Read the articles and then discuss the following:
- What do the articles suggest are the dos and don'ts of internet dating?
- What are the benefits of internet dating?
- What are the possible drawbacks?
- How do the findings in these articles compare to the list of words you generated in the starter activity?

Article 1

The Secret Language of Internet Dating
By Casilda Grigg

There's something bewildering about the world of online dating.

It's as if a geek in Silicon Valley invented a language, only forgot to tell anybody, let alone publish a dictionary. There you are, profile finally written, ready to step into a world of gorgeous singletons, and nobody warns you about the linguistic pitfalls.
If you are to find love on the web, you need to be cautious about what you say about yourself. Even the most innocent word can give off the wrong idea.

When e-commerce director Alec Shaw Stewart, 54, joined a dating site for the first time many years ago, he made a classic newbie mistake. Keen to convey he was a bright-eyed male with real get-up-and-go, he used the word "active" in the title of his dating profile. The result? A storm of electronic abuse from the good-looking women he'd been hoping to attract.

"All I wanted to convey was that I didn't sit around all day doing nothing," says Shaw Stewart. "I picked a short, succinct word to do the job. But I got all sorts of abuse. It turned out that women didn't like 'active' at all. To them it was code for 'highly promiscuous'."

The same goes for the word 'fun'. "In normal life it has no sexual connotation," says property developer Jason Thomas, 38, who believes the paying sites get more responses than the free ones. "But if a girl says she's 'up for fun' in a dating profile I immediately assume she's talking about bed."

Appearance is another minefield. If you're female and blessed with an hourglass physique, "curvaceous" would be the obvious word to pick. What woman wouldn't use a word synonymous with Marilyn Monroe? But in web-speak "curvaceous" quite simply means "fat". "The word is not offensive to anyone, but let's be honest, most people know what it means," says Duncan Cunningham, director of the The Dating Lab, which runs The Telegraph's dating service.

Men who choose harmless words like "stocky" or "well built" are also unwittingly awarding themselves extra layers of blubber.

Even if you're built like a footballer, or a weightlifter, women may suspect you have a serious Krispy Kreme habit with all the adverse consequences that implies.

Phrases, even innocuous ones, aren't safe either. "Inadvertently, people use clichés which others interpret more cynically," says Cunningham. Experienced internet dater Andrew Gibson, 47, considers himself an expert at recognising the red flags. "If the woman tries to touch all the bases, for example by saying she loves going out on the razzle, but is equally happy pottering about at home, I'm suspicious," he says. "It's too contrived." Faced with the pressure to write well and avoid clichés, it's tempting, perhaps, to take the easy option and dash off something brief and ungrammatical, much as you would a text. But according to one user on Muddy Matches, the rural dating site, this is likely to scupper your chances. Text speak suggests a "don't care" attitude and a lack of respect for the prospective match.

So what else do we need to know? "A picture speaks 1,000 words," says dating psychologist Madeleine Mason, who hosts PassionSmiths, workshops and seminars based on getting Britain's lonely hearts back in the dating saddle. Mason urges users to avoid taking blurry selfies and cautions against portrait shots featuring other people. "Everybody starts with the pictures," she says. "And a good photo that's smiley and in focus is the quickest way to get your message across."

[Article from The Telegraph](#)

Article 2

Must Love Pets
By Casilda Grigg

What words really mean
Laid-back Marijuana habit
Free spirit Sure to cheat on you
Not materialistic Skint
Life and soul Drink problem
Must love pets Prefers cats to people
Likes fun Looking for no-strings sex
Tired of games Has serious baggage
Wants an independent partner Will never buy you dinner
Artistic Lives with parents
Photo available on request Married

Six of the worst clichés (avoid! avoid!)
I like to curl up on the sofa with a glass of wine and a DVD
My life is great. I just need someone to share it with
My friends and family are really important to me
I'm just as happy at a black tie event as I am in a muddy field
My friends say I'm... (attractive, romantic, thoughtful, etc)
I never thought I'd end up on a dating site

The language of popular internet daters
Telegraph Dating has conducted a study of the top 200 words used in the profiles of the men and women who attracted most interest from the opposite sex.

The words turn out to be relentlessly, almost spookily, positive. Popular people of both sexes continuously use words like "enjoy" and "good". They apparently "like" things a lot. That's when they don't "love" them. Negativity of any kind is a definite turn-off for prospective lovers. Many of us join dating sites in our darkest hours, but note the complete absence of words like "lonely" or "desperate".

So what do these popular cheerleader types do when they're not being "happy" with their "friends" and loving things? They like "music" and they do various activities of which the most common is "walking". The great advantage of walking is that any of us can do it. If you said you liked marathon running or rock climbing, potential partners might feel they could not readily join in.

A few other words are noticeable by their absence. Popular women hardly ever mention the terrifying word "relationship". Popular men don't use it at all. And none of the popular men or women ever uses two other words that could spread fear and alarm: "commitment" and - gasp! - "marriage".

[Article from The Telegraph](#)