



Activity: TxtA3

Theme

Abbreviations and acronyms are commonly used in technology-based communication.

Key learning/subject areas

Cross curricula and particularly suited to English and Language Arts.

Duration

One period.

Objectives

On completion of this activity students will be able to:

- understand and use the common conventions in contemporary text language
- convey key messages and information relating to the safe and ethical use of the internet and mobile technologies.

The output will be:

- an abbreviated text message containing advice on safety or ethics when using the internet or mobile technologies.



Resources/links/materials required

CyberNetrix CD-ROM:

Object in the room	Activity
Mobile phone	Cool text terms Glossary
Bike helmet	Staying cybersavvy–Basic safety hints



Introduction

Students will write and design a piece using text terms and emoticons. In small groups, they will develop a succinct key message and tags chosen from one of the issues related to safe and ethical use of the internet and other technologies.

Prior learning

Students need to have:

- a basic understanding of what constitutes safe and ethical use of the internet and mobile technologies
- knowledge of the basic conventions of text messaging
- knowledge of abbreviations and emoticons for text messaging. These can be downloaded from 'Cool text terms' on the CyberNetrix CD-ROM.



Activity description

1. Whole class activity

Ask students what they know about text messaging and if they use it when communicating with each other. Discuss the similarities and differences between traditional long hand communication and text messaging.

Briefly, ask them to list some typical text message abbreviations, acronyms or emoticons on the board.

2. Small group activity

Break students into groups of three to four with the aim of developing a text message which:

- contains advice on being safe or ethical when using the internet or mobile technologies—this may need to be discussed more with the class
- provides information about what to do if someone needs help or advice.

When the messages have been developed, ask each group to pass their message to another group which will try to decode it.



Teacher notes

If this activity is done early in the term and students are not well acquainted with safety advice, it may be necessary to spend some time discussing the issues before forming small groups. 'Basic safety hints' and 'Cool text terms' documents can also be downloaded from the CyberNetrix CD-ROM as a resource for the class.

Of course, text messaging as a means of communicating is a salient issue in education today. Debate over whether or not texting is a valid text genre continues and it may be decided that exploring this does not meet the goals of the school's curriculum. However, it is worth considering that texting and instant messaging are used ubiquitously by Australian students and the language style and structure are increasingly becoming part of Australian language.

It may be decided to discuss the similarities and differences between traditional communication and text messaging, as well as the behavioural expectations of people who text message. This could include discussing the netiquette surrounding the use of capitals, and how flaming and other forms of communicating that can have adverse affects, be offensive or inappropriate in the context of safe and ethical use.

If the school permits, students could use mobile technologies—such as mobile phones—to convey their text messages to each group.