

Name: _____



THE SILENT CONVERSATION

Even doing **nothing** is communication.

MAIN QUESTION

When we communicate online and through a screen, what information gets lost, and how do we fill in the gaps?



PART A

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Rate each scenario from 1–5.

1 = Doesn't bother me
5 = Really bothers me

YOUR RATING

- 1 You send a text and get no reply.
- 2 Someone reads your message but doesn't respond.
- 3 Your friend responds with only "K."
- 4 Your friend reacts with 👍 instead of writing a response.
- 5 Someone takes two days to answer.
- 6 Someone answers immediately.
- 7 Someone leaves a group chat after a disagreement.
- 8 You see someone posting online but they haven't replied to your message.

FOLLOW-UP

★ Which situation bothered you most? Why?

★ Which situation bothered you least? Why?



Seen



PART B

WHY MIGHT THIS HAPPEN?

For each situation, brainstorm possible explanations.



EXAMPLE SITUATION:

No response for 24 hours

COULD MEAN:

- ☐ Ignoring me
- ☐ Busy
- ☐ Forgot
- ☐ Lost phone
- ☐ Didn't know what to say
- ☐ Needed time to think

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Why do people often assume the worst explanation first?



PART C

WHAT MESSAGE IS BEING SENT?

Match each online action with one or more possible messages.

ACTION	POSSIBLE MESSAGES
1 👍	Agree, busy, annoyed, ending conversation
2 ❤️	Support, appreciation, friendship
3 Seen ✓✓	Busy, upset, forgot, doesn't know what to say
4 Typing...	Changed mind, interrupted, unsure

THINK ABOUT IT



Can two people see the exact same online action differently? Explain.



Remember: Online actions are not always what they seem. Curiosity and compassion help close the gap.





PART 2: LOST IN TRANSLATION

Text messages don't contain tone of voice, facial expressions, or body language.



PART A = DECODE THE TEXT

Read each message. How could it sound? (Choose all that apply.)

1 MESSAGE 1	2 MESSAGE 2	3 MESSAGE 3	4 MESSAGE 4	5 MESSAGE 5
Sure.	Okay.	I know.	Whatever.	Fine.
How could this sound?	How could this sound?	How could this sound?	How could this sound?	How could this sound?
☐ Happy ☐ Excited ☐ Neutral ☐ Annoyed ☐ Sarcastic ☐ Other _____	☐ Happy ☐ Excited ☐ Neutral ☐ Annoyed ☐ Sarcastic ☐ Other _____	☐ Happy ☐ Excited ☐ Neutral ☐ Annoyed ☐ Sarcastic ☐ Other _____	☐ Happy ☐ Excited ☐ Neutral ☐ Annoyed ☐ Sarcastic ☐ Other _____	☐ Happy ☐ Excited ☐ Neutral ☐ Annoyed ☐ Sarcastic ☐ Other _____



The goal isn't finding the correct answer. The goal is discovering there isn't one.



PART B = REWRITE FOR CLARITY

Take ambiguous messages and rewrite them so the meaning is clearer.

EXAMPLE:

Original: "Sure."

Clearer versions:

- "Sure! Sounds fun."
- "Sure, I can do that."
- "Sure, but I'm a bit busy today."

NOW YOU TRY! CHOOSE OR CREATE FIVE AMBIGUOUS MESSAGES AND REWRITE THEM TO MAKE YOUR MEANING CLEAR.

1		→	
2		→	
3		→	
4		→	
5		→	



PART C = ADD THE MISSING INFORMATION

You receive this message:



HOW WOULD YOU CHANGE THIS MESSAGE IF THE SENDER WAS...

EXCITED	ANGRY	GRATEFUL	IN A HURRY	BEING SARCASTIC



A few words can mean many things. Adding tone, detail, and clarity helps everyone understand.





THE SILENT CONVERSATION



GALLERY WALK ACTIVITY & DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

GALLERY WALK ACTIVITY



Purpose:

Help students see how much meaning can be attached to the same short message.

Instructions:

- 1 Post each message around the room.
- 2 Students rotate to each station.
- 3 For each message, they write one possible meaning or interpretation.
- 4 Read what other students have written.
- 5 By the end, every message should have 10–20 different meanings attached to it.



Students will see how much ambiguity exists in text-based communication.

GALLERY WALK MESSAGES

1 K

7 Sure.

13 I know

2 Cool.

8 LOL

14 No worries

3 Whatever.

9 👍

15 Sounds good

4 Fine.

10 🙌

16 ...

5 That's interesting.

11 😐

17 Seen

6 Thanks.

12 Okay

18 Typing... then nothing

TEACHER DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Is doing nothing online still a form of communication? Why or why not?
- 2 When someone sees a message but does not reply, what might other people think?
- 3 Can an emoji replace a full response?
- 4 Why do people use emojis?
- 5 What information do we get face to face that we do not get through text?



PERSPECTIVE

- 1 Have you ever misunderstood a text message?
- 2 Has someone ever misunderstood one of your messages?
- 3 Why do misunderstandings happen so easily online?
- 4 Could two people read the same message differently?
- 5 How do emotions affect how we interpret messages?



REFLECTION

- 1 Do you text different people in different ways?
- 2 Do you respond differently to friends, family members, teachers, or teammates?
- 3 How long is a reasonable amount of time to respond to a message?
- 4 Is there a difference between being busy and ignoring someone?
- 5 What assumptions do people make when they do not get a response?



CRITICAL THINKING

- 1 Is texting better for some conversations and worse for others?
- 2 What conversations work well through text?
- 3 What conversations should probably happen face to face?
- 4 When does texting become a poor communication tool?
- 5 Can technology make communication easier and harder at the same time?



TEACHER NOTES

- ☐ Tone of voice is missing
- ☐ Facial expressions are missing
- ☐ Context matters
- ☐ People often assume meaning
- ☐ Emojis can be interpreted differently
- ☐ Delayed responses do not always mean rejection
- ☐ Different communication tools work best for different situations
- ☐ Online communication requires extra clarity