

The Language of Websites

Objective: To explore and analyse the structure of websites and blogs.

To explore how 21st Century language has influenced the way we communicate in blogs and vlogs.

Use the interactive resource – *Starter activity*

Teacher note: Have students analyse the tweet in the resource and ask them to consider how this changes the way in which we ‘read’ online.

The narrative structure of websites

Use the printable resource – *Discussion questions*

Teacher note: Question 1 - Students could extend this discussion by making notes on websites they commonly use, or ‘track’ their own reading of websites – do they ever read a page from start to finish, or do they find themselves reading through multiple sites?

Question 2 - possible points of discussion:

- Fan sites
- A way of sharing unpublished writing, so a way of getting published
- Sharing experiences in a community
- Written form of becoming famous on YouTube
- Curious hybrid of secret diary and public revelation

Question 3 – This piece of writing could be shared with the students after they have discussed the question.

From Mark Boardman’s The Language of Websites

‘The personal facts and sentiments revealed [in blogs] are frequently more than many would choose to reveal even in private conversations with friends, and yet they are there for the world to see. A useful analogy is this: a dense forest where a personal diary is hidden underneath a tree; the diarist returns to the same spot to update the diary every day. Given the size and heavily wooded nature of the forest, it is perhaps unlikely that many people would read the diary. There is, however, the thrill of knowing that someone just might read it – and, crucially, read it anonymously without personal consequences to the diarist. What is more, the diary is charmed so that it can only be moved, altered or destroyed by the person who wrote it.’

Analysis task

Use the printable resource – *Analysis task*

Teacher note: Students could extend this discussion by making notes on websites they commonly use, or ‘track’ their own reading of websites – do they ever read a page from start to finish, or do they find themselves reading through multiple sites?

A possible follow on creative writing task could be: Using the language features identified in this blog, write your own blog entry in which you rant about an element of 21st Century language that irritates you. Annotate your language features to show how you have adapted your style to suit the form.

Youtube Vlog

Use the interactive resource – *Youtube Vlog*

Teacher note: Have students watch the film in the interactive resource and consider how language is used differently in this form of 21st Century language to the blog they will have read in the previous resource. Have them focus on lexical rather than prosodic features.

Blogs – Language issues and concepts

Use the printable resource – *Language issues and concepts*

Teacher note: Have students read the blogs and consider how they vary language use to suit purpose and intended audience.

A possible creative writing task could be: Using the features identified in the example blogs, write your own guide to using another social media site. Carefully consider linguistic and structural choices as well as any specific graphological features. Students could adapt an extract of their work so that it sounds more like a vlog and discuss the differences in their language choices.