

Future Literacy 80-3

Unit 1. Hurried Talk

SMS became popular for many people as cell phones with texting capabilities became commonplace. However, unlike the smartphones and instant messengers we use today, text messages on older phones exclusively use SMS. SMS stands for “short message service”. Because phone carriers often have a limit to how many characters you can use per message, SMS language is used to shorten words and phrases. For example, common phrases like “What are you doing?” can be shortened to “wrud?”. This also helps users save time when communicating. Over time, a few seconds saved can add up to several hours. This can also help your thumbs from having to type the same words over and over again. Some people worry that SMS may negatively impact younger users’ language skills. However, David Crystal and Dr. Nenagh Kemp conducted a study that found that SMS may actually lead to an overall improvement in literacy levels in students.

Unit 2. Talking with the Deaf

Deaf people can’t hear, but they can communicate with other people. Some deaf people can read lips and speak clearly. This is possible for people who lost their hearing in their late teens or as an adult. They rely on their memory of how words are enunciated in their mouth. For others, it may be difficult to speak. So, they use sign language to communicate. Sign language is quite different from country to country. Even in countries that share the same spoken language, the sign language used can be completely different. For example, American Sign Language is different from British Sign Language even though both countries speak English. Sign language is also different from the spoken language. For example, American Sign Language does not use the same grammar as American English. This makes sense since signing every single word, including all the articles and conjunctions, would take a very long time.

Unit 3. The Flag of South Korea

The South Korean flag is called the *Taegeukgi*. It symbolizes peace, unification, creation, light, and eternity. However, this flag actually took a long time to come into existence. During the Japan-Korea Treaty negotiations that took place in 1876, the Empire of Japan presented the Japanese national flag. During this time, Korea did not have its own national flag to show. The continued foreign negotiations in the following years made a Korean national flag necessary. There were many proposals and suggestions made. Eventually, on August 22, 1882, Korean politician Park Yeong-hyo presented a model of the flag to the Korean government that had a black and red circle at the center with eight black bars surrounding it. He was the first person to use the flag in Japan later that year. In March of 1883, the Korean government officially established the *Taegeukgi* as its national flag. After the division of Korea, the current South Korean flag was made official in 1949.

Unit 4. Secret Codes

In 1863, the U.S. government forced a group of Native Americans called the Navajo from their homes in Arizona and New Mexico. They were imprisoned at Fort Summer. Five years later, a treaty was signed. Among other changes, Native American children were forced to go to schools where they were not taught any Native American history and were forbidden from using their language. When World War I and World War II broke out decades later, the U.S. government hired many Native American bilingual speakers as code talkers. These code talkers used open radio waves to communicate coded messages in their own native language. Because the enemy at the time did not speak any of these languages, this tactical communication was incredibly effective. Thanks to the heroic efforts of these Native American code-talkers, the U.S. was able to win the war. Unfortunately, many Native American veterans still faced discrimination as they were not allowed to vote in some national or state elections.

Unit 5. Straw No More

The harms of plastic materials have been highlighted in video documentaries of a sea turtle that had a plastic straw lodged up its nostril. This sparked a debate about plastic waste and some restaurants and bars vowed to eliminate straws from their establishments. However, the bigger problem lies in the sheer volume of plastic used in food packaging. Though eliminating plastic straws might be a step in the right direction, there are many more tons of disposable plastic packages being produced every day. Walk into any supermarket, and you will be faced with plastic containers, plastic bags, plastic cartons, and plastic wrappers. The Dutch supermarket Ekoplaza has tried to address the issue by creating a plastic-free aisle. This aisle is stocked with 700 products, including rice, beans, yogurt, chocolate milk, cereal, snacks, and even meat. Everything is packaged inside reusable or recyclable containers made of glass, metal, and a compostable biofilm material.

Unit 6. Helping with Water

When Ryan Hreljac was six years old, he learned from his teacher that people in Africa were suffering because of a lack of fresh water. Africans would walk for hours to reach water. Ryan wanted to help the Africans by building a well for a village. He achieved this by saving up money by doing household chores and talking to people at school. He built his first well in 1999 at the Angolo Primary School in a northern Ugandan village. This project evolved into Ryan's Well Foundation. This foundation has completed more than 900 projects around the world. Its mission is to bring clean water to people so that they don't have to suffer. After graduating from college, Ryan returned to run his foundation as a project manager. He is currently the executive director of Ryan's Well Foundation. He continues to work tirelessly to make a difference in the world.

Unit 7. BUGS in the City

Baltimore Urban Gardening with Students (BUGS) is an after-school program for 2nd to 5th grade students who attend Commodore John Rodgers Elementary/Middle School. Its goal is to provide meaningful hands-on academic enrichment activities in school. The program offers a learning environment that includes access to a greenhouse, gardens, a henhouse, a cooking lab and access to the wetlands on Baltimore's Inner Harbor. The students can also host a springtime farmers' market where they can apply their knowledge of math and entrepreneurial skills. Through the process of running the market, they can also gain real-life customer service skills. BUGS has been recognized not only for its creative approach to improving students' class attendance and behavior but also for teaching the value of making an impact on the community. They are especially well-known for their focus on eco-friendly subjects such as gardening and the environment.

Unit 8. The Shoe That Grows

Walking around barefoot can be dangerous for kids. They could step on sharp objects. Disease and germs may enter the body through such injuries. This makes shoes important for kids. The problem is that not everyone can afford them. A company based in the United States of America designed sandals that would help solve this problem. The specially designed sandals are called The Shoe That Grows. As the name suggests, the size of the shoe adjusts itself as the child's foot grows. The shoes can grow up to five sizes and can last for years. These shoes are especially useful for poor families who cannot afford to buy new shoes every time their children grow out of their new ones. These shoes were made possible with donations from across the globe. Each pair of shoes cost 12 euros, and over 140,000 pairs of shoes have been distributed to children in need.

Unit 9. The First Photo of a Person

Louis Daguerre and Nicéphore Niépce started developing a photographic process in the early 1830s. They used a thin, silver-plated copper sheet, iodine crystals, mercury fumes, and a salt solution to perfect their process. This process, called the daguerreotype, was named after Daguerre as Niépce passed away in 1833. The process was soon used around the world. It was eventually replaced by the wet collodion process. However, many photos of famous political figures, regular workers, buildings and landmarks, etc. were photographed using Daguerre and Niépce's method. Famously, Daguerre took a photo that is currently believed to be the earliest to show a living person. Shot in 1838, the only people captured in the photo were a shoe shiner and his customer. Another famous picture was taken by photographer Robert Cornelius. He took a self-portrait and his picture is believed to be the first daguerreotype taken in North America. Other well-known subjects of daguerreotype include the moon, Abraham Lincoln, and the first president of Liberia, Joseph Jenkins Roberts.

Unit 10. A Changing Hobby

Kodak's main business was selling film. With the introduction of digital cameras, sales dropped dramatically and Kodak filed for bankruptcy protection in 2012. It re-emerged as a smaller company in 2013 but has lost much of its power. Many people have said that the reason behind this was Kodak's inability to adapt to digital technologies. However, this is far from the truth. In fact, the first prototype of a digital camera was created by an engineer at Kodak. The mistake, however, was not being able to make the most of their technology. Instead of creating a platform where people could share their photos, likes, and comments with others, it would have been Instagram before Instagram ever existed. Kodak created a website that encouraged customers to print more photos. In the end, Kodak had the potential and opportunity to grow from digital technologies. However, unfortunately, it failed to recognize the potential of marrying photographs and digital cameras with online networks and mobile devices.

Unit 11. DSLR Cameras

Nikon was the first company to announce its first digital single lens reflex (DSLR) in 1999. Back then, digital cameras were still relatively new and film was still the norm. Over the course of the next few years, DSLR technology improved. More people began to take notice and started using them. Later on, Nikon released a DSLR with video capabilities. About a month later, Canon released its own DSLR with video capabilities. Unlike the Nikon version, it could shoot in full HD and produce professional-quality videos. It was so impressive that it started the DSLR videography movement. Professional studios began to use DSLR cameras to shoot advertisements and even television shows. Canon is still considered to be the reigning king of DSLR for video. However, there are plenty of other companies that also make great DSLR cameras. It all depends on what you want to use it for.

Unit 12. Inside the Picture

Three hundred sixty cameras are special because the scene looks like a scene inside of a sphere. You can look around using a 360 camera instead of just one place on a flat plane. You can take wide-angle shots and panoramas as well. Nowadays, you can consume 360 photos and videos on your smart device. Certain video-sharing platforms support 360 photos. It even allows you to toggle the 360 feature on and off. There are, however, some drawbacks to this type of camera. Even though the resolution might sound really good on paper, the image is stretched over the inside of a sphere. So, when you're actually looking at the finished product or trying to figure out how to edit the footage, the resolution might not actually go very far. If you are looking into purchasing a 360-degree camera, there are largely two options. The first is a spherical action camera that is designed for more movement and rough environments. The second is a cheaper lifestyle camera that is small and easier to use.

Unit 13. Work Worries

Most child labor is currently illegal in many parts of the world. However, this was not always the case. Children worked as apprentices and servants throughout history. However, child labor reached all new extremes during the Industrial Revolution. Children who lived in cities often worked in dangerous conditions for little money. Factory employers especially liked to use children as laborers because their smaller size allowed them to navigate the tight spaces of factories or mines. More importantly, children were paid less than adults. Child laborers often worked because they needed to support their families. Unfortunately, this also meant that they couldn't go to school because they had to spend all their time working. Reformers and labor organizers fought to protect children from the exploitation of the industry. But it wasn't until the Great Depression that any rules could really be established. After the market crash, people wanted all the available jobs for adults. So, they established labor laws to prevent children from working.

Unit 14. Important Jobs

Paramedics help people who have been in car accidents stay alive until they can get to a hospital. Vehicle accidents kill many people every year, but doctors aren't around to help them at the site of the accident. Without immediate care, people can die before they ever see a doctor. That's why paramedics and ambulances were created. Emergency medicine curricula and courses were developed so that trained professionals could work as paramedics. Ambulances were equipped with sirens so that they could signal to cars in front of them to yield the road. This made it easier for them to rush over to the scene of the accident. As time passed, the standards for paramedics were updated. Exams and courses were standardized and practical training hours were increased. Today, many paramedics are highly skilled and very well trained. They work with emergency room doctors to save hundreds of people every year.

Unit 15. Child Actors

Children have been acting on stage and in movies for many years. However, some of those child roles were taken by adults as the Hollywood star system developed. This may have been partly due to the fact that filmmaking involved a long and exhausting work schedule unsuitable for real children. In any case, the star system made it difficult for actual child stars to develop. There were exceptions, however. In 1921, Charlie Chaplain introduced child actor Jackie Coogan to the world. Coogan quickly rose to fame and became the youngest person in history to earn a million dollars. Unfortunately, much of his money was squandered away by his parents during the course of his youth. This led to the California legislature passing the Coogan Act in 1938. Now, any money made by a child actor can be protected by law.

Unit 16. Designing Websites

Designing a website has become more simplified thanks in part to businesses that offer services that either design the entire website or provide easy tools to do so. However, web design is still a complex process that involves much more than just choosing pretty images for a website. A web designer also needs to think about things such as how a customer might use the website. They have to choose a colorful but tasteful color scheme for the landing page so that customers are immediately captivated. Visual cues should also be used to direct the customer to what they are looking for. If it's difficult to find products or look for the checkout button, then no one will want to shop at the online store! The entire website should also be readable. That means the designers should place text strategically. If the entire website has a paragraph-length block of text in tiny font sizes, then no one will bother trying to read what it says. Considering all the different things that a designer needs to keep in mind, website design is not as simple as it looks.