

Digital Communication Basics

40 minutes

Digital Media Literacy

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, you'll explore the essentials of connecting online. Learn what digital communication is, discover various tools and styles, and understand how to communicate clearly, respectfully, and safely. Build confidence in your online interactions with practical steps.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Understand the fundamental concepts and importance of digital communication in daily life.
- Identify various tools and styles of digital communication for different contexts.
- Apply respectful and clear communication behaviours in online interactions.
- Recognise safety practices to protect privacy and maintain security online.
- Reflect on personal communication styles to improve clarity and effectiveness.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- This is largely a discussion and writing lesson. The main activity needs somewhere to write: a notebook, or a notes app on each device if you are working on screen.
- Devices are optional here. If you use them for reading the on-screen content, check the messaging and email examples display and that any interactive activities load.
- Have a couple of your own before-and-after message examples ready in case pupils are slow to see what makes one clearer than another.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

What is Digital Communication?

Types of Communication Tools and Styles

Communication Behaviours

Activity: Rewrite a Message

How Do You Communicate Online?

Wrapping It Up

TEACHING MOVES

- 1. Introduction. Open by asking who messaged someone far away this week and how fast the reply came. Use their answers to frame why communicating well online matters.
- 2. What is Digital Communication? Draw the simple picture: typing here, pressing send, the message travelling to another device. Contrast it with talking face to face so the difference is concrete.
- 3. Types of Communication Tools and Styles. For each tool ask when they would use it, not just what it is. Pin down that a quick group chat and a formal email suit different jobs.
- 4. Communication Behaviours. Slow down on tone. Read one short message aloud two ways, kind and sharp, so pupils hear how the same words can land differently.
- 5. Activity: Rewrite a Message. Take one scenario together first, thinking aloud about tone, clarity and safety, then let pupils rewrite the rest. Circulate and ask why they made each change.
- 6. How Do You Communicate Online? Keep this spoken. Ask a few pupils whether they write differently to a teacher than a friend, and whether a message of theirs was ever misread.
- 7. Wrapping It Up. Ask pupils to name one thing they will do differently in an online message after today. Draw out clarity, respect and safety in their answers.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils think a formal tone is the polite choice everywhere, and end up writing stiff messages to friends. Show that matching the reader matters more than being formal. A relaxed message to a friend and a careful one to a teacher can both be respectful.
- Pupils treat a message as private just because it feels like a quiet chat, and share things they would not say aloud. Remind them a digital message can be screenshotted, forwarded or seen later. Ask whether they would be happy for anyone to read it before they send.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Give one scenario rather than all of them, and let the pupil fix only the tone first before worrying about the rest.
- Developing: Have them rewrite a message, then explain to a partner what they changed and why, so the reasoning becomes deliberate.
- Proficient: Ask them to write a fresh scenario of their own, a badly worded message plus its improved version, for a partner to check.