

HOW DO YOUNG MEN REALLY TALK, AND WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT US?

They write in five-word lines, and they talk about the shows, not the service. We counted what men 18 to 24 post and comment on TikTok, Reddit, YouTube, X and Instagram, then ran the same count on the brand's own posts.

42* the views for an acted-out bit compared with a sincere post

293 TikToks sorted by hand, 2,965 comments measured by script, 480 labeled by hand, 6,622 counted for words, 4,283 Reddit questions and 78,682 comments under four trailers.

Why they asked

A streaming service wanted to keep young men watching in the gaps between seasons of its biggest men's shows. The team was about to brief a social voice for that audience, and some of the ideas on the table read like a slang glossary.

The question was easy to ask and hard to answer: how do men 18 to 24 talk when no brand is in the room, and where does the service come into it? Opinions were everywhere. Counts were not.

A voice that sounds scripted gets called out in public, in the replies under the brand's own posts. This audience can hear a script in a few words.

The answer, slide by slide

HOW THEY WRITE

THEY WRITE FIVE-WORD LINES. BRANDS WRITE HASHTAGS.

A typical line is five words, first person, lower case. One word in 62 is slang. The brand's own captions carried a hashtag 92.5% of the time; their comments, 0.2%.

WHAT GETS WATCHED

A BIT GETS 42 TIMES THE VIEWS OF A SINCERE POST.

Median 91,850 views for an acted-out sketch, 2,171 for a sincere post, 1,675 for a brand post. Per viewer, both get liked at the same rate. The sincere post just reaches 42 times fewer people.

WHAT THEY REWARD

HALF OF THE TOP COMMENTS ARE JOKES.

Of the 360 most-liked comments, 49% are a joke of some kind. One in ten is sincere. Sarcasm is rare, and when it lands it is the second most-liked kind.

THEIR WORDS, COUNTED

THEY DON'T USE THE GLOSSARY.

The two most searched slang terms of 2025 appear in one comment and in none, out of 6,622. The words they do use are verdicts on the work, not decoration.

WHAT THEY TALK ABOUT

THEY TALK ABOUT THE SHOWS, NOT THE SERVICE.

78,682 comments under four trailers. The service only comes up when it gets in the way: ads, the app, a canceled show.

WHAT TO DO

- **Play along:** Reply to the bit. Don't start one.
- **Tell, don't ask:** State a time. Never ask the room a question.
- **Hand over the mic:** Let a fan's line be the caption.
- **No glossary:** No slang in the caption.

How we answered it

1. **Pull the posts they make themselves.** We pulled 293 TikTok from eight formats young men run themselves, including the boys group chat, aura points, lock in, gym bro, the fantasy football group chat and the boys trip. Each post was sorted by hand: an acted-out bit, a sincere post, or a brand post.
2. **Measure how they write, with one ruler.** We measured 2,965 comments with one script: words per line, first person, lower case, full stops, hashtags, swearing. The same script ran on the service's own captions and on a competing streamer's, so every comparison is like for like.
3. **Label what the room rewards.** The three most-liked comments under every post in ten TikTok pulls, 360 in all, were labeled by hand with one kind each: plays along, flat verdict, roast, sincere, sarcasm and so on. In total 480 comments were labeled by one reader, and every label is filed.
4. **Count their words.** We counted words and emoji across 6,622 comments from their own spaces: the eight formats, four men's shows, the replies under the service's account and the trailers on YouTube. A term counts once per comment. Then we set them next to the glossary words.
5. **Map what they talk about.** We sorted a year of r/AskMen question titles, 4,283 of them, by keyword rules, and checked the 57 posters who state an age between 18 and 24 on their own.
6. **Read the rooms about the service.** We counted 78,682 comments under the service's four biggest men's trailers on YouTube, on 53.5 million views, plus four TikTok pulls on the shows (155 posts, 2,279 comments) and two Reddit sweeps. Every rule in the report is tied to one of these counts.

Everything we found

1 in 62

They write five-word lines. Brands write hashtags.

A typical comment is five words. 37% say I, me or we, 27.6% are all lower case, 4.9% end in a full stop, 3.4% swear and 0.2% carry a hashtag. One word in 62 is slang. The service's own TikTok captions that month ran eight words, with a full stop 35% of the time, first person 5% of the time and a hashtag 92.5% of the time. A competing streamer's captions already sat at the audience's rate.

42*

An acted-out bit gets 42 times the views of a sincere post

Across 293 TikToks the median bit, a sketch with a punchline, had 91,850 views. The median sincere or motivational post had 2,171, and the median brand post 1,675. That makes a bit 42 times a sincere post and 55 times a brand post, and the order held in seven of the eight pulls. Per viewer, the like rate is the same: 107 likes per 1,000 views on a sincere post and 106 on a bit. People like the sincere post just as much. It reaches 42 times fewer of them.

5,007,997

Sincere works when a real person is in the frame

Out of 293 posts, one sincere post traveled: a bricklayer's clip of his 19-year-old apprentice asleep after a 90-day outage, at 5,007,997 views. Sincerity travels when someone real is in the shot, doing something real.

242 vs 3

The comments are the second act

The median most-liked comment under a bit has 242 likes. Under a sincere post it has 3, and under a brand post, 1. For a brand, the reply section under someone else's bit is often a better stage than its own post.

49%

Half of what the room rewards is a joke

Of the 360 most-liked comments, 49% are a joke of some kind. A quarter play along with the bit: they extend it, quote it back or pitch it as a film ("could be a amazing movie if it was a real movie", 464,928 likes). A flat verdict is 13.9%, a roast 10.8%, a joke at their own expense 10.6%. Sincere lines are 10.3% of the top comments against 14% of a random sample, so they write sincerely more often than the room rewards it. Questions are 3.9%.

1 in 36

Sarcasm is rare, and it lands

Sarcasm and deadpan are 2.8% of top comments, about one in 36. When it appears it is the second most-liked kind of line, at a median of 9,796 likes. It is aimed at the post and never at other commenters. The most-liked reply under one of the service's own posts called it bad and promised to watch anyway. Deadpan, and it means "I'm in."

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They don't use the glossary

The crying-laughing emoji is in 63 of every 1,000 comments, more than any word. "Bro" is in 40 per 1,000, then peak (8.3), real (7.9), aura (5.7) and lock in (5.7). The glossary words barely register: unc 0.8, sigma 0.6, skibidi 0.2, and rizz, huzz and gyat at zero. The two most searched slang terms of 2025, at 141,000 and 61,000 searches, show up in one comment and in zero comments, out of 6,622. A 450-term glossary is for sale on X anyway. The words they do use are verdicts they apply to the work: peak, real, cinema, goat.

1.9%

They don't ask each other what to watch

In a year of r/AskMen, 4,283 questions, 36.7% are about women and dating, 10.9% about being a man, 5.1% about sex, 4.1% about mental health and 3.5% about friends and loneliness. Hobbies, games and entertainment: 1.9%. Just 47 titles ask about entertainment, at a median of one upvote. Among the 57 posters who say they are 18 to 24, the shape holds, with 36.8% on dating. On TikTok the format is the topic: the group chat (22.5 million views on the biggest post), the gym (13.0 million), the boys trip (11.5 million), the fantasy league (692,923).

78,682

They talk about the show inside the show's own thread

Entertainment comes up under the show itself: 78,682 comments under four trailers on 53.5 million views, and fan edits between seasons at up to 10 million views. The same four moves appear under every trailer: the callback, the lore, the cadence ("At last. A show that comes out every year rather than making us wait 2-3.", 15,000 likes) and the return ("Guys we are back", 5,200). They grade the marketing too: 54,000 likes on a note about how the new season should be advertised.

41,403

The service only comes up when it gets in the way

Young men talk about the shows, and rate the service one show at a time. The service itself gets named when something blocks them: ad breaks (46 upvotes on a complaint about one episode), the app (23), and a canceled show (41,403 likes on the news). When they say "cancel", they mostly mean the show. On the service's own TikTok, men's titles got a median of 137,600 views against 675,800 for romance posts, a fifth. A regional desk's post for one men's show did 12.1 million views; the home desk's biggest men's post did 524,100.

What we told them to do

- **PLAY ALONG** Reply to the bit. Don't start one. Be the second act: the callback, the riff, the pitch. The top comment under a bit gets 242 likes; under a sincere post, 3.
- **TELL, DON'T ASK** Write a statement with a time in it. "We tee off at X o'clock." Never "who's watching tonight?". Questions are 3.9% of the top comments.
- **HAND OVER THE MIC** Let a fan's line be the caption. The person says it and the brand supplies the stage. A regional desk did 12.1 million views this way; the home desk's biggest men's post did 524,100.
- **NO GLOSSARY** No slang in the caption. One word in 62 is slang, and those words are verdicts they apply to the work. Use the short, flat lines the brand's X desk already writes.
- **MOVE THE VOICE YOU ALREADY HAVE** The voice already exists inside the company, on the X desk and the regional TikTok desks. The job is to move it to the accounts that need it.

What any brand can take from this

- **Count before you brief a voice.** A voice brief built on a glossary guesses at an audience. A voice brief built on counts (line length, first person, what the top replies are) describes one. Run the same ruler over your own captions and the gap shows up in one table.
- **Borrowed slang reads as a script.** The report cites a 2025 Journal of Marketing Research study that found slang in a brand's posts cost likes and sales in every age group. Their words are for judging things. A brand that wears them looks like it is trying.
- **Find the room where your category gets discussed.** These young men almost never ask what to watch. They talk inside the show's own thread. Every category has rooms like this, under the trailer, on the game's forum, in the book's reviews, and those rooms are where a brand can join in.

What this doesn't prove

- r/AskMen skews older than 24, so the 57 posters who state an age of 18 to 24 are shown on their own. The Reddit rooms about the service also skew older than 24.
- One reader labeled 480 comments. Every label is filed so it can be checked, but it is one person's reading.
- Instagram returns no like counts on comments, so Instagram replies appear only as examples. The like-based rankings come from TikTok.
- The report shows how this audience talks and what it rewards in public. It doesn't prove the voice rules will raise viewing. That needs a test against the service's own numbers.

Every comment and post was pulled from public pages and every label is filed. Counts use the same script on the audience and on the brand. Names of the brand, its campaigns and its titles are removed. The numbers are exactly as delivered.

Your question is next. Try it free: pick a question and we answer it with your own numbers and what people say, then walk you through it in 30 minutes. No card. usearcus.ai/free-report