

# Teens, Sexting and 'Cyberbaiting'



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*This story comes from VOA Special English, Voice of America's daily news and information service for English learners. Read the story and then do the activities in the worksheet at the end.*

This is the VOA Special English Technology Report.

How common is teen sexting? Last week we reported on a new study of more than fifteen hundred Internet users age ten to seventeen. It found that only two and a half percent of them had sexted in the past year. It also found that only one percent of the images might violate child pornography laws.

That study came from the University of New Hampshire. But another new report suggests much higher rates. Both studies defined "sexting" only to mean sending or receiving naked pictures.

Psychologist Jeff Temple is an assistant professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

JEFF TEMPLE: "We found actually about twenty eight percent of teens had sexted."

Mr. Temple says reports from medical offices and school officials support that finding.

JEFF TEMPLE: "One of the authors that will be on our paper with our data is a pediatrician. And he certainly sees this in his office. And from talking to school personnel and teens themselves, it certainly seems like it's happening quite a bit more frequent than the one percent reported in the New Hampshire study, and more in line with what we found in terms of about one in four kids have sent a sext."

And he says the behavior was the same for boys and girls.

JEFF TEMPLE: "We found that about a third of girls had sent a naked picture of themselves to another teen and about a third of boys had sent a naked picture of themselves to another teen."

Sexting is not the only issue involving teens and technology. A recent "Online Family Report" from computer security company Norton called attention to "cyberbaiting" in classrooms. Marian Merritt is the company's Internet safety advocate.

MARIAN MERRITT: "Kids may engage in purposely taunting, or teasing, or harassing the teacher, in order to get the teacher to have some kind of reaction or response that they then hope to capture on a cellphone camera, a video, and post online where people can view it. Now this can be incredibly embarrassing and humiliating and damaging to the reputation of a teacher."

Ms. Merritt says Norton surveyed more than two thousand three hundred teachers in twenty-four countries.

MARIAN MERRITT: "What we were surprised to learn is that one in five teachers globally knows somebody that it's happened to or has had it happen to themselves."

She also did a little research of her own.

MARIAN MERRITT: "Just typing in phrases like 'teacher loses it' and that sort of thing, because the term 'cyberbait' is still relatively unknown. But I was surprised to find there are lots of these videos out there."

The online survey also found that seventy percent of young people reported having had a negative experience online. Forty percent rated the experience as serious, including cyberbullying, cybercrime or being contacted by strangers.

*Now do the worksheet ...*

**Level: beginner - intermediate**

**Time: 20-30 minutes**

**This worksheet will help you learn new vocabulary about slavery in the U.S. You will answer questions about the Phillis Wheatley, an early African-American poet, and write a short paragraph about a similar person in your country's history.**

1. Write a word that means the opposite as the words below. The answers are in the article.

free person \_\_\_\_\_

healthy \_\_\_\_\_

usual \_\_\_\_\_

disrespect \_\_\_\_\_

easy \_\_\_\_\_

2. Find the word in each list that doesn't belong. Explain your answer.

a. colony, state, nation, culture

b. poet, uneducated, writer, businessman

c. love, respect, kidnap

3. Who is this article about?

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4. Look at the sentences below about Phillis Wheatley's life. Put them in the order they happened, from 1 - 9.

\_\_\_\_\_ *An Elegiac Poem on the Death of the Celebrated Divine* was published.

\_\_\_\_\_ She wrote on the wall of Mr. Wheatley's room with a piece of coal.

\_\_\_\_\_ She was kidnapped and brought to New England.

\_\_\_\_\_ She was freed from the Wheatley family.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Wheatley gave Phillis a pencil and paper.

- \_\_\_\_\_ She could read English.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She traveled to London and gave poetry readings there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She was sold in a slave market to John Wheatley.
- \_\_\_\_\_ She was invited to visit George Washington in his headquarters.

5. Read the sentence below. Is it *true* or *false*? If it is false, correct the sentence.  
Phillis Wheatley was the first black female poet in the United States.

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6. How did Phillis Wheatley get to New England?

[ ] She was kidnapped in Senegal and brought to New England by ship.

[ ] Her parents brought her to New England for a better life.

7. Complete the following sentence with *better* or *worse*.  
In Northern states in the seventeen hundreds, black slaves were treated \_\_\_\_\_  
than they were in the Southern states.

8. Think about Susannah Wheatley. How could you describe her?

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9. How old was Phillis when she began to write poetry?

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10. Phillis Wheatley was freed in 1774. How did her life change? Do you think she died happy?

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### OVER TO YOU

Does your country have a history of slavery? If so, is there a person like Phillis Wheatley? Write a short paragraph about a similar person in your country's history.

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## ANSWER KEY

1. slave, sickly, unusual, respect, difficult
2. culture [the others describe unified areas]; uneducated [the others are professions]; kidnap [the other two are positive]
3. *Phillis Wheatley*
4. She was kidnapped and brought to New England.  
She was sold in a slave market to John Wheatley.  
She wrote on the wall of Mr. Wheatley's room with a piece of coal.  
Mr. Wheatley gave Phillis a pencil and paper.  
Phillis could read English.  
*An Elegiac Poem on the Death of the Celebrated Divine* was published.  
She traveled to London and gave poetry readings there.  
She was invited to visit George Washington in his headquarters.  
She was freed from the Wheatley family.
5. true
6. She was kidnapped in Senegal and brought to New England by ship.
7. better
8. students' own answers [Susannah Wheatley believed that all human beings, including African slaves, could learn if given the chance. She believed that all people, of any skin color, should love and respect each other. She treated Phillis more as a daughter than as a slave.]
9. 12 years old
10. students' own answers [Her life became more difficult. She married John Peters, a free black man. He failed in many business attempts. Their three children died at a very young age. Phillis tried to publish another book of her poems. But now that she was free, she had lost her appeal as a slave poet. Phillis Wheatley died poor and alone in seventeen eighty-four.]

