

# Teachers' Guide for Cobblestone

February 2012: How We Keep in Touch

By Debbie Vilardi

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Goal: To explore changes in communication technology over time.

\*Always have a parent or trusted adult help with web research.

Before Beginning: Consider the cover of this issue. What forms of communication are shown? Which of these do you use? Which ones replaced others? Can you think of any that aren't shown?

"The Future Is Now!" by Laurie Peach Taupin (Pages 4-7)

Vocabulary: analog, digital

Comprehension:

1. What might be some benefits of an entirely wireless system?
2. What are two common wireless technologies and how do they differ?
3. What is an obstacle to universal access?

Writing Activity: The article mentions a smart refrigerator. What are the benefits and drawbacks of having such smart technology?

Art or Writing Activity: In the article, the microwave cooks mac and cheese. How did the product get into the microwave? Design a device to accomplish this task. You may draw the device or write its story.

Research Topics: The growth of digital technology

"You've Got Mail" by Ellen Hardsog and Andrew Matthews (Pages 8-10)

Comprehension:

1. What were some of the problems with early mail delivery? What steps were taken to overcome them?
2. Why did the British government establish a mail service?
3. How did Congress change the mail service?

4. What innovation occurred in 1863?
5. How did Rural Free Delivery affect farmers?

Math activity:

1. How much did it cost to send a letter of six sheets 38 miles before 1845? If the same letter went 530 miles, what would the cost have been?

Writing Activities: Before writing, read the sidebar on page 11, "Express Mail Across the West" by Carol Peterson.

1. Discuss how mail delivery and transportation developments are intertwined. Include information from the sidebar and the main article.
2. Would you have wanted to work for the Pony Express? Why or why not?

Research: Thomas Neale, mail delivery, streets with the name Post in your area, The Pony Express

"Read All about It" by Beth Turin Weston (Pages 12-13)

Comprehension:

1. What change allowed for town criers to be replaced by newspapers?
2. What features did the papers of the early 1800s have in common with today's papers?
3. How did the *Sun* revolutionize the newspaper industry?
4. In what ways were penny papers similar to news sites on the web?

Writing Activity: Many people believe the print newspaper is becoming extinct. Write an opinion piece for a newspaper or news site detailing your opinion.

Research: Learn the history of your local newspaper

"Dot, Dash and Ring-a-ling" by Barbara D. Krasner (Pages 14-17)

Vocabulary: telephone, telegraph, electromagnets, exposition

Comprehension:

1. Why was Morse considered crazy?
2. What was the first message sent by telegraph?
3. Why did newspapers establish the Associated Press?
4. How did the telegraph revolutionize intercontinental communication?

5. What were some of the problems with the telegraph?
6. What accidental discovery led to the telephone?
7. What prompted the spread of telephones?

Research: Electromagnets, Samuel F. B. Morse, the Associated Press, Western Union, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Watson, innovation by accident, Bell Telephone Company, AT&T, Theodore Vail

"See What I'm Saying" by Andrew Matthews (Pages 18-19)

Vocabulary: optical

Comprehension:

1. Why was the optical telegraph developed?
2. What led to it becoming obsolete?
3. What are some current uses for optical telegraph systems?

Math Activity:

Assume the fifteen towers are spaced evenly between Lille and Paris. How far apart are the towers?

Research: Claude Chappe, Telegraph Hill, Semaphore

"Instant Words, Instant Pictures" by Duane Damon (Pages 20-23)

Comprehension:

1. What were the benefits of radio broadcasts?
2. Why did some people panic on Halloween night in 1938?
3. Why might TVs have been called "magic" boxes?
4. How did television affect future presidential campaigns?
5. In what ways did space science impact television?

Math Activity: How old was radio when Edward R. Murrow first reported from London?

Research: Edward R. Murrow, President Roosevelt's "fireside chats", National Broadcasting Company, Radio Corporation of America, *Telstar*

"Internet Q&A" by William J. Joel (Pages 26-27)

Vocabulary: browser

Comprehension:

1. Define the Internet.
2. Why was it first developed?
3. Why are satellites important to data transmission?
4. Name some ways people use the Internet.

Writing Activity: Imagine man had never entered space or sent up satellites. How would your life be different? Compare a day in your life without space access to a real day.

Research: ARPA, Telnet, e-mail, World Wide Web

"Quick Connections" by Kathiann M. Kowalski (Pages 29-31)

"Welcome to Blogland" by Steven R. Wills (pages 32-33)

"Are You Following Me?" by Ruth Tenzer Feldman (Pages 36-38)

Vocabulary & Research: Apple, IBM, VOIP, Computers, Internet Service Provider, microprocessor, router, Wikis, HTML, Jorn Barger, weblogs, social networking, KidLitosphere, transmedia

Comprehension:

1. What innovations are being worked on to improve computers and smart devices?
2. Why did Blogger become popular?

Discussion: Social networking sites and blogs allow users to post whatever they want. Users can provide fake names and false information about themselves. What are the benefits and drawbacks to anonymity and the ability to post anything?

Activity for the Entire Issue: Research and write about other communication systems. These may include those mentioned on pages 40-41 as well as others such as tribal drumming, Braille and sign language.