

Unit6

how r u?

Get ready to write

- What do you think the man in the picture is doing?
- Do you ever send text messages?
- What do you think is the maximum number of letters and spaces in a text message? Circle the correct answer.
a 140 b 160 c 180



go to Useful language p. 83

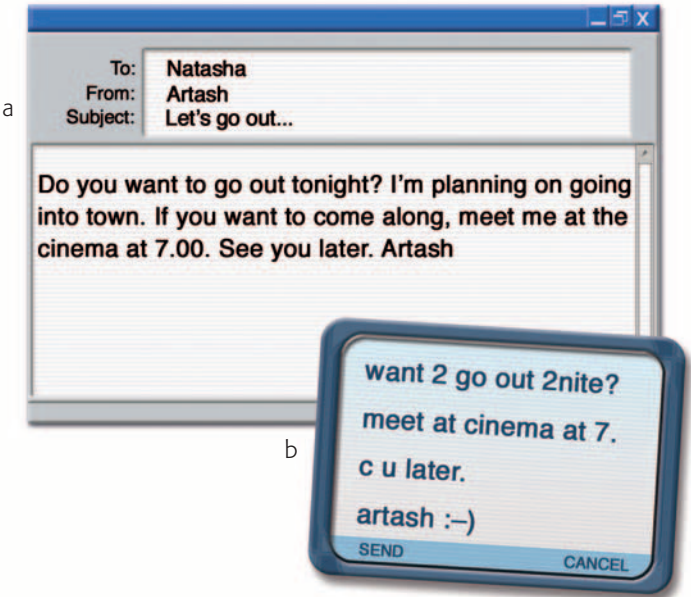
A SMS / text messages

Look at an example

- 1 Look at these two messages. Which is the text message a or b?
- 2 Artash sent the text message to Natasha. What does he invite her to do?
.....
- 3 Are these statements about text messages true (T) or false (F)?
a They use fewer words than emails. T
b They use symbols and abbreviations.
c They use complete sentences.
d They use capital letters.
- 4 Look at how the sentences on the left are shortened in the text messages on the right.
Do you want to go out tonight? → want 2 go out 2nite?
Meet me at the cinema at 7.00. → meet at cinema at 7.

Put a cross X next to the types of words that you can sometimes leave out of text messages. Tick ✓ the types of words you need to leave in.

- a Nouns (e.g. *cinema, tonight*) ☒
- b Verbs (e.g. *meet, go out*) ☐
- c Pronouns (e.g. *I, you, me, it*) ☐
- d Articles (e.g. *the, a*) ☐
- e Prepositions (e.g. *at*) ☐



Did you know ...?

- The government in China uses text messages to warn millions of people if a typhoon is coming.
- In the past, you had to press your telephone keypad many times to create text. Most mobile phones now have predictive text. This completes words for you automatically by predicting (= guessing) what you want to write. Sometimes it gets it wrong!



Plan

5 Cross out the words that you could leave out of these text messages.

- a I didn't see you at the cinema.
- b I'm at the North Car Park.
- c I've lost my car keys.
- d Please can you bring your keys?

6 In English, some words sound like the name of a letter or number. In text messages we often use letters and numbers instead of words. Say the words below aloud. What letter or number can you use to replace each one?

- a you =u.....
- b are =
- c why =
- d be =
- e see =
- f to =
- g for =
- h ate =

7 In text messages we make some words shorter by spelling them like they sound e.g. know = no. Write the standard English spellings of these text words.

- a S o m e = sum
- b _ _ _ _ = luv
- c _ _ _ _ = wot
- d _ _ _ _ _ = nite

8 In text messages you can use numbers and letters together. Say these text messages aloud. What do the words in *italics* mean? Complete the sentences in standard English.

- a cant see you b4 6. = I can't see you b e f o r e 6.00.
- b wot about going l8r? = What about going _ _ _ _ _?
- c wot about 2moro? = What about _ _ _ _ _?

9 Text messages also use symbols and abbreviations. Match the words on the left with the symbol or abbreviation on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| a and | 1 cos |
| b at | 2 plz |
| c kiss | 3 thx |
| d thanks | 4 @ |
| e please | 5 lol |
| f lots of love / laugh out loud | 6 & |
| g because | 7 X |

10 In this text message *cant c u b4 6*, the writer has not used an apostrophe (') in *can't* to save space. Put the apostrophes and capital letters in the correct places in the Standard English sentences.

- a Text: didnt c u at cinema. where were u?
Standard English: I didn't see you at the cinema. ^Wwhere were you?
- b Text: dont no if i can cum
Standard English: i dont know if i can come.
- c Text: she wont b there
Standard English she wont be there.

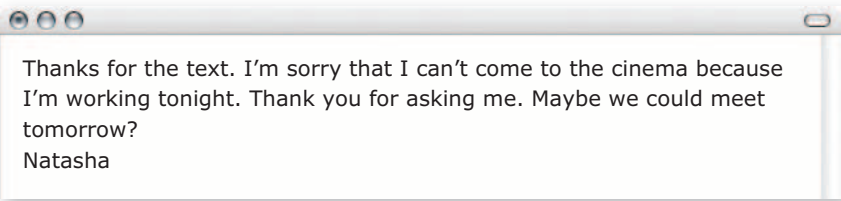
11 Look at Artash's text message on page 30 again. Rewrite it and make it even shorter.

Learning tip

Only use abbreviations and symbols if you are sure the reader will understand them. If you don't know the reader very well, don't use them because they could get confused.

Write

12 Natasha was at work when she got Artash's text message so she decided to email him. Rewrite her email as a text message. Remember to include only the essential information.



Check

- Does the text message make sense?
- Have you included only the essential information?
- Have you cut all the words that you can?
- Have you used symbols and abbreviations?
- If you have used symbols and abbreviations, are they easy to understand?

Unit6 how r u?



Focus on ...
editing for essential information

Before you write anything, ask yourself, *What does the reader need to know?* Your reader will need answers to some of these questions: *What? Where? When? Who? Why? How?*

- 1 Look at Artash’s text message on page 30 again. He asks and answers these questions.
What? A night out. *Where?* Meet at the cinema. *When?* 7.00. *Who?* Artash. (Artash does not give the answers to *Why?* and *How?* because they are not essential.)



- 2 Look at the picture. What do you think this woman’s problem is?
- 3 You are going to help the woman send a text that contains only essential information. She has already left a phone message. Listen to the message she left.

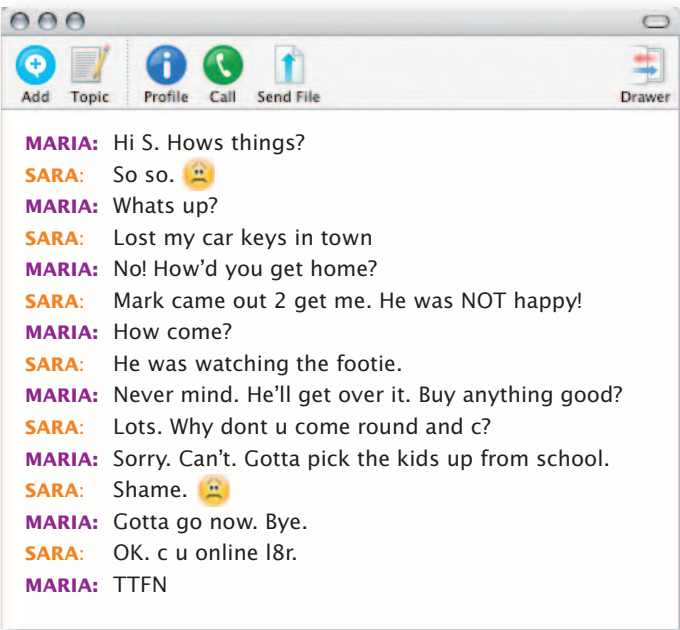
- 4 Read the transcript of her message and underline the answers to the questions (a–e) below.
ANSWERPHONE: Please leave a message after the tone.
SARA: Hi Mark, it’s Sara. I need your help. I’m in the town centre and I’ve lost my car keys. I came in to do some shopping and I had to park at the North Car Park. You know they’ve had problems here, so I checked the car was locked before I left it. I didn’t want it to get stolen! Anyway, shopping took longer than I expected. I’ve been about three hours. I’ve just got back to the car and I can’t find my keys. I think I must have dropped them somewhere. I’ve been to so many shops that I don’t know where to start looking! Can you please come and bring your keys with you? Call me. I’m not going anywhere!
- a Who’s got the problem?
b What is the problem?
c Where is she?
d What caused the problem?
e How does Sara want Mark to help her?
- 5 Sara has decided to text Mark as well. Four of the questions in Exercise 4 contain essential information that Sara must include in her text message. Which are they?
.....
- 6 Use the essential information to complete this text message for Sara.



B IM / instant messaging

Look at an example

- 1 Look at the instant messaging exchange between Sara and Maria opposite and decide if these statements are true (T) or false (F).
- a IM exchanges are similar to a telephone conversation. You type instead of speak. T
b IM exchanges are similar to text messages. You can use abbreviations and symbols.
c You can emphasize words in IM by putting them in CAPITAL LETTERS.
d People only use essential punctuation in IM.
e People only use full sentences in IM.



2 Look at the exchange again. Underline these things.

- a A short way of writing *have got to* (meaning *must*).
- b An abbreviation for *Ta ta for now* (meaning *goodbye*).

Plan

3 Match the shortened questions from instant messages a–e with their meanings 1–5.

- a You: Hows things?
Friend: OK/Fine/Good/Not bad.

b You: Wots up?
Friend: I lost my car keys.

c You: Wot r u up 2?
Friend: I've been shopping./The usual.

d Friend: I'm stressed.
You: How come?

e Friend: Saw Johnny Depp in town!
You: And?
- 1 What are you doing?

2 How are you?

3 What happened next?

4 What's wrong?

5 Why?

Focus on ...
double consonants

People sometimes make spelling mistakes in instant messages because they are typing quickly and can't spell-check them. Find six double-letter spelling mistakes in this IM exchange and correct them. (The first one has been done for you.)

- Yoko:

How's your course going?
- Lei:

The Business English part's realy usefull. At the beginning General English was easy.
- Yoko:

Is it geting harder now?
- Lei:

Yes. I enjoy the writting lessons but English spelling's impossible!

Class bonus

Work in pairs. Imagine you are taking part in an IM exchange. Do not talk to each other. Use one piece of paper. Student A writes on it and passes it to Student B. Student B writes their reply underneath. Continue until you have finished your exchange.

Write

4 How could you reply to these comments in an IM exchange? Write your responses.

- a Wot r u up 2?

I'm working.....
- b 😞 Failed my driving test (again)

.....
- c Going 2 have a baby!

.....
- d Bye 4 now

.....
- e Got socks 4 my birthday present

.....

Check

- Do your responses make sense?
- If you have used symbols and abbreviations, are they easy to understand?
- Is it possible for the reader to misunderstand your message? If yes, add a clearer explanation.

E Xtra practice

- Join an online IM service and use it to chat to your friends in English.
 - Emoticons are text symbols that look like faces. They show how the writer is feeling. Find an emoticon online for each word in this list.
- a happy 😊

b sad

c angry

d bored

e confused

f cheeky

g rude

Can-do checklist

Tick what you can do.

- I can write personal SMS (text messages).
- I can edit for essential information.
- I can write IM (instant messages).

Can do

Need more practice