

Middle primary unit

Positive online communication



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Positive online communication

Before you start

This unit is designed for students aged 8–9 years.

Before you start this unit it is important that you are aware of what your students, and others in this age group, are doing online and how they use online technologies. For some general information visit the 'What are students doing online?' section at www.cybersmart.gov.au/schools.aspx.

This section provides information on children and technology, including cybercitizen profiles, videos of students discussing their online activities and links to ACMA research regarding online behaviour.

Teacher background information

Students communicate with various people in various ways every day. Online communication, such as email, instant messaging, video chat and social networking is fast becoming an integral part of life. Students need to be aware that many of the rules, manners and etiquette principles that apply to face-to-face interactions also apply to online communication. Online communication etiquette is often referred to as 'netiquette'.

Unit overview and objectives

This unit aims to help students to:

- understand how online communication is similar to, but differs from, face-to-face communication
- develop kind and respectful online communication skills.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- describe the differences and similarities between face-to-face and online communication
- list several 'netiquette' tips
- write emails using respectful, appropriate and inclusive language.

Unit duration

The time allocated to this unit will depend upon the prior knowledge and skill levels of your students. It comprises four activities, each designed to take approximately one or two 45 minute lessons.

Required resources

- Worksheets 1–4
- Interactive whiteboard with Internet access
- Student class/school email accounts
- E-pal licences (located with worksheets)

Further information

For more information, contact:

Australian Communications and Media Authority
Cybersafety Contact Centre

Tel: 1800 880 176

Email: cybersafety@acma.gov.au

www.cybersmart.gov.au

Activity 1: How do we communicate?

What you will need:

- Worksheet 1: Mind map

Students work in pairs to brainstorm the various ways in which we communicate in our daily lives.

For example:

- face-to-face conversations
- email
- texting
- phone
- letters

Compile the results into a class list.

Allocate each pair a method of communication from the list and ask them to record the features of this type of communication on worksheet 1 (you may wish to complete one example with the whole class).

Features could include:

- Is it a written or a verbal method of communication?
- Is it face-to-face?
- Does body language impact on this method of communication?
- Does it require the use of technology?
- What is/are its purpose/s?

Follow this by asking each pair to consider what is required to make their method of communication successful (this can be done on the same worksheet, or a new one can be used). For example:

- speaking politely
- good spelling, grammar and punctuation
- inclusive language
- appropriate body language
- considering the feelings of others
- speaking clearly
- using easy-to-read fonts.

Share ideas and highlight any successful communication requirements that are applicable to more than one method of communication (e.g. considering the feelings of others and using inclusive language).

Activity 2: Successful communication

What you will need:

- Worksheet 2: Communication cartoons (enlarged to A3 size)

Students to reflect on the features of positive communication from activity 1.

In pairs, students to select a method of communication and use worksheet 2 to draw two simple cartoons, one illustrating an example of successful communication and the other illustrating an example of unsuccessful communication.

Display the cartoons in the classroom and invite the students to walk around and view them. Conclude with a class discussion about how to communicate successfully by agreeing on a class list of successful communication 'must haves'.

Activity 3: Online communication

What you will need:

- Successful communication 'must haves' list from activity 2
- Worksheet 3: Venn diagram

Write the word 'netiquette' on the board and ask students to tell you what they think it means and how it was derived.

Netiquette is a combination of the words (inter) net and etiquette and refers to the use of good manners when communicating online.

Ask students to think about how they communicate online. If online communication has been addressed in activities 1 and 2, review the information already compiled. If not, ask students to think about when, if, and how, they use email, social networking sites, instant messaging, video chat etc.

As a class, or in small groups, use the 'must haves' communication list (from activity 2), to compare and contrast online communication with face-to-face communication (on worksheet 3). Students should discover that many of the rules that apply to successful face-to-face communication will also apply to online communication (with minor adjustments).

For example:

- Speaking politely can be adjusted to using polite and appropriate language.
- Using a clear voice can be adjusted to writing in a clear and simple manner.

Work as a class to develop a 'Netiquette tips for online communicators' document, using the ideas from worksheet 3. All students must feel comfortable about adhering to this document.

Activity 4: Applying netiquette (assessment opportunity)

What you will need:

- 'Netiquette tips for online communicators' from activity 3
- Interactive whiteboard with Internet access
- Student class/school email accounts (if they do not have a class/school email account this will need to be organised before the lesson)
- Worksheet 4: Email draft
- E-pal licences

Find out how your students currently communicate online, why and with whom. You may wish to record this information on a graph.

Explain to students that they are going to be assigned an e-pal (this can be a random or deliberate allocation) and will be required to send regular emails to that person. The emails must adhere to the agreed 'Netiquette tips for online communicators'.

Depending on the knowledge and skill levels of your students, some time may need to be allocated to introducing them to the features and design of an email. Use an interactive whiteboard to show an email account, or you could enlarge worksheet 4 to A3 size. Explain each part of an email (e.g. To... Cc... Subject:) to the students.

Students to use worksheet 4 to write a draft email to their e-pal explaining the concept of netiquette. The written draft must be reviewed by the teacher and edited by the student (if required) before it is composed online. Teachers may wish to provide students with some direction for their communication by suggesting topics for future emails.

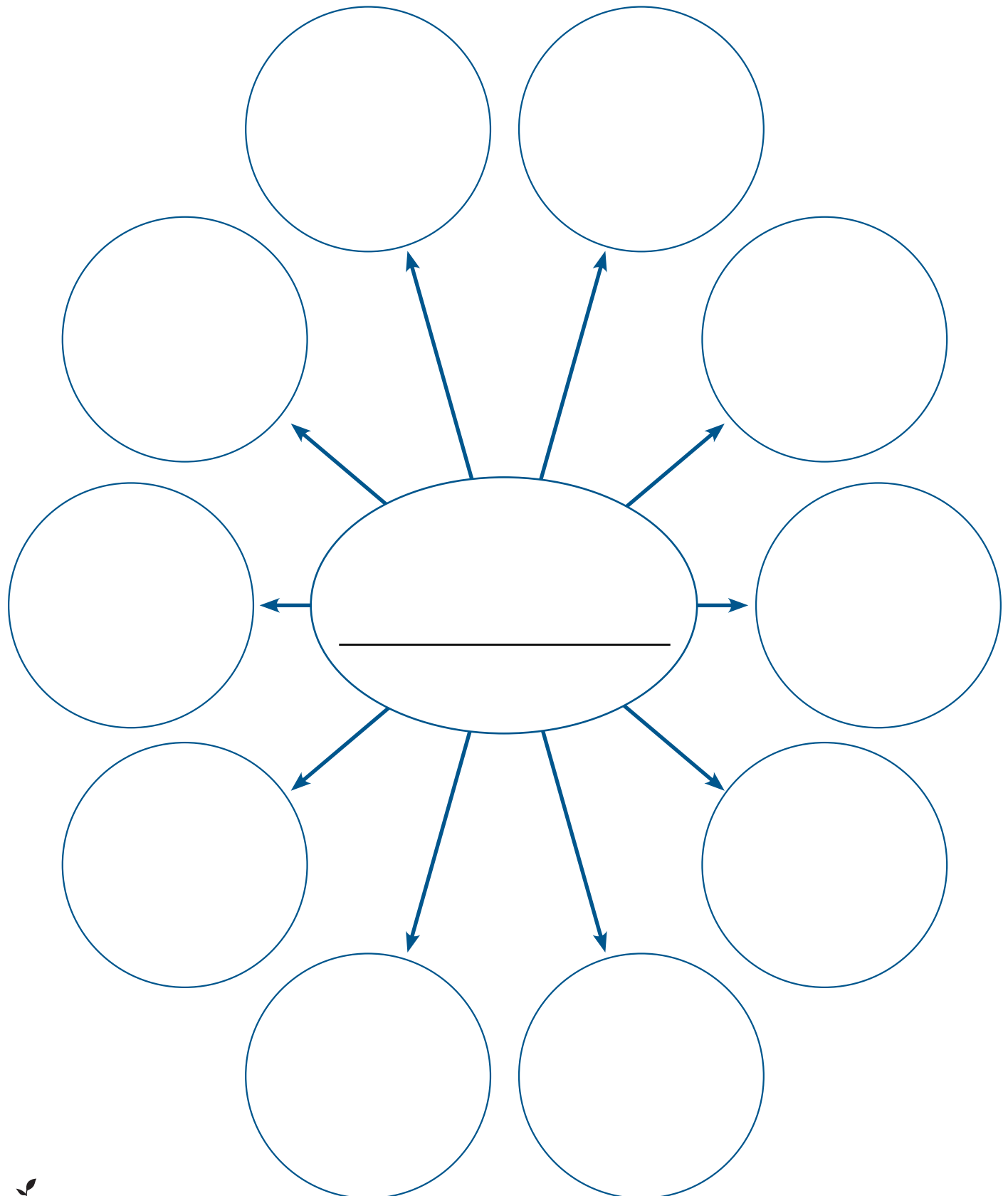
When students have submitted an acceptable draft they can send the email to their e-pal.

Drafts may not be necessary for subsequent emails, but the teacher must monitor all communications.

Once the students have sent a pre-determined number of approved emails to their e-pal they will earn an 'E-pal licence' (see template after the worksheets).

Worksheet 1: Mind map

Name: _____





Worksheet 2: Communication cartoons

Name: _____

An example of successful communication

An example of unsuccessful communication

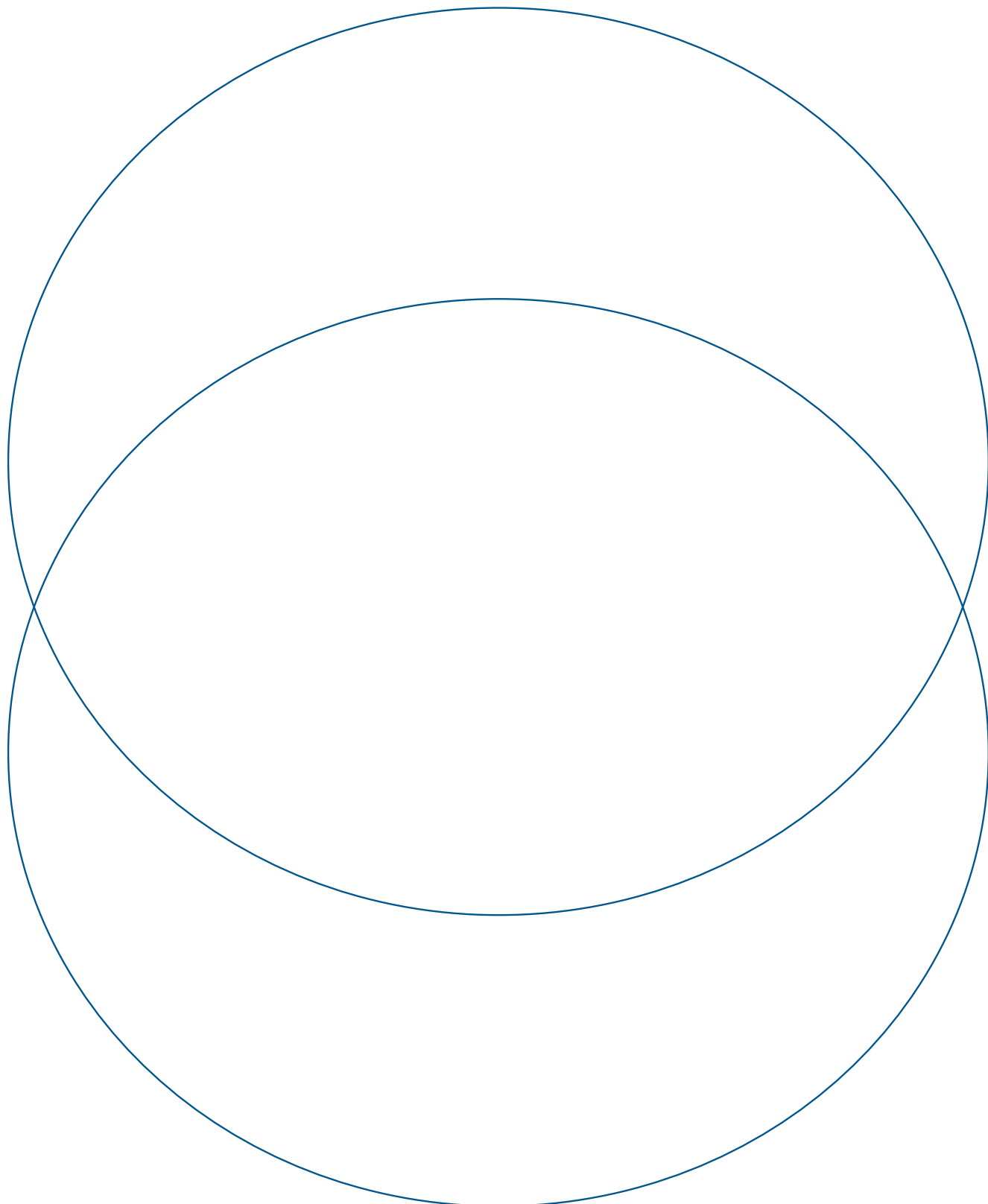


Worksheet 3: Venn diagram

Name: _____

Online communication

Face-to-face communication



E-PAL LICENCE

Congratulations

This is to certify that

uses 'netiquette' when communicating online.

Signed: _____ Date: _____