:** The apology · **hint:** 'He apologised for... but refused to...'

example: It started last Tuesday, when a fitness influencer with about two million followers posted a photo of a plate of food. Within an hour, thousands of comments had accused her of promoting an unhealthy lifestyle, and one nutritionist even threatened to report her account. She denied that the photo was hers at all — she insisted it had been taken from a magazine years ago — but the screenshots kept coming. By Wednesday she'd apologised in a long video, admitted that the caption had been a mistake, and warned younger followers not to copy anything without checking the source. It's now recommended, apparently, that she 'take a break from social media' — which, in influencer language, means she'll be back next week with a brand deal.

challenge: ■ Extra ■ if you sneak in an ACCUSE OF + gerund AND a WARN sb NOT TO + infinitive.

Writing mini-task — 'a viral comment thread' (100–120 words)

Write 6–8 short comments as if they were on a viral post. Include: at least 1 hate comment, 1 defence, 1 apology, 1 accusation, 1 threat. Then rewrite the whole thread as a paragraph of reported speech using 6+ different reporting verbs.

Wrap-up · three quick prompts

Pick ONE and finish it out loud. Class votes on the sharpest verdict.

1. **label:** Prompt 1 — the confession · **prompt:** The last thing I've quietly admitted to myself about my own social-media use is...

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2. **label:** Prompt 2 — the boundary · **prompt:** One thing I would never post online, no matter who asked, is...

3. **label:** Prompt 3 — the prediction · **prompt:** In five years, the platform we're all wasting our time on will be...

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Workbook — home practice



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Going viral - Workbook

Extra practice for home study · with answer keys

1. Vocabulary - social media

Choose the word or phrase that fits best.

1. A post that spreads very fast to a huge audience has ____.
(A) been muted
(B) gone viral
(C) been shadowbanned
(D) gone offline
2. Someone who reads posts but never comments is called an ____.
(A) agitator
(B) observer
(C) bot
(D) creator
3. A title designed only to make you click is called ____.
(A) a hashtag
(B) clickbait
(C) an algorithm
(D) engagement
4. The software that decides what appears in your feed is the ____.
(A) subscriber
(B) algorithm
(C) hashtag
(D) reach
5. When hundreds of people attack one post at once, it's a mass ____.
(A) reach
(B) trend
(C) onslaught
(D) reply
6. Being publicly boycotted for something you said is being ____.
(A) muted
(B) ostracised
(C) verified
(D) trending

2. Vocabulary - gap-fill

Complete each sentence with ONE word from the box (correct form).

BOX: followers · engagement · block · screenshot · trending · influencer

1. She's a paid ____ - every third post is a brand deal.
2. The hashtag was ____ worldwide within two hours.
3. Take a ____ before he deletes the tweet.
4. He lost 40,000 ____ overnight after the video.

5. The algorithm loves controversy - high ____.
6. If a troll won't stop, just ____ them.

2b. Vocabulary - discursive writing

Write 120-180 words: 'Social media platforms have a responsibility to protect users from the psychological effects of viral negativity. Discuss the impact of the algorithm on public discourse.'

Checklist:

- ☐ Use target lexis from the social media and influencer sections
- ☐ Use varied C1-level grammar (e.g. reported speech or conditionals)
- ☐ Ensure logical cohesion and smooth transitions
- ☐ Maintain a formal or semi-formal academic register

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. On the left side, there are short vertical blue lines that serve as margins, creating a series of narrow columns. The paper is otherwise empty of any text or markings.

3. Grammar - pick the correct pattern

Choose the correct continuation for each reporting verb.

1. He admitted ____ the screenshot.
(A) to share
(B) sharing
(C) share
2. She offered ____ the post.
(A) deleting
(B) delete
(C) to delete
3. They accused him ____ the story.
(A) to invent
(B) of inventing
(C) for inventing

4. The lawyer warned her ____ again.
(A) to not comment
(B) not to comment
(C) of not commenting
5. He apologised ____ the video.
(A) to post
(B) for posting
(C) posting
6. She insisted ____ the original message.
(A) seeing
(B) on seeing
(C) to see
7. I suggested ____ the app for a week.
(A) deleting
(B) him to delete
(C) to delete
8. They congratulated her ____ a million subscribers.
(A) for reaching
(B) on reaching
(C) to reach

4. Grammar - direct → reported

Rewrite each quote using the reporting verb in brackets.

1. 'I didn't send the DM.' (deny)
2. 'Fine, I did read her messages.' (admit)
3. 'You should log out for a week.' (recommend)
4. 'I'll never take that video down.' (refuse)
5. 'Don't reply to that troll.' (warn me)
6. 'I'll sue you if you post it.' (threaten to)
7. 'Sorry - I shouldn't have shared it.' (apologise for)
8. 'You leaked my chat!' (accuse him of)

5. Grammar - spot & fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. She suggested me to delete the post.
2. He denied to write the comment.
3. They accused him to steal the idea.
4. The lawyer warned him don't reply.
5. She apologised she had shared it.
6. He insisted to see the original.

6. Reading - true / false / not given

Read the short text and mark each statement T, F or NG.

In 2018, a small US bakery uploaded a fifteen-second video of a slightly wonky birthday cake. Within 48 hours, the clip had been viewed over 40 million times. Almost none of the viewers actually bought a cake - the bakery is in a town of 3,000 people - but hundreds of them left comments accusing the owner of decorating in unhygienic conditions after zooming in on a single blurry frame. The owner, a 62-year-old baker called Ellen, insisted that the photos had been misread, and apologised only for the poor lighting in her kitchen. A hygiene inspector visited the following week and reported that the bakery was, in fact, unusually clean. Ellen has since said, publicly, that she would never post another video, and warned other small business owners against ever trusting a viral moment as free marketing.

1. The video got over 40 million views in two days. [T / F / NG]
2. The bakery received a huge number of new orders. [T / F / NG]
3. Some viewers accused the owner of poor hygiene. [T / F / NG]
4. The bakery was actually dirty. [T / F / NG]
5. Ellen has since become a full-time influencer. [T / F / NG]
6. Ellen now advises other small businesses to be cautious of viral fame. [T / F / NG]

7. Writing - a viral comment thread → reported speech

Write 6-8 short comments on an imagined viral post, then rewrite the whole thread as ONE paragraph of reported speech (100-120 words) using 6+ different reporting verbs.

Checklist:

- [] 100-120 words
- [] 6+ different reporting verbs (accuse, insist, deny, threaten, apologise, refuse, recommend, warn, congratulate, admit, suggest)
- [] 3+ social-media vocab words
- [] Correct patterns (accuse OF + -ing, warn NOT TO, apologise FOR, etc.)
- [] Tense-shift where appropriate

[illegible]

8. Listening - a podcast about a cancelled celebrity

Read the transcript (two clearly different podcast voices). Answer the questions.

Audio: Podcast: 'The 48-hour cancellation' - host (Voice A) & media lawyer (Voice B) · two clearly different voices

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

9. ■ Challenge - sentence transformation

Rewrite the second sentence using 2-5 words including the KEYWORD.

1. 1. 'I posted the screenshot.' → He ____ the screenshot. (KEYWORD: ADMITTED)
2. 2. 'You leaked my chat!' → She ____ her chat. (KEYWORD: ACCUSED)
3. 3. 'Don't reply to trolls.' → She ____ to trolls. (KEYWORD: WARNED)
4. 4. 'I'll sue the platform.' → He ____ the platform. (KEYWORD: THREATENED)
5. 5. 'Sorry - I shared it.' → He ____ it. (KEYWORD: APOLOGISED)
6. 6. 'Delete the account for a week.' → She ____ the account. (KEYWORD: SUGGESTED)

10. ■ Challenge - word stress

Which syllable is stressed? Choose 1, 2, 3 or 4.

1. 'in-flu-en-cer' (4 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (IN-)
 - (B) 2 (-FLU-)
 - (C) 3 (-EN-)
 - (D) 4 (-cer)
2. 'al-go-ri-thm' (British: 3 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (AL-)
 - (B) 2 (-GO-)
 - (C) 3 (-rithm)
3. 'fol-low-er' (3 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (FOL-)
 - (B) 2 (-low-)
 - (C) 3 (-er)
4. 'a-pol-o-gy' (4 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (a-)
 - (B) 2 (-POL-)
 - (C) 3 (-o-)
 - (D) 4 (-gy)
5. 'no-ti-fi-ca-tion' (5 syllables - the stressed one is...)
 - (A) 1 (NO-)

- (B) 2 (-ti-)
- (C) 3 (-fi-)
- (D) 4 (-CA-)

6. 'com-mu-ni-ty' (4 syllables)

- (A) 1 (com-)
- (B) 2 (-MU-)
- (C) 3 (-ni-)
- (D) 4 (-ty)

11. Self-check

Tick what you can now do confidently.

- ☐ I use ADMIT / DENY / SUGGEST / RECOMMEND with -ING (not to-infinitive).
- ☐ I use ACCUSE OF, APOLOGISE FOR, INSIST ON, CONGRATULATE ON with -ING.
- ☐ I use TELL / ASK / WARN / ADVISE / REMIND + object + TO-INFINITIVE.
- ☐ I use OFFER / REFUSE / PROMISE / THREATEN + TO-INFINITIVE.
- ☐ I know that 'suggest' does NOT take 'me to do' - either -ING or a THAT-clause.
- ☐ I use B2 social-media vocabulary: go viral, algorithm, pile-on, cancelled, clickbait.
- ☐ I put the stress correctly on inFLUencer, alGOrithm, comMUUnity, apOLOgy.

Going viral — Workbook

Extra practice for home study · with answer keys

1. Vocabulary — social media

Choose the word or phrase that fits best.

1. A post that spreads very fast to a huge audience has ____.
(A) been muted
(B) gone viral
(C) been shadowbanned
(D) gone offline
2. Someone who reads posts but never comments is called an ____.
(A) agitator
(B) observer
(C) bot
(D) creator
3. A title designed only to make you click is called ____.
(A) a hashtag
(B) clickbait
(C) an algorithm
(D) engagement
4. The software that decides what appears in your feed is the ____.
(A) subscriber
(B) algorithm
(C) hashtag
(D) reach
5. When hundreds of people attack one post at once, it's a mass ____.
(A) reach
(B) trend
(C) onslaught
(D) reply
6. Being publicly boycotted for something you said is being ____.
(A) muted
(B) ostracised
(C) verified
(D) trending

2. Vocabulary — gap-fill

Complete each sentence with ONE word from the box (correct form).

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3. Take a ____ before he deletes the tweet.
4. He lost 40,000 ____ overnight after the video.

5. The algorithm loves controversy — high ____.
6. If a troll won't stop, just ____ them.

2b. Vocabulary — discursive writing

Write 120–180 words: 'Social media platforms have a responsibility to protect users from the psychological effects of viral negativity. Discuss the impact of the algorithm on public discourse.'

Checklist:

- Use target lexis from the social media and influencer sections
- Use varied C1-level grammar (e.g. reported speech or conditionals)
- Ensure logical cohesion and smooth transitions
- Maintain a formal or semi-formal academic register

[illegible]

3. Grammar — pick the correct pattern

Choose the correct continuation for each reporting verb.

1. He admitted ____ the screenshot.
(A) to share
(B) sharing
(C) share
2. She offered ____ the post.
(A) deleting
(B) delete
(C) to delete
3. They accused him ____ the story.
(A) to invent
(B) of inventing
(C) for inventing

4. The lawyer warned her ____ again.
(A) to not comment
(B) not to comment
(C) of not commenting
5. He apologised ____ the video.
(A) to post
(B) for posting
(C) posting
6. She insisted ____ the original message.
(A) seeing
(B) on seeing
(C) to see
7. I suggested ____ the app for a week.
(A) deleting
(B) him to delete
(C) to delete
8. They congratulated her ____ a million subscribers.
(A) for reaching
(B) on reaching
(C) to reach

4. Grammar — direct → reported

Rewrite each quote using the reporting verb in brackets.

1. 'I didn't send the DM.' (deny)
2. 'Fine, I did read her messages.' (admit)
3. 'You should log out for a week.' (recommend)
4. 'I'll never take that video down.' (refuse)
5. 'Don't reply to that troll.' (warn me)
6. 'I'll sue you if you post it.' (threaten to)
7. 'Sorry — I shouldn't have shared it.' (apologise for)
8. 'You leaked my chat!' (accuse him of)

5. Grammar — spot & fix the mistake

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. She suggested me to delete the post.
2. He denied to write the comment.
3. They accused him to steal the idea.
4. The lawyer warned him don't reply.
5. She apologised she had shared it.
6. He insisted to see the original.

6. Reading — true / false / not given

Read the short text and mark each statement T, F or NG.

In 2018, a small US bakery uploaded a fifteen-second video of a slightly wonky birthday cake. Within 48 hours, the clip had been viewed over 40 million times. Almost none of the viewers actually bought a cake — the bakery is in a town of 3,000 people — but hundreds of them left comments accusing the owner of decorating in unhygienic conditions after zooming in on a single blurry frame. The owner, a 62-year-old baker called Ellen, insisted that the photos had been misread, and apologised only for the poor lighting in her kitchen. A hygiene inspector visited the following week and reported that the bakery was, in fact, unusually clean. Ellen has since said, publicly, that she would never post another video, and warned other small business owners against ever trusting a viral moment as free marketing.

1. The video got over 40 million views in two days. [T / F / NG]
2. The bakery received a huge number of new orders. [T / F / NG]
3. Some viewers accused the owner of poor hygiene. [T / F / NG]
4. The bakery was actually dirty. [T / F / NG]
5. Ellen has since become a full-time influencer. [T / F / NG]
6. Ellen now advises other small businesses to be cautious of viral fame. [T / F / NG]

7. Writing — a viral comment thread → reported speech

Write 6–8 short comments on an imagined viral post, then rewrite the whole thread as ONE paragraph of reported speech (100–120 words) using 6+ different reporting verbs.

Checklist:

- 100–120 words
- 6+ different reporting verbs (accuse, insist, deny, threaten, apologise, refuse, recommend, warn, congratulate, admit, suggest)
- 3+ social-media vocab words
- Correct patterns (accuse OF + -ing, warn NOT TO, apologise FOR, etc.)
- Tense-shift where appropriate

[illegible]

8. Listening — a podcast about a cancelled celebrity

Read the transcript (two clearly different podcast voices). Answer the questions.

■ **Audio:** Podcast: 'The 48-hour cancellation' — host (Voice A) & media lawyer (Voice B) · two clearly different voices

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

9. ■ Challenge — sentence transformation

Rewrite the second sentence using 2–5 words including the KEYWORD.

1. 1. 'I posted the screenshot.' → He ____ the screenshot. (KEYWORD: ADMITTED)
2. 2. 'You leaked my chat!' → She ____ her chat. (KEYWORD: ACCUSED)
3. 3. 'Don't reply to trolls.' → She ____ to trolls. (KEYWORD: WARNED)
4. 4. 'I'll sue the platform.' → He ____ the platform. (KEYWORD: THREATENED)
5. 5. 'Sorry — I shared it.' → He ____ it. (KEYWORD: APOLOGISED)
6. 6. 'Delete the account for a week.' → She ____ the account. (KEYWORD: SUGGESTED)

10. ■ Challenge — word stress

Which syllable is stressed? Choose 1, 2, 3 or 4.

1. 'in-flu-en-cer' (4 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (IN-)
 - (B) 2 (-FLU-)
 - (C) 3 (-EN-)
 - (D) 4 (-cer)
2. 'al-go-ri-thm' (British: 3 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (AL-)
 - (B) 2 (-GO-)
 - (C) 3 (-rithm)
3. 'fol-low-er' (3 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (FOL-)
 - (B) 2 (-low-)
 - (C) 3 (-er)
4. 'a-pol-o-gy' (4 syllables)
 - (A) 1 (a-)
 - (B) 2 (-POL-)
 - (C) 3 (-o-)
 - (D) 4 (-gy)
5. 'no-ti-fi-ca-tion' (5 syllables — the stressed one is...)
 - (A) 1 (NO-)

- (B) 2 (-ti-)
- (C) 3 (-fi-)
- (D) 4 (-CA-)

6. 'com-mu-ni-ty' (4 syllables)

- (A) 1 (com-)
- (B) 2 (-MU-)
- (C) 3 (-ni-)
- (D) 4 (-ty)

11. Self-check

Tick what you can now do confidently.

- I use ADMIT / DENY / SUGGEST / RECOMMEND with -ING (not to-infinitive).
- I use ACCUSE OF, APOLOGISE FOR, INSIST ON, CONGRATULATE ON with -ING.
- I use TELL / ASK / WARN / ADVISE / REMIND + object + TO-INFINITIVE.
- I use OFFER / REFUSE / PROMISE / THREATEN + TO-INFINITIVE.
- I know that 'suggest' does NOT take 'me to do' — either -ING or a THAT-clause.
- I use B2 social-media vocabulary: go viral, algorithm, pile-on, cancelled, clickbait.
- I put the stress correctly on inFLUencer, alGOrithm, comMUunity, apOLOgy.



Answer key — Class Book

Reading: 'the tweet that ended a career'

1. (B) From London to South Africa
2. (B) 170
3. (B) A message from an old friend
4. (A) She had been fired
5. (B) Assume any post could end up on a newspaper front page

Vocabulary: social media & online life

1. viral
 2. ostracised
 3. observer
 4. clickbait
 5. reach
 6. followers
 7. onslaught
 8. algorithm
1. After the post, she was ostracised by half her followers.
 2. He received an onslaught of comments within an hour.
 3. The title was pure clickbait.
 4. The algorithm favours outrage over calm discussion.
 5. An agitator started the whole argument.

Grammar: reporting verbs

1. (B) leaking
 2. (C) to delete
 3. (A) of inventing
 4. (B) not to post
 5. (B) for sharing
 6. (B) on seeing
 7. (A) waiting
 8. (B) on reaching
1. He denied writing that comment. / He denied that he had written that comment.
 2. She admitted posting the screenshot. / She admitted that she had posted the screenshot.
 3. He recommended deleting the whole account. / He recommended (that) she delete the whole account.
 4. She refused to apologise.
 5. She warned me not to reply to the trolls.
 6. He apologised for sharing it.
 7. She accused him of leaking her messages.
 8. She threatened to sue him if he posted that photo.
1. She suggested (that) I log out. / She suggested logging out.
 2. He denied WRITING the comment.
 3. They accused him OF STEALING the video.
 4. I apologised TO her FOR the post.
 5. The lawyer warned him NOT TO post again.
 6. He insisted ON SEEING the original.

Listening: 'my post went viral overnight'

1. It's gone viral — five million views overnight and still climbing.
 2. The comments — hundreds of hate comments and accusations.
 3. To stop reading the comments and turn notifications off for 24 hours.
1. About two hundred.
 2. Restricting comments to followers only, and muting a few keywords.
 3. Faking the whole video for engagement.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



4. Not to reply to any hate comment — even a polite reply gets screenshotted and shared.
5. Replying to a troll and making the pile-on much worse.
6. Screenshotting the original post + view count as proof, then closing the app.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Answer key — Workbook

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

Going viral - Workbook — Answer Key

1. Vocabulary - social media

1. **(B)** *gone viral*
2. **(B)** *observer*
3. **(B)** *clickbait*
4. **(B)** *algorithm*
5. **(C)** *onslaught*
6. **(B)** *ostracised*

2. Vocabulary - gap-fill

1. ***influencer***
2. ***trending***
3. ***screenshot***
4. ***followers***
5. ***engagement***
6. ***block***

2b. Vocabulary - discursive writing

Sample answer

The rise of the influencer has fundamentally changed how we consume information, yet the algorithm often prioritises engagement over accuracy. When a post goes viral, it can trigger an onslaught of negativity that leads to individuals being ostracised by a mass audience. While some argue that users should simply block trolls, the reach of clickbait makes it difficult to avoid the noise. Deleting a screenshot is often useless once it has been shared across hundreds of followers. We are told that high engagement is the goal, but this often rewards controversy rather than constructive debate. If a creator is shadowbanned or muted, they lose their platform, yet the systems that decide these outcomes remain opaque. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with both the platforms and the users to ensure that social media remains a space for connection rather than a tool for division. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, we must find ways to protect the vulnerable from the excesses of viral fame.

3. Grammar - pick the correct pattern

1. **(B)** *sharing*
2. **(C)** *to delete*
3. **(B)** *of inventing*
4. **(B)** *not to comment*
5. **(B)** *for posting*
6. **(B)** *on seeing*
7. **(A)** *deleting*
8. **(B)** *on reaching*

4. Grammar - direct → reported

1. *He denied sending the DM. / He denied that he had sent the DM.*
2. *He admitted reading her messages. / He admitted that he had read her messages.*
3. *She recommended logging out for a week. / She recommended (that) I log out for a week.*
4. *She refused to take the video down.*
5. *She warned me not to reply to that troll.*
6. *She threatened to sue him if he posted it.*
7. *He apologised for sharing it.*
8. *She accused him of leaking her chat.*

5. Grammar - spot & fix the mistake

1. *She suggested (that) I delete the post. / She suggested deleting the post.*
2. *He denied WRITING the comment.*
3. *They accused him OF STEALING the idea.*
4. *The lawyer warned him NOT TO reply.*
5. *She apologised FOR SHARING it.*
6. *He insisted ON SEEING the original.*

6. Reading - true / false / not given

1. **T**
2. **F**
3. **T**
4. **F**
5. **NG**
6. **T**

7. Writing - a viral comment thread → reported speech

Sample answer

Under a video of a barista arguing with a customer, hundreds of comments appeared within an hour. One user accused the customer of being deliberately rude, while another insisted that the barista had shouted first. The customer, in a reply, denied raising her voice and threatened to sue the person who had filmed her. The barista apologised for losing his temper but refused to apologise for the coffee itself. A regular of the café recommended watching the full ten-minute version before judging, and warned everyone against sharing edited clips. The café's official account, meanwhile, congratulated its staff on 'handling a difficult morning', a comment which, predictably, was screenshotted and shared as its own viral post by lunchtime.

8. Listening - a podcast about a cancelled celebrity

1. *Deleting old posts to hide inconsistent opinions.*
2. *That she herself had once deleted a tweet in a panic and made things worse.*
3. *That there is any co-ordinated PR campaign to 'clean up' his image.*
4. *Silence for 72 hours before any public response.*
5. *To sue the platform if the account isn't restored.*
6. *That most 'cancellations' last 48 hours - the story is usually a distraction from a bigger one.*

9. ■ Challenge - sentence transformation

1. *admitted posting*
2. *accused him of leaking*
3. *warned me not to reply*
4. *threatened to sue*
5. *apologised for sharing*
6. *suggested deleting*

10. ■ Challenge - word stress

1. **(B)** 2 (-FLU-)
2. **(B)** 2 (-GO-)
3. **(A)** 1 (FOL-)
4. **(B)** 2 (-POL-)
5. **(D)** 4 (-CA-)
6. **(B)** 2 (-MU-)

11. Self-check

Self-assessment — no fixed answers.

Going viral — Workbook — Answer Key

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