

Social media are not just for young people anymore. A growing number of people between the ages of 65 and 74 are becoming active social media users. In 2019, 76% of the participants in a survey in this age category said they had used social media, compared to 40% five years earlier. An increase in social media use was also seen among people aged 75 and over. Exchanging text messages using apps like WhatsApp is the most popular use of the Internet among the elderly. A growing number of elderly people are active on social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat and are using the Internet to make calls. The top two social media platforms for people aged 65+ are the same as those for younger age groups.

But how will you react when you find out your grandparents are using social media? The two most common reactions seem to be, 'Oh no! They're going to screenshot everything I post and start writing comments,' or 'I'm going to have to spend hours teaching them how to work this.' It's only reasonable that your grandparents should need help to create a profile on Instagram or an account on Facebook. And who's a better expert than you to teach them the basics of social media? You can either bravely offer your help or regret it later. The training starts after you help them choose the right device. Today over one third of elderly people own a tablet. Tablets are small and light, with screens larger than smartphones, and they are more affordable than other devices. Most importantly, tablets are simpler to learn to use. It may still take some time before the elderly can become confident users. Remember that it can be as complicated for them to learn as it is for you to teach them! Stick to the basics to keep it fun and easy. It may even make sense to cover the information over several conversations. Be prepared! Once they have learnt how to use social media, they may never get off their device again! Take Baddie Winkle, for example. This 92-year-old granny has over three million followers on Instagram, including Rihanna and Miley Cyrus!

You should be happy your grandparents are keen to join the digital world. Social media use can have a number of health benefits for the elderly. Nowadays families are more geographically distant than ever before, and social media are an easy way to connect with faraway relatives. While nothing replaces face-to-face communication, social media are a great way to keep in touch with family members. Another benefit is that elderly people can make new friends who have similar interests, or find long lost friends from childhood. Finally, social media use can be very educational. Scrolling through Facebook news is a great way to stay informed and keep up to date with local and global events They're a great news source.

Whether it's laughing at a meme, catching up with old friends, reliving the past, playing games, or reading articles, social media are a great way to laugh, learn and share. Do your grandparents have a social media account yet? Have they asked you to help them create one, but you didn't bother? Perhaps you should make the effort because it may affect their quality of life. And who knows? Your grandma or grandpa could be the next Instagram celebrity. But not without your help!





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2 Read the text again and choose the correct answers.

1 What is the writer's purpose in the first paragraph?
- A to encourage the elderly to use social media
- B to describe the growing interest of the elderly in social media
- C to explain why the elderly use social media
- D to present the benefits of social media use

2 How do young people react when their grandparents become active on social media?
- A They think it will affect them negatively.
- B They are not concerned about it.
- C They think it's very positive.
- D They believe they will regret it.

3 The writer says that young people should 'cover the information over several conversations' to show that
- A it's interesting to talk to the elderly.
- B it takes time to train the elderly.
- C it's not advisable to talk to the elderly.
- D they have nothing to talk about with the elderly.

4 What do we learn about Baddie Winkle?
- A Celebrities don't follow her on social media.
- B She can't increase the number of her followers.
- C Learning how to use social media was complicated for her.
- D She's famous on social media despite her age.

5 What does the writer say about face-to-face communication?
- A It's the best form of communication.
- B It's less important than online communication.
- C It's not always beneficial.
- D It's not important for elderly people.

6 What are the benefits of social media use for the elderly?
- A It's good that they share videos with their friends.
- B The only benefit is keeping in touch with their family.
- C Using social media can help them enjoy life more.
- D It's educational, but not entertaining.

4 Answer the questions about you.

1 How much time do you spend online every day?

2 What do you usually use the Internet for?

3 What do your friends use the Internet for?

4 What is your favourite social media app? Why?





LIVEWORKSHEETS