Texting for all

Task 1 R u a text expert?
Try this quiz about text messages to find out if you are a text expert!

1) SMS is another way of saying 'text message'. What does SMS stand for?
   a) Silly message system
   b) Short messaging service
   c) Sending message service

2) When did text messaging begin?
   a) 1985
   b) 1990
   c) 1995

3) On average, how many text messages did each British person send last year?
   a) 158
   b) 294
   c) 416

4) What percentage of British teenagers have a mobile phone?
   a) Less than 50%
   b) Over 60%
   c) Over 75%

5) Is it possible to become addicted to text messaging?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) Maybe

Task 2 Text lingo
How's your English text lingo? Match the text message on the left with its 'translation' in real English on the right.

1) C U L8R M8	a) As far as I know.
2) B4	b) Love you with all my heart
3) AFAIK	c) Boring
4) W8 4 ME, I'M L8, SOZ	d) Text me back
5) KIT	e) Have a nice day
6) RUOK?	f) See you later mate
7) LUWAMH	g) Keep in touch

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8) HAND	h) Easy
9) Zzzzzzzzz	i) Are you okay?
10) KOTL	j) Wait for me, I'm late, sorry
11) TMB	k) See you tonight or tomorrow
12) 0 ME	l) By the way
13) EZ	m) Before
14) BTW	n) Ring me
15) C U 2NITE O 2MORO	o) Kiss on the lips

Task 3 Text circle
You're going to practise sending text messages in English. Listen carefully to your teacher.

Task 4 Texting contexts
We can use text messaging as a form of communication in many different situations. Read the contexts in the table and discuss with a partner or group whether you think it's a good idea or a bad idea to use text messaging. Give reasons for your decisions in the comments column.

Texting Contexts	Good idea?	Bad idea?	Comments
To ask somebody out on a first date.			
To finish a relationship.			
To wish a friend happy birthday.			
To say sorry to a friend for a mistake you made.			
To ask for advice from an organisation.			
For a teacher to tell you the homework.			
For a teacher to give you your marks or arrange a tutorial.			
For schools to keep in touch with parents.			
To arrange a doctor's appointment.			
To renew books at the library or reserve videos at the video shop.			

- Now compare your answers with another group.

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Task 5 Reading task - Texting for all

You are going to work in small groups. Each student is going to read about one innovative way that text messaging is used in the UK. Read your paragraph and then explain it to your group.

Text dating

A study at the University of Bath found that texting was the preferred medium for flirting and arranging dates. 62% of females compared to 52% of males are comfortable arranging a first date by text. A third of boys and a quarter of girls saw no reason not to end a relationship by text. Professor Helen Haste says, 'texting is replacing speech for much communication among young people. It is immediate, accessible, private and gives them unprecedented control over how they communicate with friends and family.'

Lecturers texting

It's not just the students who are texting, the lecturers have also realised the benefits. The staff at Wolverhampton University are now sending students revision tips, timetables, appointment times and coursework feedback using mobile phone texting. This method of communication is beneficial to both parties; the university saves money as texting is cheaper than snail mail and it saves the student time. It is no longer necessary to travel into campus to check notice boards.

Social issues texting

Base 25 is a Wolverhampton charity offering advice on relationships and health issues. They use texting to communicate with their audience. Rob Willoughby from Base 25 explains, 'it makes sense to use a medium which our target market is very comfortable with. Regardless of social class, 96% of young people own a mobile phone. We have found that we now have more boys using the service which may be because text messaging enables anonymity which makes it easy for them to ask for help.' Texting has also been used as a cry for help. A potential suicide victim not wanting to talk, sends a text instead.

Schools texting

Parents are kept in the know at a Scottish secondary school. Keith Grammar school is using texting to provide parents with regular updates on pupil's progress. Rector John Aitken said the intention is to praise positive attitudes to work or behaviour but it will also be used to highlight any problems. One parent commented that, 'I know from speaking to other parents that the scheme is welcomed. People are busy nowadays and this can tell us what is going on, wherever we are.'

It seems lots of people are finding innovative uses for texting.

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Task 6 Emoticons

Emoticons are another way to send text messages. Emoticons are little pictures made out of punctuation marks. Here are some examples:

:-) = happy face
:-(= sad face
;-D = winking grin
@--^--- = a rose

First check you know how to ‘say’ the punctuation marks in English, then create some new emoticons and dictate them to your partner. For example, to dictate a smiley face, say, “colon, dash, closed bracket”.

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