Lesson plan

**Topic:** Writing on social networks

**Level:** Entry 2 / Access 3 (Scotland) / A2 (CEFR)

**Time:** 100 minutes (plus 15 minutes before class to set up Nicenet)

**Aim:** To develop students’ ability to write personal messages on social networking websites

**Prepare:** student worksheet - one copy per student.
In addition, make some extra spare copies of Handout 5 for early finishers of Task 4.

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**Tip:** If you would like to complete Task 3 using the website 'Nicenet', you'll need to use a room with computers which have internet access. Please note that there is also an option to complete Task 3 without using computers.

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**Introduction**

This lesson is about writing messages to friends on social networks. It develops the students’ ability to write personal messages and features example threads with comments, which students have the opportunity to contribute to. They can also post new messages, and comment on the postings written by other students.

Some colleges block major social networking sites, and so it would be a good idea to highlight that although the students might not be able to use social media inside college, it is nevertheless an important means of communication outside. This lesson aims to equip students with those skills.

**Procedure**

**Warmer (15 mins)**

- Distribute **Student Handout 1** (or show it on the projector), and tell students to discuss the questions in small groups.
- Elicit feedback, then tell the students that they are going to practise writing to friends on social networking sites.
- If you have any students who are both strong speakers and regular users of social networking sites (e.g. Facebook), you could invite them to the front of the class to answer questions from the other students and the teacher about their use of these sites. Questions could include:
  - *How many online friends do you have?*
  - *Do you write to friends in English or in your own language?*
  - *What do you write messages about?*

**Setting up Task 1 (10 mins)**

- Explain that the students are going to look at the kinds of message that people put on social networking websites such as Facebook. The students are going to see messages and responses from three friends. Distribute **Student Handout 2**.

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**Tip** – Start by giving the students one handout per pair, to encourage them to work together. You can give each pair the second copy once they are busily speaking together.
• Dictate these questions:
  o Where can you see messages like this? (On a computer, on sites like Facebook)
  o What are the names of the three friends? (Mark, Nisa and Sanjay)
  o How do you know who wrote each message? (The name of the writer appears above the message.)
• Tell students to ask and answer the questions in pairs before group feedback.
• Once the students are familiar with the layout of the page, distribute Student Handout 3 – Task 1.

Task 1: Reading (15 mins)
• Ask students to complete reading Task 1 on their own before they check their answers with a partner. Monitor, ensuring that if you do have any students who are unfamiliar with social networks, they understand the idea of a posting and adding a comment, and of other people being able to read all this.

  Tip – Make sure the students ignore the three boxes under the postings from Nisa, Sanjay and Mark for now, as these will be used in Task 2.

• Elicit feedback. Draw the students’ attention to typical features of postings like this, including:
  o the topics (an invitation, unimportant comments about the weather, and sharing a family photo)
  o ellipsis (Hope you can come)
  o repeated punctuation marks (……..)
  o a joke (a gold medal for swimming in the 2028 Olympics???)
  o ways of writing sounds that people make, and the meaning of these sounds (Aaaarrrghhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!! to express annoyance with bad weather, and Ahhhhhh…. to react to the photo of the cute child). You could have fun teaching and drilling the pronunciation of these!

Task 2: Commenting (10 mins)
Distribute Student Handout 4.
• Ask the students to imagine that Mark, Nisa and Sanjay are their friends, and that they see these messages and responses on their page on a social network. Ask for suggestions as to what they could write in response to each of the three first postings, e.g. saying that you can / can’t come to Nisa’s party.
• Tell them to write their responses in the boxes. Monitor, give suggestions and correct. You could also encourage students to correct each other’s messages. Not only can they peer-correct and learn from each other, but they’ll also be able to read each other’s messages, as people do in real life.

Task 3: Writing a new message (15 mins)
• Before you ask the class to start writing postings of their own, brainstorm suitable topics and write them on the board.

• Task 3 can either be done on paper (Student Handout 5), or on computers accessing http://www.nicenet.org. See the end of this lesson plan for information on how to use Nicenet.

Task 3: version 1 (using http://www.nicenet.org)
• Using computers (instead of Handout 5) can bring extra realism to the task, but you will need to set this up carefully before class.

• Presuming you have already set up Nicenet before class, tell the students to go to http://www.nicenet.org, then go to 'join a class'. Write the key on the board for them to enter. They must then create their own username and password. (The next time they log on they will only need the username and password.) Then they can start posting and sending their own messages.

Task 3: version 2 (using Handout 5)
• If it is more practical for the students to do the writing task on paper rather than onscreen, distribute Student Handout 5.

• Explain that the students are going to write messages to each other, like they would do on a social networking website. Tell each student to write a message in the ‘message’ box on Handout 5. Some students may still struggle to think of ideas, so you may need to monitor and help.

Task 4: Commenting on messages (15 mins)
• Once the students have written a message, encourage them to stand up and give their piece of paper (Handout 5) to another student, who then adds their own comment. Continue in this way until the handout is full (the grid allows space for one initial message and up to four comments. When it is full, make sure that the paper goes back to the person who wrote the original comment. Tell students to read and check all the comments, and encourage them to correct any errors they find. You can also take in the messages to correct and then give feedback on common errors next lesson.

Differentiation – Give fast writers / early finishers another copy of Handout 5 and tell them to write another message, and then circulate it to receive more comments.

Extension (10 mins)
• If you feel it is appropriate, you could ask any keen users any social network to show their page to the other students in the class. This could work well even if the messages and comments are in another language, as the students will need to explain what the comments mean.

Tip – Some students may be happy to share their page with their classmates, while others may prefer to keep it private and not do so. The students’ need for privacy does of course need to be respected.
Cooler (10 mins)

Once you have checked all the postings and made any corrections, put them up on the wall for all the class to browse and read, i.e. the completed Handout 5s if you did Tasks 3 and 4 on paper. If you used Nicenet, you could print out the text and display it on the wall.

Answers

Task 1: Reading

1. c
2. b e f
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. a
7. a
8. b
9. b
10. a

How to use 'Nicenet' (an option for Task 3)

In order to use Nicenet, you'll need a room with a computer and internet access. Nicenet is a website which allows you to create a private online classroom where your students can practise posting messages to each other. Students can read and respond to each other's postings and you can provide written feedback for each student, which nobody else will get to see.

Before the lesson, log on to http://www.nicenet.org and 'start a class'. Once you have filled in your information, a class key will be generated. You'll need to give this key to your students so they can access the online classroom. You could start with posting a message, e.g. a comment about the weather, or any other topic which you think would be interesting and accessible to the students.