Unit 3: Social networking sites

SUMMARY

You can use this summary to guide the learning objectives and target setting for your class.

Can-do statements

By the end of this unit, students will be able to say:

- I can understand opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of aspects of the internet.
- I can read and understand messages and comments left on social networking sites.
- I can understand and use the terminology of social networking sites.
- I can understand some key differences in written British and American English.

Skill focus

Pre-reading:
Before you start ❶ ❷
Scanning:
Practising your reading skills ❷ ❸
Reading for general understanding:
Before you start ❸
Reading for detail:
Practising your reading skills ❶

Vocabulary

Social networking: *home*, *status*, *profile*, *friends*, *message*, *events*, *find friends*, *notifications*

American and British English differences: *color/colour*, *center/centre*

Grammar

Ellipsis: *(I'm) Looking at …*; *(I) Took this …*

Functions

Reading personal news: *Just been to …*, *I'm going …*, *I'm doing …*

Reading opinions of advantages and disadvantages: *I'm just not interested in …*, *I worry that …*, *I love being able to …*

CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

You can use some or all of these ideas to check and enhance your students' understanding as they work their way through *Unit 3* of *Reading B1+ Intermediate* in class.

Using *Before you start*

Before presenting the *Unit text*, the first two exercises can be brought off the page and made more interactive.

1. Ask the class questions 1 and 2 of *Exercise 1* (*What are social networking sites? Which social networking sites do you use?*). Then allow them to discuss question 3 (*Why do you use them?*) among themselves in small groups.

2. Ask one or two students to report back to the class on their groups' answers – which was the most popular use and which the least?

3. You can collate the results from feedback on the board and have students create a pie chart or bar graph of the data.

For *Exercise 2*:

1. To make this exercise more interactive, photocopy the *Advantages and disadvantages* handout, below, and cut each speech bubble out individually.

2. Give a set of advantages and disadvantages to each pair of students and allow them to work on them together.

3. Ask them to think of two more advantages and disadvantages each. Get them to write them out, expressed as opinions in the same way as on the handout.

4. Feed back with the whole class, and allow students to share their additional ideas with the rest of the group.

Using *Unit text* and *Understanding*

1. First, get the students to read the *Unit text* on their own quickly and silently before answering the general comprehension *Exercise 3*. Then get feedback from the whole class.

2. Instead of asking students to read aloud, ask them to interpret and explain the individual entries for the class (e.g. *Debbie is in the Empire State Building in New York and she's taken and uploaded a photo of the city. She has a friend called Oscar Lilly who must live in New York, and another called Lillie Pittman who wishes she did.*).

3. Then get the students to answer the *Understanding* questions on their own and compare their answers with a partner, before getting feedback from the whole class.

Using *Language note*

After the *Unit text* it is worth directing the students' attention to the *Language note* at the end and asking them to identify other examples of ellipses in the Linksworld social networking site: (*I'm*) *Looking at …*; (*I*) *Took this …* Students might want to use this style of writing in the next activity.

Using *Practising your reading skills*

Practising your reading skills gives students the opportunity to add comments to the posts on Linksworld. After completing all three exercises, you can extend this activity by creating a Linksworld social networking site for the class.

1. Give each student a copy of the *Linksworld* handout, below, and get them to add a user name and a piece of news.
2. Students can then pass their handouts round the class (in the same direction) and other students can comment on their news one by one.
3. Remind students that they should read all the comments, and can comment on the comments of other students.
4. Encourage students to use ellipses but monitor to make sure they maintain coherent sentences.
5. Feed back with the whole group.
6. Students can use the new social networking page to develop a series of true and false questions to test their partners.

Exercise 3 contains a range of vocabulary associated with social networking:

1. Brainstorm other terminology associated with internet communication (e.g. *upload*, *download*, *like*, *block*, *tweet*, *share*, etc.).
2. Students can then work in pairs to write descriptions of these in the style of *Exercise 2*.
3. Pairs can then challenge another pair to guess what their descriptions are of.
4. Encourage students to add any new terminology to their vocabulary books.

Using *Language focus*

Language focus highlights the differences between American and British English. After doing both the exercises:

1. Ask students why it is important to be aware of the differences between American and British English (*because communication is becoming more and more international and it is useful to be sensitive to the differences*, etc. In the context of a reading class they may also say that *many of the differences are in spelling*).
2. Find an article, webpage or section from a language book that deals with the differences between American and British English – or with other differences in international English – and provides a number of good examples. Photocopy one for each student.
3. Allow them time to read the text alone and then ask them to write three or four questions in the style of those in *Exercise 2* of *Language focus*.
4. Monitor to ensure the questions are accurate.
5. Put students in pairs and get them to challenge their partners with their questions.

For practical purposes, you may want to raise the issue of safety on the internet and in chatrooms, or rules for good behaviour in chatrooms. This can provide a good discussion topic, research homework or another opportunity for creating a wall poster, and will allow you to activate the language *should/should not* or *do/do not*.

Rules for internet safety might include not giving out contact details or passwords. Rules for good behaviour might include not using insulting language (eg. *flaming*, *trolling*, etc.).

PHOTOCOPIABLES

Linksworld

Linksworld

_____ _____ [your user name]

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Advantages and disadvantages

Social networking sites are an amazing way of keeping in touch with people who live a long way away.

We've banned access to social networking sites in our office – our employees were wasting so much time chatting to friends and they weren't getting enough work done.

The danger of social networking sites is that we care more about the quantity than the quality of friendship. It's simply impossible to be really good 'friends' with hundreds of people.

I worry that privacy settings might not work and that strangers might be able to see my personal information.

I'm just not interested in reading what people are doing at various points in the day! I'm too busy living my own life to care!

I love being able to see photographs of friends and family. It makes the world feel like a smaller place.

These sites are a great way to connect with people who have similar interests to you. I couldn't live without them now.

I love it because it's allowed me to reconnect with lots of old friends who I probably would never have spoken to again.