

## Text and email language

WORKSHEET A

### Exercise 1

Below are some popular examples of text speak in English. Can you work out what they mean and fill in the missing letters?

1. <b>b4</b>	bef__e
2. <b>cul8r</b>	s__ you l_t__
3. <b>np</b>	no p_____m
4. <b>toy</b>	th__k_ng o_ y__
5. <b>r u f 2t?</b>	A__ y__ fr__ to t__k?
6. <b>w4u</b>	w_____ng f__ y__
7. <b>tx</b>	th____s
8. <b>cw2cu</b>	can't w_____ s__ y_u
9. <b>ez</b>	e__y
10. <b>b4n</b>	b__ for n_w
11. <b>atm</b>	_t t__ mom__t
12. <b>?</b>	__ (e.g. 'black ? white' meaning 'black __ white?')
13. <b>pls</b>	_____se
14. <b>lol</b>	l__g__ng _u_ l_ud (when something is funny)
15. <b>lmk</b>	l_t me k__w
16. <b>g2g</b>	g_t __ _o

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# Text and email language

It seems that electronic forms of communication like text messaging on mobile phones and email have created a new kind of language. People often like to communicate as quickly as possible when they are texting or emailing, and have therefore invented lots of abbreviations or 'text speak' that they use instead of complete words.

In many countries text speak has divided the generations: under-20s are very good at using it, while over-50s often find it difficult to understand! In English, the most common examples of text language include the use of the number '2' for 'to' or 'too', '4' instead of 'for', 'u' for 'you' and 'c' instead of 'see'. It is also common to drop vowels, so that 'can't' becomes 'cnt', and 'have' becomes 'hav' or 'hv'.

While some people think text language is good way of saving time, others think it is lazy and that it has a bad effect on language. In Britain many teachers complain that some students don't know that using text speak in their schoolwork isn't appropriate, and that they are forgetting how to use Standard English.

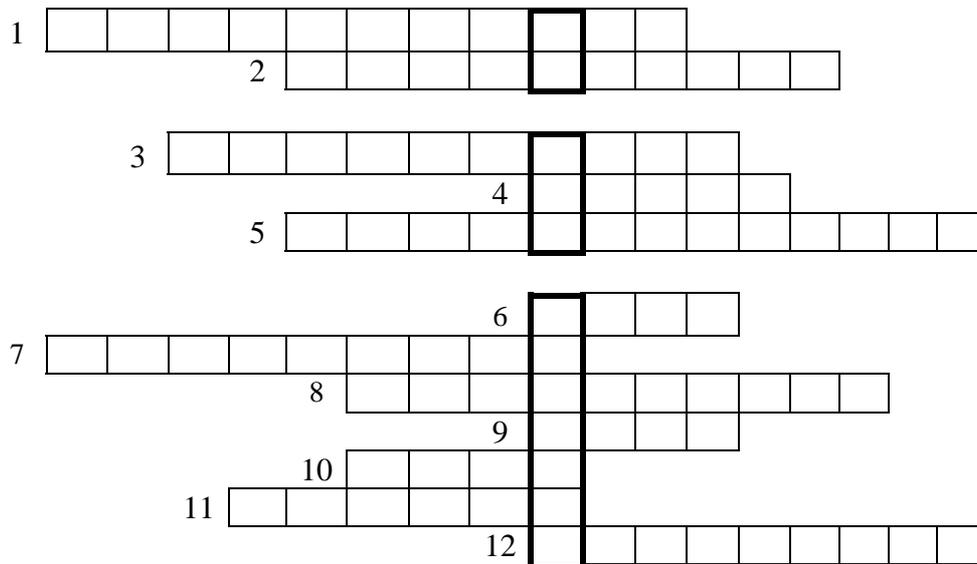
Some studies suggest that Standard English is already changing because of text and email language. One study has even suggested that 'hello' and 'goodbye' could disappear from the English language during the 21<sup>st</sup> century because so many people now use 'hey' or even 'yo' at the start of texts and informal emails, and 'laters' at the end.

A couple of years ago a mobile phone company in Britain began a service in which it sent text messages summarising books that young people were studying at school. The idea was to turn famous works of literature into text speak, so it would be easy for young people to understand what the books were about. Of course not everyone liked the idea of characters from Shakespeare speaking in text language, and it is certainly true that the famous 'To be or not to be?' speech from *Hamlet* loses something when it begins with '2b?Ntb'.

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## Exercise 2

Complete the crossword below. If all the words are correct, the meaning of the text abbreviation 'atw' will read from top to bottom.



1. It isn't usually \_\_\_\_\_ to use text speak in schoolwork.
2. Text messaging is an \_\_\_\_\_ form of communication.
3. Older people often can't \_\_\_\_\_ text language.
4. Many people begin texts and informal emails with 'hey' instead of '\_\_\_\_\_':
5. Text speak uses lots of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In texts, people often write 'u' instead of the complete \_\_\_\_\_ 'you'.
7. A mobile phone company used text speak to \_\_\_\_\_ books that young people were studying at school.
8. *Hamlet* is a famous work of English \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Some teachers worry that students \_\_\_\_\_ how to use text speak, but not Standard English.
10. People use text language to \_\_\_\_\_ time.
11. One of the most \_\_\_\_\_ examples of text speak is to use '4' instead of 'for'.
12. Because of text and email language, some people think the words 'hello' and 'goodbye' could \_\_\_\_\_.