

## Upper primary unit

### Positive online communication



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### Before you start

This unit is designed for students aged 10–11 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](http://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
- acknowledge that the language used to communicate will vary depending on the audience
- 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
- compose audience-appropriate 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 five activities, each designed to take approximately one or two 45 minute lessons.

### Required resources

- Worksheets 1–4
- Poster paper
- Small pieces of card
- Bag (see activity 3)
- Interactive whiteboard or computer with data projector
- Student class/school email accounts

### Further information

For more information, contact:

Australian Communications and Media Authority  
Cybersafety Contact Centre

Tel: 1800 880 176

Email: [cybersafety@acma.gov.au](mailto:cybersafety@acma.gov.au)

[www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://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.

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, such as maintaining eye contact
- 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)
- Poster paper

Students to reflect on the features of successful 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. The pairs should be given time to explain their cartoons to the rest of the class.

Conclude with a class discussion about how to communicate successfully and agree on a class list of successful communication 'must haves'.

### Activity 3: Who do we communicate with?

What you will need:

- Small pieces of card
- One bag

This activity is designed to show students that it is often necessary to use different types of language with different audiences/types of people.

As a class, students to brainstorm all the different people they communicate with regularly (e.g. classmates, parents, friends, teachers etc.). Write these on individual pieces of card. Put all the cards in one bag.

Choose two confident students for a demonstration. One student will be the communicator and the other the listener. The listener selects a card from the bag and takes on the role of this person (e.g. teacher). The communicator must pretend that he/she is annoyed with the listener and role-play how he/she would deliver this message appropriately.

Repeat this process two or three times with the same demonstrators.

Ask the remaining students to evaluate how the language used changed (if at all), depending on the type of person being communicated with.

Students to work in pairs and use the cards to practise role-playing several scenarios, then perform them to the class. They must indicate how they adjusted their use and style of language for particular audiences.

As a class, discuss and agree on the type of language that is appropriate to use for various audiences. Consider slang, abbreviations, swear words etc.

### Activity 4: Online communication

What you will need:

- Worksheet 3: Online emotions
- Interactive whiteboard or computer with data projector

This activity focuses on appropriate use of online language and how students can convey emotion/meaning in their online (or SMS) communications. It is necessary to reflect on activity 3 as an introduction to online communication.

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, such as using inclusive language and avoiding rude or hurtful comments.

Revisit the ideas from activity 3 regarding the use of language when communicating with different people. Explain to students that 'netiquette' includes the use of appropriate language for the recipient of emails, wall posts, chat messages etc.

With the invention of SMS and chat, the use of language has changed considerably. Students often use abbreviated language, or language which is familiar to them, in their communication with others. It is also possible that meaning/emotion can be lost or misinterpreted in written communication and students need to be aware of this. The ability to choose appropriate language and convey emotion/meaning when communicating is a valuable skill.

Ask students to think about how they communicate online. If online communication has been addressed extensively 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.

Ask students to think about how online communication differs from face-to-face communication. How are feelings and emotions conveyed in online communication?

Use worksheet 3 (displayed on an interactive whiteboard or data projector) to discuss the use of capitals, punctuation and emoticons in emails or online chatting. The lower half of the worksheet should not be revealed until the top half has been discussed.

'Emoticon' is derived from the two words 'emotions' and 'icons'. Emoticons are a shorthand method of illustrating a feeling on the Internet. Emoticons can be used in any communication over the Internet but are particularly popular in chat rooms and instant messaging. While they are a fun and easy way of conveying emotions, they are not considered to be appropriate for more formal emails and should not be used in a negative way.

Brainstorm a list of feelings that students might wish to convey in written online communication.

Students work with a partner to devise an emoticon for each of the feelings discussed.

## Activity 5: Applying netiquette (assessment opportunity)

What you will need:

- Interactive whiteboard
- 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

In this activity students will be applying what they have learnt about online communication to write three emails for three different recipients.

Students use worksheet 4 (each student will need three copies of this) to plan three emails: one to a friend, one to the school principal and one to a local company. Students can choose the topics of the emails or they can be decided by the teacher.

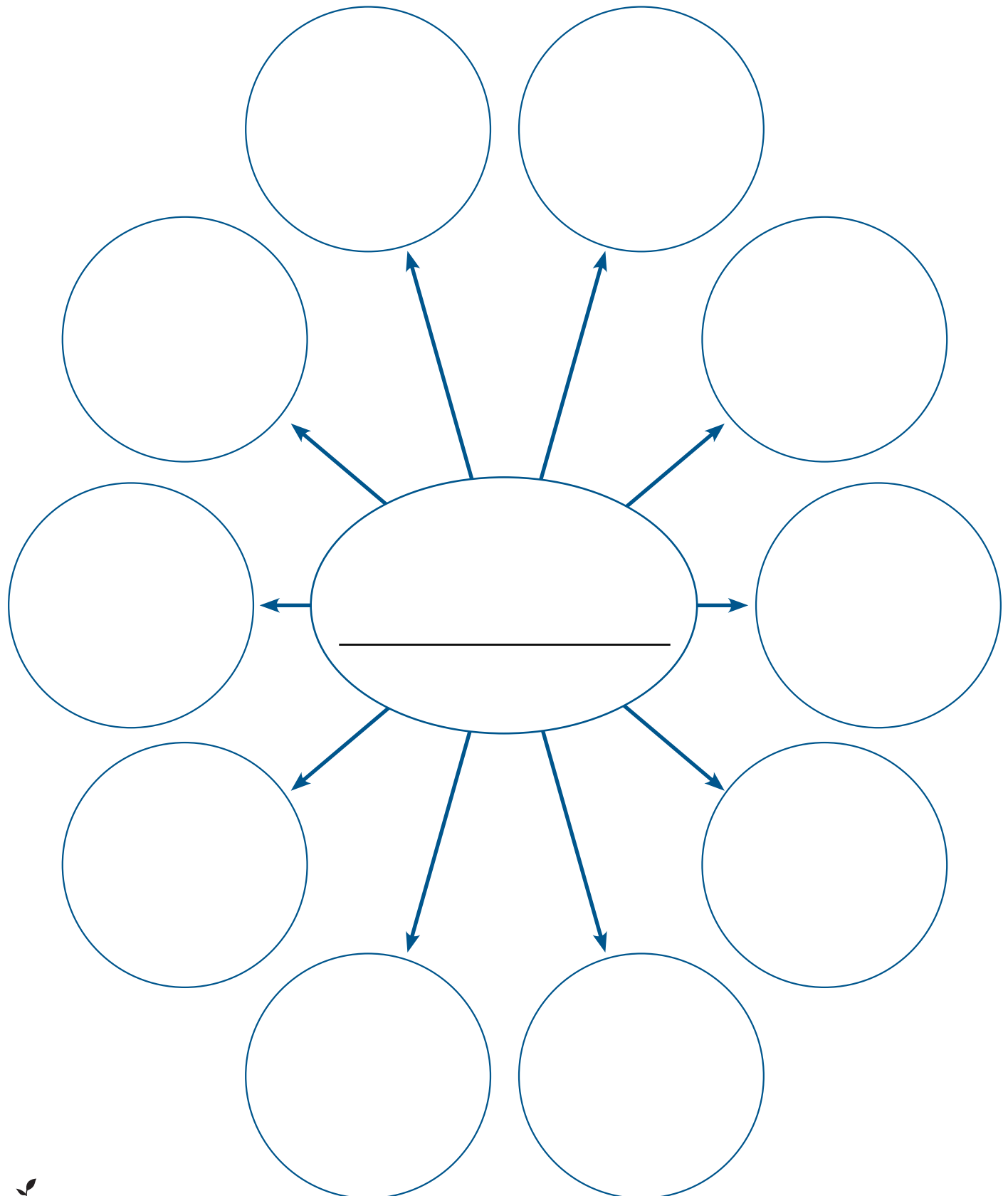
The students must show a draft of each email to the teacher for confirmation of appropriate language use.

### Please note

It is left to the discretion of the teacher to decide if the emails will actually be sent. It is recommended that the email to a friend, and possibly the email to the school principal, are sent but the one to a local company remains in draft form.

# Worksheet 1: Mind map

Name: \_\_\_\_\_







### Worksheet 2: Communication cartoons

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

An example of successful communication


An example of unsuccessful communication


### Worksheet 3: Online emotions

Read each of the following messages. How do you think the writer was feeling? Why?

**Message 1:**

I am finally doing my homework.

**Message 2:**

My mum just got home with my sister.

**Message 3:**

Please don't send me another message because I need to go to sleep.

**Message 4:**

I am going to Sara's house on the weekend.

**Message 5:**

We are having chops for dinner tonight.

Read the messages below. Now how do you think the writer was feeling? What is it about these messages that makes it easier to understand the writer's emotions?

**Message 1:**

I am finally doing **MY** homework!!

**Message 2:**

My mum just got home with my sister?????

**Message 3:**

PLEASE DON'T SEND ME ANOTHER MESSAGE BECAUSE I NEED TO GO TO SLEEP!!!!!!!!!!.

**Message 4:**

I am going to Sara's house on the weekend :(

**Message 5:**

We are having chops for dinner tonight 😊

