

Topic: Texting

Aims:

- To help students understand text message abbreviations
- To develop students' reading skills
- To develop students' speaking and listening skills

Level: Lower intermediate B1

Introduction

Students do lots of texting in their L1 and are often keen to learn how to text in English too. In this lesson students have a discussion, learn some useful texting abbreviations and read an article about texting and literacy.

Procedure

Lead in: Discussion

- Introduce the topic of mobile phones. Write these discussion points on the board. *How often do you use your mobile phone? What do you use your mobile for? How often do you send text messages? How long is the average text message that you send? How much do you spend on your mobile phone? How often do you change your mobile phone? What would your life be like without a mobile phone?*
- Put students into small groups to discuss each question and share their ideas and experiences.
- Ask a student from each group to feed back to the rest of the class about their ideas.
- Write a few simple text messages on the board and elicit their meanings: *CUL8R (see you later), LOL (laughing out loud), FTF (face to face)*. Explain that some text messages are easy to understand when you say them aloud; C = see, etc. Other text messages are abbreviations that need to be learnt.

Task 1: Translating

- Give each student a copy of Task 1.

CUL8R	<i>see you later</i>	BF	
LOL		GFI	
4ever		HAGD	
WUCIWUG		RU there?	
v		STU	
vvv		shhh	
gr8		TYVM	
ILNY		UOK?	
EZ		w/e	
GF		zzz	

- Students work in pairs ‘translating’ the text messages and writing what they mean in English. Give students a limited time. When they finish, put students into groups of four (two pairs) to compare and share their answers. Explain that you don’t expect students to know all of the answers, but they should be able to guess some.
- Elicit the answers orally or dictate them for students to check.

Answers: See you later, laughing out loud, for ever, what you see is what you get, very, extremely, I love New York, easy, girlfriend, boyfriend, go for it! Have a great day, Are you there? Same to you, quiet, Thank you very much, Are you ok? weekend, sleeping, bored or tired

Task 2: Reading

- Give students Task 2.

1 Read the text and answer the question.

Who started the debate about the possible danger of texting?

Texting and literacy

Lately, some people have been concerned that the explosion in text messaging among young people is having a negative effect on their literacy skills. However, a recent study at the department of communication and science at City University in London compared the spelling and punctuation of 11 and 12-year old texters and non-texters, finding no significant differences between the two groups.

It is important when texting to be fast and concise. This is to save on time and space. A reader who is unfamiliar with texting will feel lost when they see abbreviations, acronyms and emoticons. For texters, this 'language' is easy to read and easy to write.

The debate about the harmful effects of texting started a few years ago. Teachers began noticing examples of texting language in their students' exam papers. One case, a 13-year-old Scottish girl who wrote an entire description of her summer holidays in text language, became famous. Her teacher sent a sample of the essay to a national newspaper and readers sent in hundreds of letters giving their opinion.

2 Read the text again and circle the correct option.

1. Some people think that young people who **don't send / send a lot of** text messages, write badly.
2. A recent study compared the **literacy / exam results** of children who text and children who don't text.
3. The results of the text showed that there was **hardly any / quite a big** difference between the two groups.
4. Texters try to write their message **in code / using very few words**.
5. A **Scottish girl / teacher** sent some text to the newspaper.

- Tell students to read the introduction quickly and answer the question. Then they read the text again and answer the questions. Elicit the answers orally for students to check.

Answers: (1) School teachers;

(2) 1. send a lot of; 2. literacy; 3. hardly any; 4. using very few words; 5. teacher

Task 3: Translating an essay from text language

- Write these questions on the board and ask students to discuss them for a few minutes in pairs:

Do you think people who send a lot of text messages have problems with literacy?

Does anything from the reading text surprise you? (What? Why?)

Ask a few pairs to feed back their ideas for the rest of the class.

- Tell students they are going to read the original Scottish girl's essay extract. Give each student a copy of Task 3.

Task 3

This is part of an essay written by a Scottish 13-year-old secondary school pupil. Read the texting and 'translate' it into English.

My smmr hols wr CWOT. B4, we used 2 go 2 NY 2C my bro, his GF & thr 3 :-
@ kds FTF. ILNY, its gr8.

Bt my Ps wr so {-:/ BC o 9/11 tht thay dcdd 2 stay in SCO & spnd 2 wks up N.

Up N, WUCIWUG -- 0. I ws vvv brd in MON. 0 bt baas & ^^

- Students work in pairs. First they read the extract. Then they try to 'translate' it into English.
- When students finish, read the answer aloud for students to check their answers.

Answer

My summer holidays were a complete waste of time. Before, we used to go to New York to see my brother, his girlfriend and their three screaming kids face to face. I love New York, it's a great place.

But my parents were so worried because of the terrorism attack on September 11 that they decided we would stay in Scotland and spend two weeks up north.

Up north, what you see is what you get - nothing.

I was extremely bored in the middle of nowhere. Nothing but sheep and mountains.

Extension idea

- Students write short text messages for each other in pairs. They exchange messages and 'translate' their message.

Useful websites

<http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php>

<http://www.techdictionary.com/chat.html>