

Despite its recent release, BeReal is ranked **top four** in social media downloads behind Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest

"I like to have **interesting** people take my BeReals because it makes them stand out, it's fun to see how people **react**."  
- Savannah Nguyen-Meyer, 11



Photos | Nadia Knoblauch and Julia Sumpter

# Let's BeReal.

Nadia Knoblauch | News Editor

**"Y**ou have two minutes left to BeReal!" Grabbing her instrument before band practice, junior Lauren Verstrate ran back to her locker to rummage for her phone, hoping she would be able to post her BeReal on time.

"My friend yelled that the BeReal went off and we all started running and laughing. I always try to post on time," Verstrate said.

Discovering the app through her friends, Verstrate began posting on BeReal daily as a new way to share what she was doing with others. Through the spontaneity of the app, BeReal has helped to take off the pressure of posting on social media for Verstrate, and altered it into a positive and anticipated part of her day.

"It helps you not be fake," Verstrate said. "Instead, you create something and it is just you in your natural state." After blowing up on TikTok in early 2022, BeReal became one of the most popular apps of the summer, allowing it to gain new users through social media and word of mouth.

"I first downloaded BeReal because I had heard about the app from my friends," senior Aryan Patel said. "My first impression was that this was going to be boring, but since I tend to enjoy sharing my fun moments with friends and also seeing what fun things they are up to, I use it daily."

Originally released in 2020, the app encourages users to post one

unedited, unplanned photo a day. This is done by sending a daily, time-sensitive notification randomly, prompting users that it is "Time to BeReal." Once this notification is received, users have two minutes to take their BeReal, where the app takes a photo using both the front and back cameras to capture the user's full surroundings.

As BeReal has brought a new wave of authenticity to social media, many students have embraced this new change and become avid posters on the app, enjoying the routine of posting their BeReals on time.

"Whenever BeReal goes off, I do it right away, except if it goes off during my practice time," junior Emma Greenier said. "I love posting on time because it gives a real representation of being real in that moment and not faking fun."

Since cued post times often overlap with class time, BeReal has also reached teachers and staff. One way staff have interacted with the app is through students asking them to take their BeReals, often capturing the teacher in the post as well.

"It's more fun to have a staff member take your BeReal because most adults aren't aware of what BeReal is, so they aren't prepared for their photo to also be taken," junior Cailin Kilkenny said. "When the staff member sees their photo they are usually shocked and it makes the BeReal even more authentic and funny."

Along with BeReal's goal of showcasing more genuine depictions of peoples' lives, the app also works

to combat toxicity that can be found on other social media apps. BeReal's gimmick is that it shows real-life situations, unlike other social media apps like Instagram. Through the app, students have begun to notice the differences between people's social media lives and their real ones.

"Instagram is a great way to alter the way people see you and your real personality and lifestyle," Greenier said. "People can put on a fancy outfit and Photoshop some background in their pictures to make their life seem like something it is not. I think the app BeReal changed the way people think to 'Wow, this might make people seem as something that I'm not.'"

Even so, some students believe that BeReal can still be used to warp the appearance of users' lives. As the app still allows users to post late, some take advantage of this and wait until later in the day, or even the next morning to post their BeReal. By doing this, people can control the environment they are in, their appearance and the overall look of their BeReal post, which in hindsight, is not truly showing an accurate depiction of their life.

"I sometimes choose to take my BeReal late either because I forget to do it on time, or I know I'll be doing something more interesting later," junior Bryce Padilla said. "I think in some cases it can feel fake to post late, but in other cases, the timing of the BeReal is just inconvenient."

Despite the app's efforts towards a more positive and realistic social media

presence, many find themselves taking BeReals in odd or awkward situations, making their posts and feed especially interesting. Users can react to these by using "RealMojis," which are photos they can take of their live reaction to the post, helping the app to be even more genuine and sincere.

"One time when my BeReal went off, two of my friends were fighting," Kilkenny said. "When you take a BeReal in a strange situation you tend to get more reactions and comments, one time I had over 20 reactions."

However, BeReal's random notifications can sometimes go off at the perfect time, according to junior Katie Pollack, whose BeReal went off while at the Lady Gaga Chromatica Ball concert.

"I thought it was cool because Lady Gaga is my favorite artist and she has had such an impact in my life," Pollack said. "I was able to use this to document my experience in a unique way, getting both her on stage and me in the photo at once."

Through simple notifications, BeReal has helped change the way students view their social media presence while also incorporating a new form of contact between friends into their daily routines.

"I think BeReal is so popular because you can share a moment with everyone at once," Kilkenny said. "Having the app adds excitement to my daily life because when I am doing something fun or interesting, I am excited to get my notification so I can share those moments with my friends."

BeReal has over **21.6 million** active monthly users, with over **2.9 million** daily app visits

The app is **most widely** used in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom and France

Alexis Barreyat, a former employee for GoPro, **founded BeReal in 2020**

