

PROJECT 1 GETTING STARTED

IT MIGHT SEEM A BIT ANNOYING TO START YOUR TIKTOK ADVENTURE WITH A WHOLE CHUNK OF THIS BOOK DEDICATED TO SAFETY, SECURITY, AND LEGAL STUFF, BUT IT'S SUPER IMPORTANT TO KNOW SO YOU CAN MAKE SMART CHOICES.

The early days of TikTok were a bit of a wild west, meaning that sometimes the content wasn't what a parent would consider "safe" for their family, but TikTok is maturing a lot as a platform, and it's getting better and better at ensuring you have a fully safe and comfortable experience.

MAKING SMART CHOICES

When you're doing anything online, and especially when it comes to social media and video content creation, it's really important to know how to navigate safely. This might seem like boring stuff but knowing some of the safety basics will mean you are set up for success and can avoid unpleasant situations.

- » If you're under 18, you will need permission from a parent or legal guardian to sign up and use TikTok.
- » There is some important legal stuff to know to make sure you don't get into TikTok trouble.
- » And most of all, you want to ensure everything you do on TikTok keeps you safe.
- » A few minutes reading this section is time well spent.

GETTING PERMISSION

Ask your parent or legal guardian if you can download TikTok to your phone, tablet, or computer. It's a great idea to have a conversation with your parent about why you want to use TikTok, how you intend to use it, and how they can participate in your usage of TikTok to ensure you're enjoying your experience.

COPYRIGHT

You should have a basic understanding of copyright. If you write an original book, if you make an original movie, if you create an original TV show, and if you make an original TikTok video, you are the copyright owner of it. *Copyright* is a legal term that means you are the owner of something, and so someone else can't claim that they made it. Copyright only applies to original content you create — meaning, you made this and no one else, and copyright encourages people not to steal other people's original content creations. This means one simple thing: Don't use other people's work and pretend it's your own. For example, don't video record a TV show and post it on TikTok — they'll take it down immediately, and you might get some kind of strike against your account. Remember, only upload to TikTok content that you have created.



TIP

Okay, a copyright protects original content, but sounds are different — right? Well, TikTok has a big sound library that you can use to make your TikTok videos. Sounds are original content creations and remain the copyright of the legal owner, but TikTok and the copyright owners allow people to use their sounds in videos. We explore using sound in Project 4.

UNDERSTANDING SAFETY

Why all this emphasis on safety? Well, with any social media site, people are uploading content, and sometimes that content might have more adult themes unsuitable for someone younger. Further, the platform works hard to ensure nothing illegal is posted. People still try — every day — to upload content to apps like TikTok that they shouldn't. And because TikTok is a social media site, it's a place where you might find yourself talking with strangers, so proceed with caution.



TIP

Listen to your instincts. If you're unsure if something is appropriate, or if something is making you feel unsafe, ask your parent or legal guardian for their advice and help.



WARNING

Above all else, never give out your personal information like your phone number, e-mail address, or home address to anyone on the Internet without a parent or legal guardian's permission. And remember that you can block people if needed.

NAVIGATING THE APP

If you're completely new to TikTok, it's time to download the app and get familiar with the basics. We'll dive right in and cover:

- » Downloading the app and creating your Profile
- » Learning about privacy and security settings.
- » Understanding viewing basics like Follows, Likes, Comments, and Shares

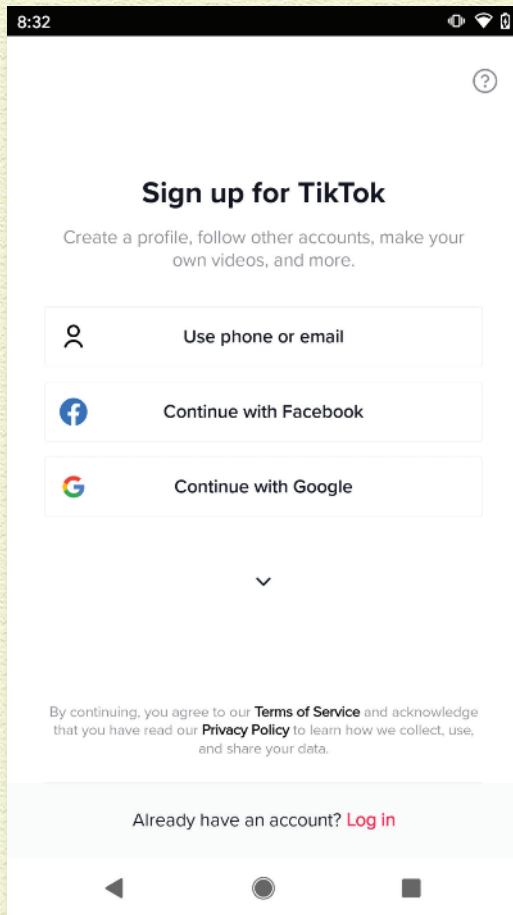
DOWNLOADING TIKTOK

Head to either the Apple App Store (iPhone) or the Google Play Store (Android) and search for TikTok and get started by downloading the app. After you've downloaded the TikTok app, open it to get started.

CREATING YOUR PROFILE

- 1** When you open the app, you'll be asked to either log in (if you already have an account) or to sign up. Choose Sign up.
- 2** You'll choose from different options to **sign up** — using your phone number, e-mail address, or a Facebook or Google account.

You might be asked to enter a code sent to either your phone or e-mail address for verification.



- 3 You'll be asked to enter your birthdate, as well as pass a verification security step (usually matching a puzzle piece to the right spot in an image).

4 You'll create a username and password (if needed).

You can change your username later if you'd like, but it's best to choose something and stick with it. You can use your name but consider using a fun nickname instead. If you have other social profiles, like Instagram, consider choosing the same username so people can find you across other social media platforms.

5 You might be asked to choose your interests, such as Beauty & Fashion or Football.

This will help TikTok show you content you are more likely to like.

6 From any screen in the app, you can click on the Profile icon in the bottom-right corner. Here you can upload a profile photo, as well as edit your profile to add things like links to your other social profiles, your pronouns, a bio, and even a charity (or nonprofit) you support.

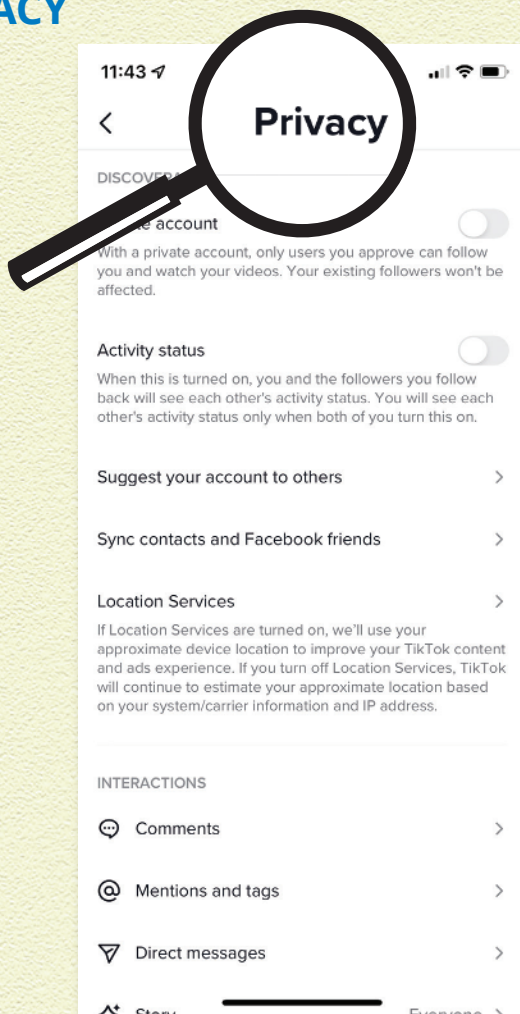
Your profile displays how many people are following you, how many people you are following, and how many likes your videos have received to date.



TIP

We suggest using a photo of your pet or something inanimate like your favorite house plant, toy or any object. It's better for your privacy and lets you show your sense of humor.

PRIVACY



When you sign up for TikTok, you'll be asked to pass through what's known as an *age gate*. In the U.S. market, you need to be at least 13 years old to use most of TikTok's features. If you're **under 13 years old**, TikTok will place you in their TikTok for Younger Users experience, which has additional privacy and safety protections designed specifically for you. That's a

good thing, so when you sign up, be honest about your age. We point out other legal requirements, like age requirements to live stream, in the later project chapters.

You'll have the option to customize your privacy settings in the app. Here's how to set up further privacy settings:

- 1 Tap the hamburger menu in the upper-right corner. (It looks like three horizontal stacked lines.)**
- 2 Choose Settings and Privacy.**
- 3 Choose Privacy.**

In this section, you'll find options to:

- » **Set your account to private.** With a private account, only users you approve can follow you and watch your videos. For maximum safety, consider setting your account to private.
- » **Set your activity status.** When you turn this feature on, you and the followers you follow back will see each other's activity status.
- » **Turn on/off suggesting your account to others.** TikTok will recommend your account to other people who might like to follow you. But you can turn this off at a few different levels including your contacts, your Facebook friends, people with mutual connections, and even people who open or send links to you.
- » **Turn off location services.** TikTok is saying here that they use your geographic location to improve the content and ads they show you. Really this means they want to know your location for the best possible advertising targeting. You can turn this feature off, but TikTok will still guess your

location using your Internet service provider and IP address (the address of your device on the Internet).

- » **Customize your interactions.** You can play with settings around comments, mentions, tags, who can direct message you, duet and stitch you, accounts you may have blocked, and much more.

TAKING A QUICK LOOK AT THE FEATURES

When you open the TikTok app, you'll immediately see a video playing. You can scroll down to refresh your feed and tap the screen to pause it so we can look around at the different features.

- » At the top of the app, you'll see two words — *Following* and *For You*. The *Following* page shows you content only from accounts you are following whereas the *For You* page shows you content recommended by the TikTok algorithm. (That's fancy speak for a computer program making choices on what to show you.) You can flip between either of these tabs to enjoy videos. We explain these tabs in more detail in "Project 2: Finding Inspiration."
- » At any time, tap the Home button in the bottom-left corner to return to the home screen.
- » There's a plus-sign button (+) used to create your own TikToks. Check out "Project 4: Making a TikTok" for more info.

On the right-hand side, you'll see a row of vertical icons. Let's start with the profile photo of the person who uploaded the video paused on your screen.

FOLLOW

Tap the “+” button under the profile photo and you’ll immediately follow that person. Their content will appear on your Following page and will most likely show up on your For You page (or FYP). If you tap the upper part of their profile image, you’ll be taken to their Profile page where you can see how many people are following them, who they follow, how many likes they have in total, and even links to message them on TikTok and on other social profiles.

LIKES

The heart icon shows how many times people have liked the video. You can only like a video once. Tap the heart once to “Like,” and again to remove the Like. There isn’t a “Dislike” button. But if you tap and hold anywhere on the screen, there is a “Not interested” option that enables you to teach TikTok what content you don’t like. Make use of the Like and Not interested features to make TikTok show you more of the content you love.

COMMENTS

The next icon looks like a chat bubble and has the number of comments that the video has received. You can tap this icon to see what people have said, add your own comment, and like or reply to other people’s comments.

FAVORITES

The button that looks like a ribbon is your bookmark button to save your favorites. You’ll find your saved favorites listed on your profile. Just tap the profile icon in the bottom-right corner. Just beneath your bio, you’ll see a row of four icons. The heart icon shows you videos

you have liked, and the bookmark icon shows you videos you have marked as your favorites.

SHARES

The arrow icon lets you share the video with your friends. Tap this and choose to repost the video, copy the link, or send it to one of your messaging or social media apps. You can even save the video, actually downloading a copy of the video itself, and take other actions like duet or stitch, which we cover in “Project 2: Finding Inspiration.”

SOUNDS

The last icon on the right side looks like a spinning wheel. Tap that icon and you’ll see what sound is used in the TikTok. You can add this sound to your favorite sounds, or you can immediately record it by tapping “Use this sound.” Skip ahead to “Project 4: Making a TikTok” for more on how to use sounds to make your own TikTok.



TIP

The app changes over time with new features and buttons, but the principles remain the same. If you find something has changed in the app that doesn’t line up with the instructions in this book, it’s likely that the button has simply moved to a new location.

EQUIPMENT YOU’LL NEED

You already have it in your hand. (No, not this book, although that’s definitely a handy piece of equipment.) All you need is a phone or tablet to be able to use and make TikToks. If you have other equipment, like a ring light that provides great lighting, then that’s great, but it’s not necessary to make great content.