

Emoji

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you use emoji?
If yes, when do you use them? If no, why not?
2. How do emoji differ from words?
3. Which emoji describes your mood right now?
Draw it on the back of your paper and hold it up for your class.



Emoji or Emojis?

The word *emoji* comes from the Japanese words for *picture* and *character*. In Japanese, the plural of *emoji* is “emoji.” In English, the acceptable plurals are “emoji” or “emojis.” In this lesson, we use “emoji” for plurals. Note that when “Emoji” refers to a language, it is capitalized.

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. emotion | a) used or recognized by all |
| _____ 2. universal | b) innocent, not causing pain or damage |
| _____ 3. clear-cut | c) a feeling or mood |
| _____ 4. wink | d) a person who feels negatively about something |
| _____ 5. flirt | e) to figure out what something really means |
| _____ 6. inside joke | f) to express romantic interest |
| _____ 7. harmless | g) a point or level that one can't go beyond |
| _____ 8. crack the code | h) precise or obvious, easy to understand |
| _____ 9. critic | i) something that only people in a certain social circle understand |
| _____ 10. limit (<i>noun</i>) | j) to quickly close and open one eye |

Reading

EMOJI

Say it with a smile (or a sushi symbol)

1. How do you express **emotions** when you send a text message? Why, with emoji, of course!
2. The first emoji set came out in Japan in 1999. It included a few faces, some weather icons, and a variety of objects you'd see around the city. Since then, hundreds of images have been added, and Emoji has become its own language.
3. Is Emoji a **universal** language? Though a smile is a smile in every corner of the world, other images aren't as **clear-cut**. Are you joking or **flirting** when you send someone a **winking** emoji? What does the raised hands emoji mean to you?
4. Emoji are sometimes used as a secret language or code. Close friends use emoji to express **inside jokes**. Secret codes aren't always **harmless**. Some kids use emoji to discuss sex, drugs, and alcohol. When adults **crack the codes**, kids just come up with new ones.
5. Some **critics** say that the use of emoji is a big step backward for mankind. After all, humans moved from communicating with pictographs to developing spoken and written language after learning the **limits** of drawings. Is the fastest-growing language making humanity lazy?
6. Despite these criticisms, emoji are not going away anytime soon. In 2015, Oxford Dictionary named an emoji (Face with Tears of Joy) its Word of the Year. Which emoji would best describe the current year?

“With its poodles, noodles, and happy poos, Emoji is now the fastest-growing language in the UK.”

—Jonathan Jones, journalist

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. What is the meaning of the subtitle?
2. What does the author imply about the winking emoji?
3. Why does the passage mention alcohol?
4. What is paragraph 5 mainly about?
5. Choose an emoji to represent each paragraph.
Compare your choices with a classmate's choices.

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. My teenage daughter and her friends have so many _____ .
I never know what they're laughing about.
2. _____ said the Word of the Year should always be a real word, not a picture.
3. I have so many _____ running through me.
I am happy, scared, and excited all at the same time.
4. Make sure you add a _____ emoji to that post. He might not know you are joking!
5. She _____ with me online, but in real life she ignores me.
6. Our son gets mysterious texts from his friends with emoji and text abbreviations.
We have no idea how to _____ .

Vocabulary Review cont.

B. Choose the Correct Word

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

1. The rules aren't that clear-cut.
 - a) fair
 - b) obvious
 - c) written
 - d) easy
2. Is the peace sign a universal symbol?
 - a) large
 - b) important
 - c) widespread
 - d) limited
3. There's a limit to how many characters you can use in a tweet.
 - a) maximum
 - b) mean
 - c) minimum
 - d) message
4. My dog looks mean, but he's harmless.
 - a) dangerous
 - b) cute
 - c) gentle
 - d) flirting
5. I'm not good at reading people's emotions.
 - a) minds
 - b) words
 - c) pictographs
 - d) feelings
6. I cracked the code. They are planning on drinking alcohol at the party.
 - a) figured it out
 - b) spelled it out
 - c) needed to know
 - d) checked the answers

Discussion

1. Do some people in your social network go overboard with emoji?
2. Do emoji fulfill the purpose they were designed for?
3. Are today's emoji diverse enough?
4. When would you NOT use emoji?
5. Do you agree or disagree with the argument that the use of emoji is a big step backward for mankind?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

EMOJI

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3. Is Emoji a _____ language? Though a smile is a smile in every corner of the world, other images aren't as _____. Are you joking or _____ when you send someone a _____ emoji? What does the raised hands emoji mean to you?
4. Emoji are sometimes used as a secret language or code. Close friends use emoji to express _____. Secret codes aren't always _____. Some kids use emoji to discuss sex, drugs, and alcohol. When adults _____, kids just come up with new ones.
5. Some _____ say that the use of emoji is a big step backward for mankind. After all, humans moved from communicating with pictographs to developing spoken and written language after learning the _____ of drawings. Is the fastest-growing language making humanity lazy?
6. Despite these criticisms, emoji are not going away anytime soon. In 2015, Oxford Dictionary named an emoji (Face with _____) its Word of the Year. Which emoji would best describe the current year?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about the evolution and use of emoji. They learn related vocabulary and discuss topics such as emoji diversity. They also explore the limits of emoji by doing a group challenge.

TEACHING TIPS:

See Discussion Starters Teaching Guide (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: emoji, emojis, emoticons, emoticon, emotion, feelings, pictures, language, technology, culture, communication

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. h | 5. f | 7. b | 9. d |
| 2. a | 4. j | 6. i | 8. e | 10. g |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 6. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. The subtitle suggests that you can say anything with emoji these days. (E.g., You can simply express an emotion or you can say what you feel like eating or are eating.)
2. The author implies that the winking emoji can mean different things to different people depending on who is sending and receiving it (and possibly what one’s cultural background is). Some emoji mean more than one thing.
3. Alcohol is mentioned as a secret subject that young people can discuss by using emoji that adults won’t suspect.
4. Paragraph 5 is mainly a criticism of emoji. It introduces the idea that emoji use can be viewed as language reverting to how it used to be.
5. Answers will vary.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. inside jokes | 4. winking |
| 2. Critics | 5. flirts |
| 3. emotions | 6. crack the code |

B. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

1. b 2. c 3. a 4. c 5. d 6. a

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Say It with Emoji

A. SURVEY

Have students walk around the class and find out which group they want to be in.

B. YOUR CHOSEN ACTIVITY

Then give them time in or outside of class to complete the challenge on a large piece of poster board.

C. PRESENTATION

Hold group presentations. Then have students discuss the limits of communicating with emoji.

Listening

- emotions
- weather, its
- universal, clear-cut, flirting, winking
- inside jokes, harmless, crack the codes
- critics, limits
- Tears of Joy

SPELLING NOTE:

Note that *Backward* is preferred in American English, while *Backwards* is preferred in Canadian and British English.

ABOUT THE EMOJI:

The emoji (and their derivatives) used in this lesson are from Twemoji, an open-source project by Twitter. They are licensed under CC-BY 4.0. <https://github.com/twitter/twemoji>