

Unit 3: Instant messaging

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 recognize abbreviations and short forms used in instant messaging.
- I can interrupt in an instant message.
- I can change the subject in an instant message.
- I can resume the conversation in an instant message.

Vocabulary

Emoticons: :D (laughing), <3 (love), \o/ (surprise)

Grammar

Instant message and *Skype* as verbs

Function

Interrupting a message: *Hold on a sec ...*, *Hang on*, *Sorry to stop you*, *but ...*

Changing the subject: *I wanted to ask you ...*, *Can we talk about something else ...?*

Resuming a message: *Picking up where we left off ...*, *What were we talking about?*

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 *Writing B1+ Intermediate* in class.

Using *Before you start*

To introduce the topic by using the *Before you start* passage as a gap fill:

1. Photocopy the *Before you start* gap fill worksheet.
2. Get students to complete the gap fill and compare their answers with a partner.
3. Feed back with the whole class.
4. Discuss as a class where and when people use IM, and in what ways instant messages can 'move fast and go anywhere'. (Students may talk about people breaking off the conversation and coming back, the conversation being stalled because of the internet going down, crossed wires with more than two people talking, people accidentally sending the message when it wasn't complete, and so on).

Using *Language focus*

After *Exercise 1*:

1. Like text messages, IM as a form of writing tends to mimic conversation in that it is made up of short acts of communication. The example here provides a good opportunity for reading aloud in class.
2. Afterwards, get students to explain what is going on in the dialogue. Ask questions like:
Does Chris really have time to talk?
What happens after Chris asks about Baljit?
What happens when Marika returns?

This should lead into *Exercise 2* and *3*.

After *Exercise 3*:

1. Ask students to work in pairs and give each student three small pieces of paper. The students should write examples of their own ideas for interrupting on the pieces of paper, changing the subject and resuming the conversations on separate pieces.
2. Then each pair should mix up their six sentences and swap them with another pair, who will then categorize them into different functions.

Using *Language note*

This *Language note* can provide a useful discussion topic.

1. Get students to read the *Language note*.
2. Ask them to think of other words that have become so common that they have become a recognized verb:
Google: That's interesting, I'll Google it later.
Facetime: Do you want to Facetime after school?

Using *Writing appropriately*

After *Exercise 1*:

1. Put students into pairs and get them to think of three scenarios in which they might receive an instant message.
2. Monitor so that it is at the appropriate level.
3. They can then exchange their scenarios with another pair and challenge them to provide an answer for each situation.
4. Feed back the best ideas with the whole group.

Using *Emoticons*

If students are interested in emoticons and you think it would be useful for them, you can use the emoticon cards, below, to play a memory game with the students.

1. Make two photocopies of the table below and cut them out into a pack of 24 'cards'.
2. In class, get students into pairs or groups of three and give a pack to each group.

3. Students should shuffle their pack and place the cards face down on the table randomly so that they don't know which is which.
4. One student can then turn over two cards:
 - If the cards match, the student must name the emoticon and if they are right they can keep the pair.
 - If they don't match, or the student can't name the emoticon, they must turn them back over and play moves onto the next student.
5. Eventually students will memorize the places of the cards and quickly build up pairs.
6. The winner will be the student with the most pairs at the end of the game.

Using *Get writing*

The *Get writing* activity in the book provides gap fill activities to get the students thinking of what they might message to a friend. But the classroom environment affords you the opportunity to get the students involved in a complete instant message exchange.

Think of two or three scenarios which would suit your students' targets and needs, and get them to work in pairs on a ten-message exchange. For example:

First student: *Tell your friend you are online now, buying tickets for a concert. Try to persuade them to come.*

Second student: *Your friend wants you to come to a concert, but you are worried about the price and whether you have the time.*

PHOTOCOPIABLES

Before you start

Fill the gaps in the text with the phrases from the box

grammatically complete

at the same time

text speak

on the move

keep in touch

How do you _____(1) with friends? In addition to texting _____(2), you might want to use instant messaging (IM) on your computer or laptop. IM messages tend to be longer and more _____(3) than texts because people often use a proper keyboard to type them (but they still might contain some shortened sentences, emoticons or _____(4)). Also, more than two people can message _____(5) so the conversations can move fast and go anywhere!

Emoticons

:)

I'm happy

;))

I'm joking

:-?

I'm confused

: (

I'm sad

:-@

I'm angry

:->

(smug)

:P

(tongue out)

<3

I'm in love

</3

I'm broken-hearted

;P

(flirting)

:0

I'm surprised

:-X

It's a secret