

Learning Through Poetry: Keys to the Future, by Children's Laureate Wales



This lesson can take up to 45 minutes. It can be broken down into smaller lessons or extended as required.

Ages 7-9

The lesson has been designed for learners aged 7-9. The "checkpoints" offer differentiation strategies to scale learning as required.

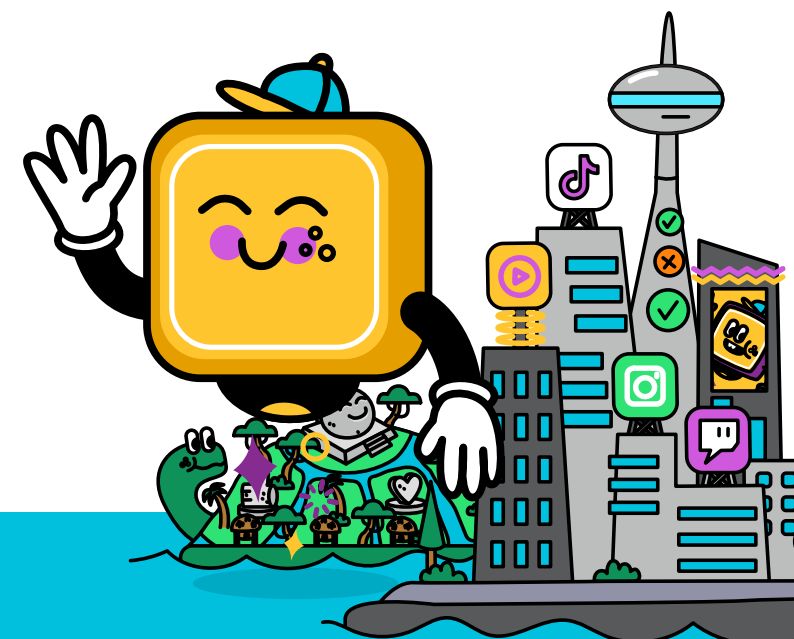


This lesson is part of the eSmart Digital Licence program

By completing just four engaging lessons, including this one, your class can earn their eSmart Digital Licences—signalling their understanding of safe and responsible online behaviour. Start now and guide your learners toward becoming confident and positive digital citizens.



Learn more about the program
be.esmart.org.au/dl/overview



Overview

This activity is based on the poem "Keys to the Future", by the Children's Laureate Wales. The poem was developed in partnership with The Royal College of Psychiatrists, following a series of poetry workshops with children that focused on the effects of technology on children's mental health.

Further information regarding the development of the poem can be accessed here on the [Literature Wales](#) site.

This activity is relevant for:

- Introducing students to poetry, and encouraging students to relate its key themes to their everyday lives.
- Addressing concerns about student wellbeing and social interactions related to device usage.
- Encouraging a balanced perspective of both the positives and negatives of technology use.

Activity setup

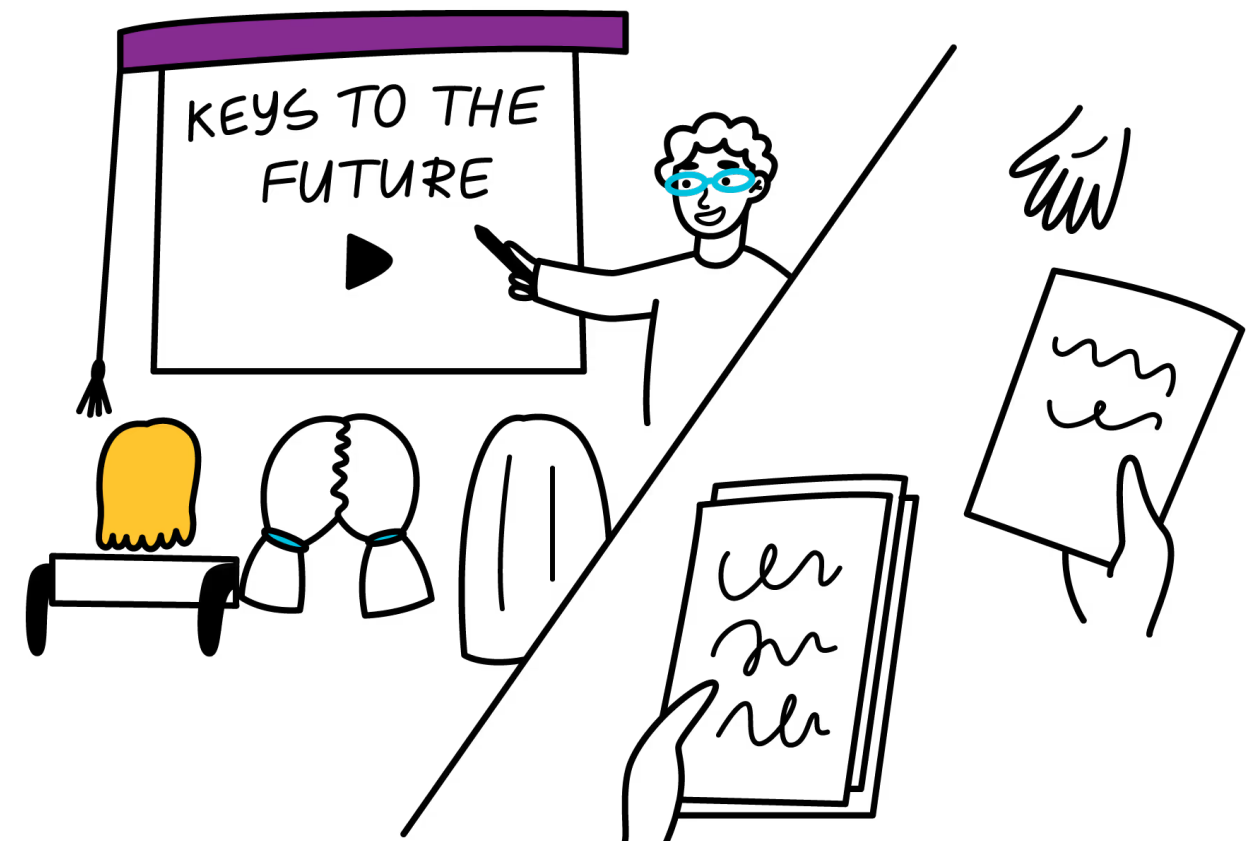
Download and print the "Student Activity Pack" from the Resources section, which can be pasted into student workbooks. This Activity Pack can also be used digitally as a visual guide, or shared via Google Classroom or similar.

Learning intentions & success criteria

Learners will:

By completing this activity, our class intends to:

- Identify ways that technology can work to bring people together, and also keep them apart.
- Describe strategies for maintaining positive and balanced technology use.



1

Introductory discussion

Lead students in brainstorming responses to the first activity in the "Student Activity Pack". Here, students are asked to list some of the ways that technology can bring us together, and how it might also keep us apart.

In the "Ways technology can bring us together" column, examples include:

- Gaming online with friends (i.e. playing Roblox).
- Connecting with family through video calls.
- Participating in online classes or outside activities.
- Phone calls and messaging.
- Showing our family or friends something cool that we found online.
- Showcase creativity by making art and culture accessible to others.

In the "Ways technology can keep us apart" column, examples might be:

- Prevents us from spending quality time with family and other friend groups.
- Missing out on offline activities, such as sports or other in-person clubs.
- We might compare ourselves to other people, and feel negatively.
- Excluding people from playing with us online.
- Some people might be mean to others online.

Ask students whether they think the positives of technology use outweigh the negatives, and why.

2

Play or read the poem

Introduce the poem. You may wish to explain that the poem was inspired by a series of workshops with children in 2022, which focused on the impacts that technology might have on mental health. The poem was inspired by what the children said and wrote in these workshops.

Play the poem from Youtube here, or read the poem as a class from the transcript provided in the "Student Activity Pack".

3

Analysis and comprehension

Follow the comprehension questions in the "Student Activity Pack". To assist in comprehending the overall meaning of the poem—and to scaffold students towards the analysis of certain words and poetry techniques—it is advised to split students into pairs or small groups. Assign a stanza of the poem to each group. The first step is for them to circle the stanza they will be analysing on their individual worksheets.

For quick reference, the worksheet asks:

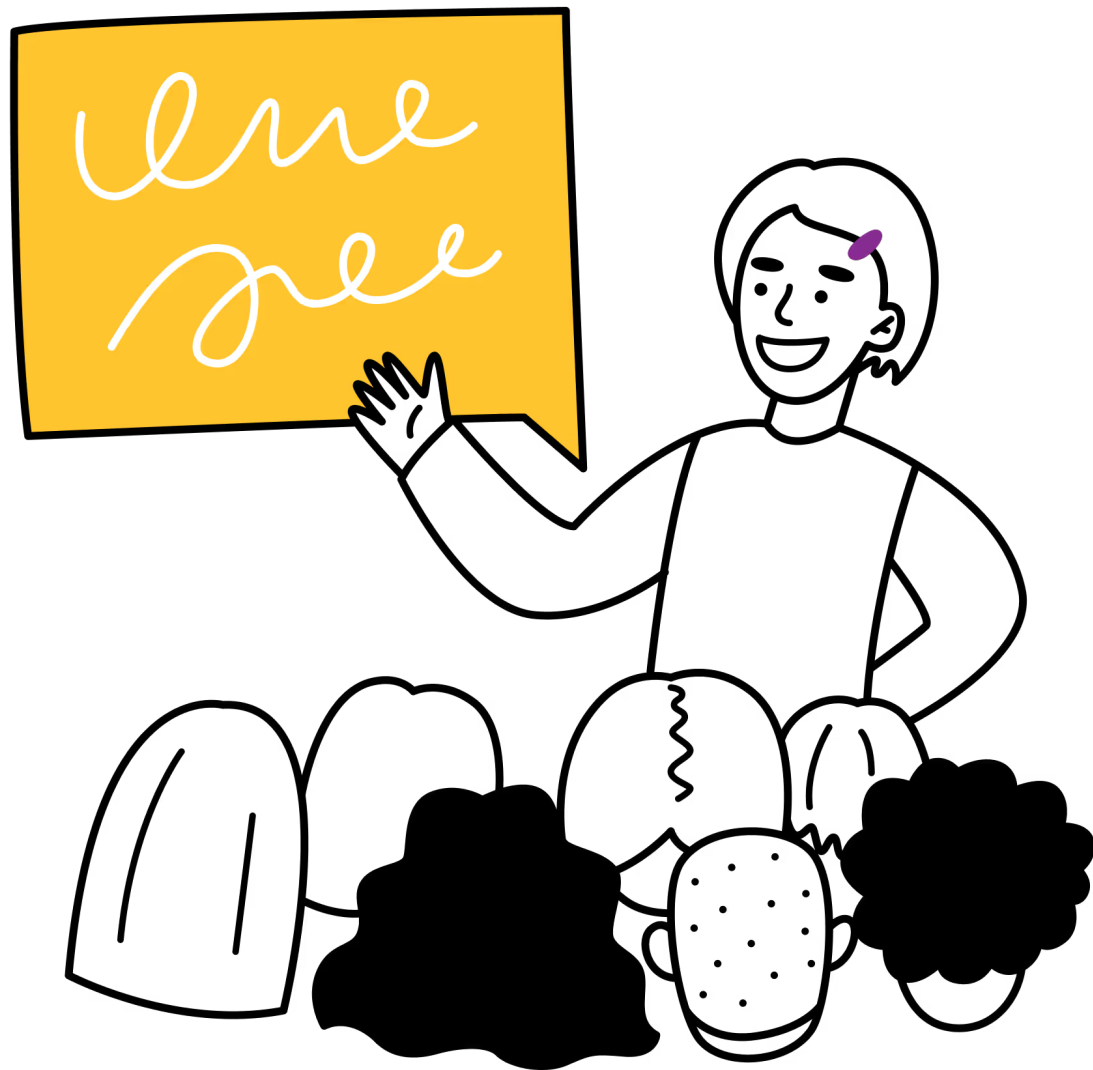
- In your stanza, is technology seen as a positive, negative, or both?
- Circle clues that tell us whether technology is seen as positive, negative, or both. Clues can be certain words, rhymes, or ideas.
- Can you see any ways that the stanza might relate to your life, or someone that you know? Give an explanation.

As a whole group, ask for volunteers to report their findings.

4

Exit pass

Finally, ask students to come up with at least one goal for using technology to bring people together in positive and healthy ways.



Australian Curriculum (Version 9.0)

Years 3 and 4: General Capabilities Personal and Social Capabilities

Relational awareness:

- Level 3: Identify how they can contribute to healthy relationships and manage challenging relationships.

Year 3: English

- AC9E3LA03: Describe how texts across the curriculum use different language features and structures relevant to their purpose.
- AC9E3LE02: Discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences.
- AC9E3LE04: Discuss the effects of some literary devices used to enhance meaning and shape the reader's reaction, including rhythm and onomatopoeia in poetry and prose.

Year 4: English

- AC9E4LA03: Identify how texts across the curriculum have different language features and are typically organised into characteristic stages depending on purposes.
- AC9E4LE02: Describe the effects of text structures and language features in literary texts when responding to and sharing opinions.
- AC9E4LE04: Examine the use of literary devices and deliberate word play in literary texts, including poetry, to shape meaning.

My Time, Our Place

Outcome 2: Children and young people are connected with and contribute to their world.

Children and young people develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary as active and informed citizens.

This is evident when children:

- Understand the concept that while digital technology can connect us, it is also vitally important to maintain our face-to-face and interpersonal connections too.

CASEL Framework

Self-management:

The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.

Responsible decision-making:

The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse situations.



Contents and Checklist



1. Activity: Does technology bring us together, or keep us apart?
2. Poem detectives: Analyse a poem about technology.
3. Extension question for super detectives.
4. Exit pass

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List some of the ways that technology can bring us together, and how it might keep us apart.

**Ways that
technology can
bring us together**

**Ways that
technology can
keep us apart**

Do you think the positives outweigh the negatives? Why?



"Keys to the Future" by the Children's Laureate Wales

Is the world in a twilight zone?
Countless hours on mobile phones.
Is that good or bad?
Does it make us happy or sad?
Some find comfort in games and TV,
others find comfort in outdoor mysteries.

Sometimes we're lost,
struggling with how to cope,
but we have to hold on to hope.
Whether that's through a screen
gaming with a group of friends,
or outside in nature
putting our souls on the mend.

The development of the world,
it's mysterious to me.
Representing the future,
the depths of our creativity.
It's limitless,
like our imagination should be.
We hold the keys.

1. Circle the stanza you will be analysing.

A stanza in a poem is like a paragraph in a story; it's a group of lines put together. Think of a stanza as a section of a poem, similar to verses in a song.

2. In your stanza, is technology seen as positive, negative, or both?

3. In your stanza, circle clues that tell us whether technology is seen as positive, negative, or both.

Clues might be certain words, rhymes, or ideas.

4. Can you see any ways that the stanza might relate to your life, or someone that you know? Give an explanation.



Activity Pack

Emotions and Online Safety

Extension question:

What suggestions would you give to make sure that technology doesn't divide or isolate people?

Exit Pass

Write at least one goal for using technology to bring people together in positive and healthy ways.
