

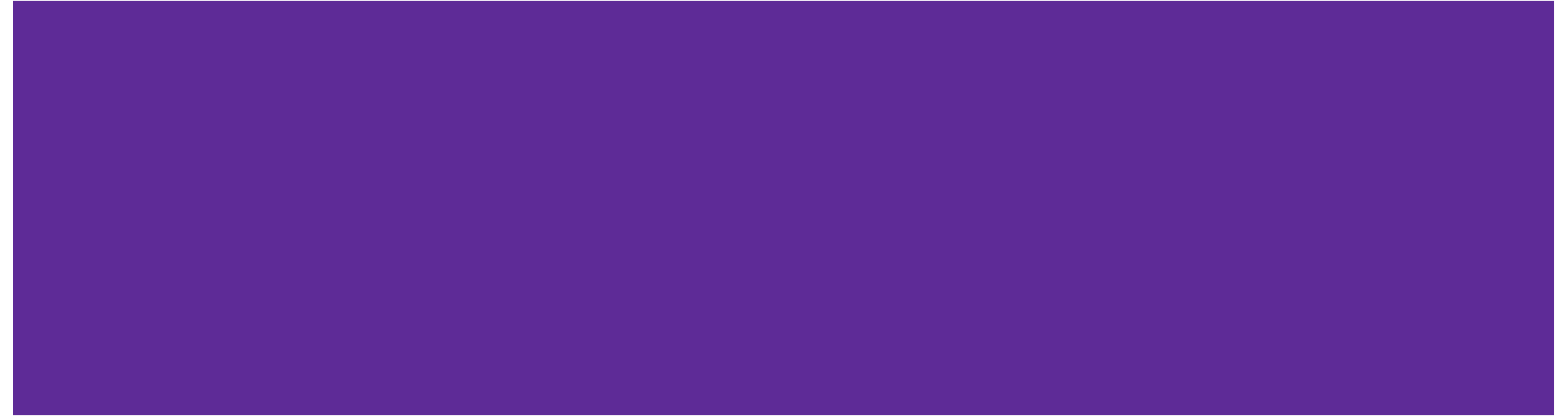


Beginners Guide to Instagram

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Guided tour around an account



Definitions/glossary

These terms definitely seem confusing at first! But it's a very user-friendly platform so you will get used to them very quickly.

- **Account** - a presence on the site, it can be a person or an organisation. You can have more than one account e.g. one for personal and one for business.
- **Bio** - the short lines of text about you on your **profile**. You should include key info and links to your website and activity.
- **Carousel** - a **post** which consists of several photos or videos (maximum 10), often connected or telling a story.
- **Comment** - a public message responding to a **post**, **reel** or **story**.
- **DM/Message** - a private message from one **account** to another.
- **Feed** - the **posts** and **reels** from **accounts** and **hashtags** you follow.

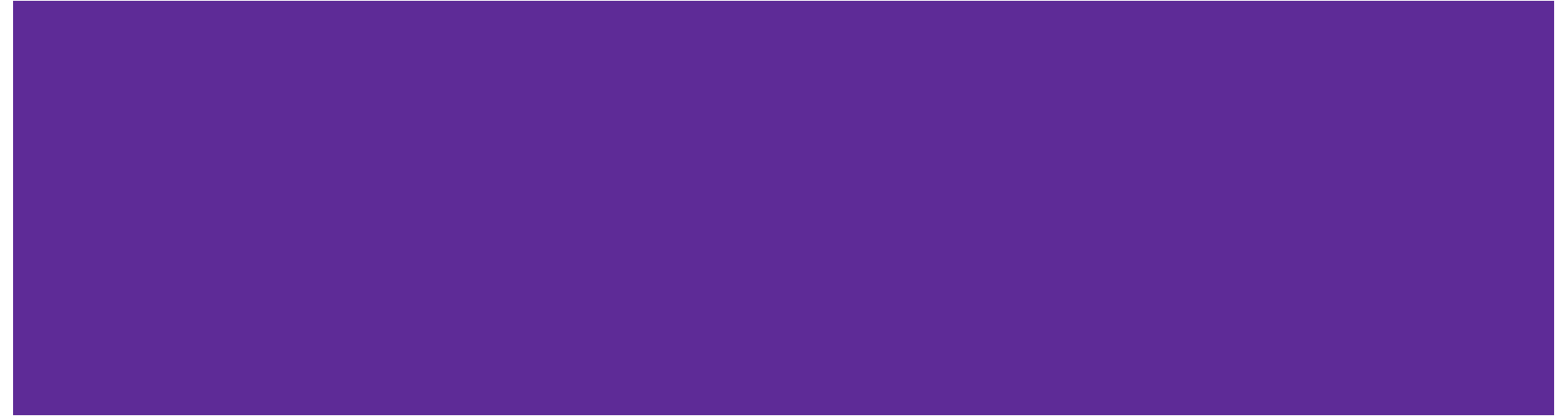
Definitions/glossary

- **Follower** - someone who has chosen to see your **posts** in their **feed**.
- **Hashtag (#)** - a keyword or phrase which will direct people to your content. You can follow hashtags as well as **accounts**.
- **Highlights** - curated collections of **stories** that appear on your **profile**. Useful for showing different aspects of your work e.g. reviews, sketches, commissions, FAQs.
- **Links in bio** - the web links you can direct people to so that they can find out more: your website, VIG gallery page, event info, Facebook link etc.
- **Live** - a live video stream to your **followers**.
- **Mention (@)** - a way of tagging another **account** to your content.
- **Name** - what you call your **account** e.g. Bucks Art Weeks Official, The National Gallery, Sarah Cripps Art. It's what you use to **mention** other people/organisations.

Definitions/glossary

- **Post** - an item you put up for people to see - it can be a static image or a video. It should be square or slightly portrait (4:5 ratio).
- **Profile** - the 'about you' page. It's the place where people can see your brief **bio**, link to your website and see your **posts, reels** and **highlights**. It gives them the chance to follow you too.
- **Profile photo** - the icon people see with your **account** when you **post, comment** etc.
- **Reel** - a video you put up for people to see. It should be portrait orientation, 9:16 ratio.
- **Story** - short images or videos that only appear for 24 hours. They can include links to websites.

General principles



General principles

Instagram exists by keeping people watching it and showing them adverts, just like other media.

To keep people watching, they have to give people content they like.

So to be successful on Insta we have to give them entertaining, informative, engaging content.

How people use Insta

People can and do access their content in different ways:

- Through their **feed** (accounts they have chosen to follow)
- Through **stories** (quick snippets with links to see more)
- Through **reels** (videos)
- Through the '**discover**' tab (what Insta thinks you might like, based on what they know you like so far)

There are different algorithms for each of these (!)

AND the **algorithms change** regularly too - you can google every few months to see what's new.

General pointers for success

Be **consistent**, not sporadic - aim for one post/reel per day.

Encourage **interaction** - ask questions, seek feedback.

Be **entertaining** - tell stories.

Use **hashtags** - think about how people can find you.

Ask for support - build your tribe - what is the next step you want someone to take?

Post at the **right time** (you can schedule in advance).

Use **analytics** to see what works.

Engage with others - respond to comments, pay it forward.

There's no secret recipe but it's not rocket science

Remember, it's **just one aspect of engaging your audience** at the start of their journey towards being your customer.

It's just like any other way of selling/engaging online:

- The person doesn't know you, so you have to **build their trust** by giving them all the information and reassurance they need so that they decide to take the next step.
- The decision about whether to engage with you will be **emotional**, not rational - so feed those emotions!

Watch out for risks, scams and spam

Make sure you respect **Insta's community guidelines** otherwise your account may be blocked e.g. if you do life drawing, be careful what you post!

Keep your log in secure so that you can't be **hacked**.

People may try to tag you into what they are selling - keep an eye out and **block any dodgy accounts** as soon as you see them.

People will use the sites to send **phishing** messages - stay on the platform and don't give them your email address, phone number or PayPal details. If in doubt, check - don't let them rush you and if it sounds too good to be true it probably is!

People will say they want to buy your art as **NFTs...** usually a way to scam you with cryptocurrency.

Making a post



Making a post

Posts are good for engaging people who already follow you, building your tribe and taking people to the next step on their journey with you.

It can be a **single item** (static image or video) or a series of up to 10, known as a **carousel**.

Images should be square or slightly portrait (4:5 ratio).

Think about including the **location** - it can help Insta show it to the right people.

Post at the **best time**: weekdays around lunchtime or Saturday mornings (but Insta will give you personalised best times in your analytics).

Images, especially of artwork, should be **good quality** - straight, no reflections or blur.

Making a post

Use your caption to **drive conversation** - seek comments and likes.

You can talk about **why and how you made something**, the composition / colours / mood / tone / texture etc.

Include a **call to action** e.g. visit your website, message you, like, share with a friend, tap on your profile.

Add relevant **hashtags** and mentions.

Carousels can **tell a story** really well.

You can **pin** up to three posts in the top row on your profile page, so that these will always show to people first.

Making a reel



Making a reel

Reels are good for attracting new followers.

It is a **video** but it can be made up of **still photos**.

It should be **portrait orientation** (9:16 ratio).

It should be **entertaining**, fun, inspiring, informative - people react emotionally.

It can be raw/experimental, not finessed - something **authentic**.

It should be **short** - 30 seconds maximum - the algorithm measures if people watch it to the end!

There are **templates** you can use on Insta, Canva etc.

Making a reel

If you use **trending music** it should help reach more people BUT (a) authenticity is key and (b) lots of people don't turn the volume on anyway.

Use **on screen captions** so that it reaches those who don't turn the volume on.

It should have **a hook, a narrative and a call to action** (a beginning, a middle and an end!):

- Something to intrigue / make people watch
- The main story / what it's about
- The end / what they should do next

As with a post, put it up at the best **time**, give it a good **caption** and add relevant **hashtags**.

Making a story



Making a story

Stories are good for **interacting with your followers** and **sending them to your website** or other external links. They will be shown most to your biggest fans.

They only show for 7 seconds so they are **image-led**, not text-heavy.

They only appear for **24 hours** and are usually more **informal and fun** - maybe including something from your personal / social life (within reason!) and emojis / gifs.

Stories are your only opportunity on Insta to add **direct web links!** They are ideal to highlight individual **products** with a link to them in your online shop or Etsy.

It can be a static image or a video.

Images should be **portrait orientation.**

Making a story

You can easily share a post or a reel to your story.

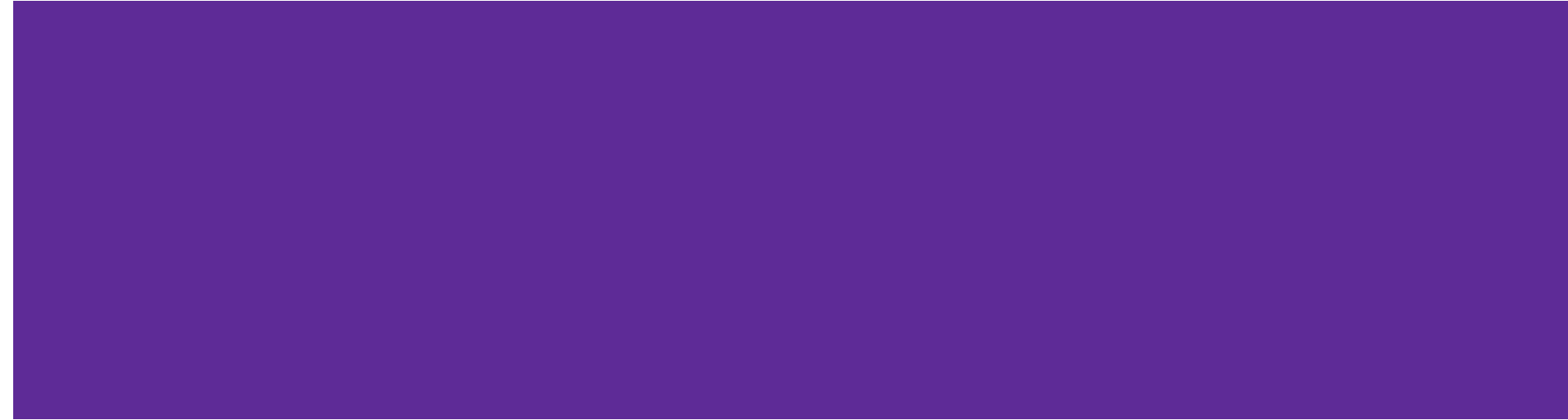
Use **stickers** to drive engagement e.g. a poll question, a quiz, an emoji slider poll.

It's often relevant to add a sticker with your **location**.

You can build your brand by **sharing other people's content** to your story e.g. artists you admire, places you love and commenting on it.

You can collect stories together into a **highlight** on your profile page which people can see at any time - useful for product ranges or building a narrative.

Your profile



Your profile

This is your chance to show people a bit more about you and hopefully persuade them to follow you or click through to your web links.

Your **profile picture** should be something that reflects you and what you do - maybe a picture of you at work, a piece of your work or your logo if you have one. Choose something that can be seen when very small on a phone and which fits in a circle.

Your **bio** is very limited on space so make the most of it. Revise it regularly if needed.

Add **web links** which are useful and drive people to take the next step with you e.g. look at your website/Etsy shop, visit your next event, sign up for your newsletter. Revise them regularly.

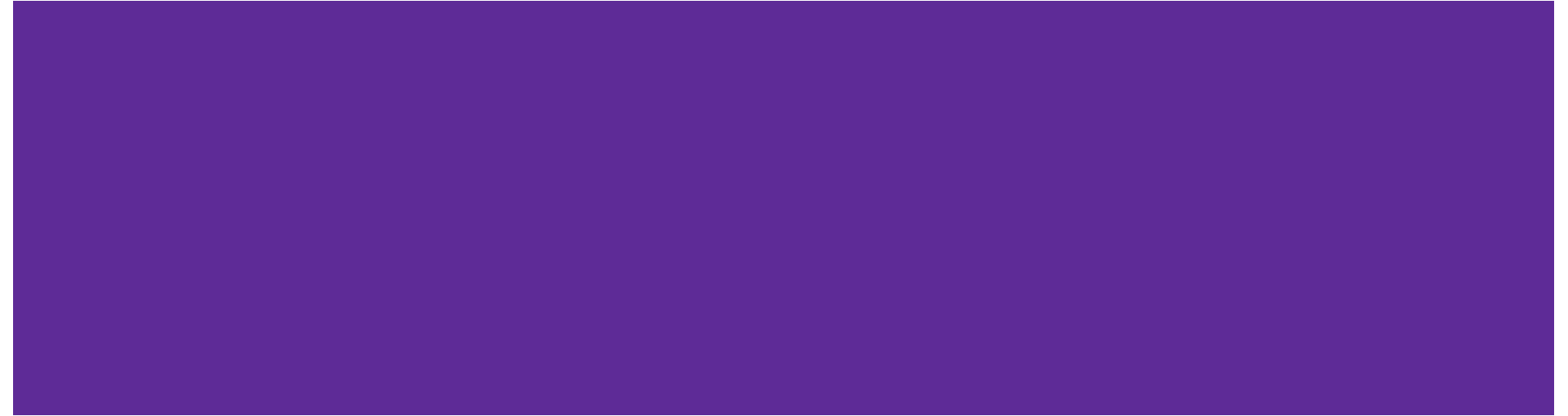
Your profile

Add **highlights** (made up of stories) that make sense of your business - think of them as mini-brochures about different aspects of your work.

You may want to **pin** up to 3 posts or reels to the top of your profile grid e.g. about me, how to buy, upcoming workshops etc.

Review your **profile grid** regularly - does it look attractive overall as a gallery? This is what people will use to decide whether to follow you in less than a second! Quality is better than quantity!

Ideas for content



Your content

You may find these prompts helpful in creating content - please share ideas for more!

- A new product/piece - why and how you made it, description, price and how to buy
- Looking back at an older piece
- Smaller value items e.g. prints, greeting cards
- National/interational events e.g. Christmas, Valentine's, International Women's Day
- Customer reviews
- Pieces in situ in their new home or a gallery
- Your events e.g. workshops, fairs and shows
- Your stockists

Your content

- Suggestions for gifting your work e.g. weddings, birthdays
- Answering common questions e.g. how big, how long it takes, how much it costs, how to order/buy
- Work in progress - timelapse videos or stages of creation
- Your studio / tools / apron / pet
- Your materials
- What inspires you - other artists, landscapes, music, ...
- When a piece has sold
- How to display / care for / use your work
- Themed posts e.g. blue week, seascape week
- Behind the scenes e.g. packing for an exhibition

Your content

- Preliminary sketches/models
- Revealing a piece gradually
- Somewhere you've been
- Something you've learnt
- ...

Hashtags



Hashtags

Imagine your content is a book in a library which contains every book ever written. Hashtags are a way for people to find the shelf that your book is on.

You will need a mixture of very **general** hashtags and very **particular** ones so that people come to the right section of the library and then the right shelf.

You **MUST** think of these from the **perspective of the people you want to reach**, not your own perspective as an artist - not everyone uses the same artistic language as you - e.g. picture/painting, blue/ultramarine, pottery/ceramics, printer/printmaker, decor/art!

About 20 is the current recommendation.

Hashtags

Suggestions (experiment, look at others and find what works for you!):

- The subject matter
- The media
- The process
- The emotion/mood
- The colour
- Your location
- Buying local / direct from the artist
- The art society you belong to
- Bucks Art Weeks Official!

How to work with Bucks Art Weeks on Instagram



Making the most of your links with Visual Images Group/Bucks Art Weeks

We are time limited and not digital media specialists!

Overall BAW Insta needs to: showcase the breadth and quality of everyone's work; be fair between media, geography etc; be upmarket/give a gallery feel; and be interesting.

We will do as much as we can within this to promote you!

Interact with each other and BAW - a rising tide lifts all boats - like, share and comment on ours and other artists' posts (even just an emoji).

us in your *posts* at **#bucksartweeksofficial** - lots of people follow this hashtag so you will be reaching some of them directly.

Making the most of your links with Visual Images Group/Bucks Art Weeks

Mention us in your *stories* at **@BucksArtWeeksOfficial** and we will share if possible.

At least during Bucks Art Weeks, **link to your VIG gallery page** in your bio - and make the most of your VIG gallery page all year round!

Keep in touch and we can promote you throughout the year.

Tell us your news - for PR as well as social media - you can use this form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8BX655B>

Please don't message us on Insta - email is better.

Around Bucks Art Weeks

Think ahead and plan/schedule your images and posts.

Post that you're taking part 2 weeks before, 1 week before, and just before.

During Bucks Art Weeks - post a picture of your own work every day and tag us:
#bucksartweeksofficial

Ask people to share your content and ask visitors to post that they visited.

Include your name, venue number and location in your caption if you can.