

Time	~ 1 hour
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand what is an external API

API Wrappers vs. API

Most online apps talk to each other via HTTP or HTTPS (*there are other protocols out there but don't bother for now*). It's not very different from a user typing in your app's URL, for e.g. <http://yourcoolapp.com>.

Many companies (Facebook, Twitter, PayPal) develop APIs so that you can use their service through your app. But they (or the open-source community) go a step further and build wrappers as Gems for you so that you can integrate these APIs into your app with even greater ease.

When you did the Facebook login integration, you probably used `omniauth-facebook` gem. That's an API wrapper essentially. It was such a high-level wrapper that you almost didn't even need to write any code to get it to work.

That's great but you'll not always be that lucky! Some other apps you want to integrate may not have a wrapper for you to use. In cases like these, you will need to communicate with the other app by writing HTTP calls to their various API endpoints.

Let's look at example. There are two ways to return a Twitter user's followers:

1. Calling an API with no Wrappers

```
RestClient.get("https://api.twitter.com/1.1/followers/list.json?cursor=-1&screen_name=twitterdev&skip_status=true&include_user_entities=false", access_token: access_token)
```

2. Calling an API with Twitter's Wrapper

```
client = Twitter::REST::Client.new do |config|
  config.consumer_key    = "YOUR_CONSUMER_KEY"
  config.consumer_secret = "YOUR_CONSUMER_SECRET"
  config.access_token    = "YOUR_ACCESS_TOKEN"
  config.access_token_secret = "YOUR_ACCESS_SECRET"
end
```

```
client.followers
```

Which method would you prefer and why? To learn more about APIs, here is a [good resource](#) for you to check out. Have fun!