

**New York City College of Technology**  
**English Department**  
**ENG 1101 Final Examination**  
**Part 1 – Form B**

In your own words, summarize "Texting Shorthand Annoys Purists and May Have Lasting Impact" by Seth Mydans. The essay was published on April 9, 2007, in The New York Times. Be sure to state clearly the author's thesis and three or four of his supporting points. You must include one or more brief quotations from the article to convey the flavor of the author's style and thought, but be sure that the summary is expressed in your own words. Your summary should consist of one well-developed paragraph.

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**Part 2 – Form A**

**Choose A or B and write a well-developed essay of about five paragraphs.**

A. In his essay, Seth Mydans writes about texting as an effective agent for language change and the reactions to such change from various parties. Based on your own experience, consider how change has occurred in your life or in the lives of those around you. Describe in detail the agent of change and the effects it had. What lesson did you learn about change from this experience? How does Mydan's view on the impact of texting on language compare to what you have experienced? If you like, instead of referring to a situation in your own experience, you may write about a situation described in something you've read. In the course of writing your essay, you must state clearly the point of Mydan's article, what he is basing it on, why he feels it is important, and how it compares to what you have experienced or read about. You may address this question in any order, but be sure to respond to all parts of this assignment and to connect your thoughts into a single, clearly organized essay.

B. In his essay, Seth Mydans writes about texting as an effective agent for language change and the reactions to such change from various parties. Think about another instance when change has divided those around you—at school, at church, at work, in your family. Describe in detail the particular agent of change and its effects. Then write about the two different reactions to it. Explain the reasons for the change and why for some it is seen as positive and for others as negative. If you like, instead of referring to a situation in your own experience, you may write about a situation described in something you've read. In the course of writing your essay, you must state clearly the point of Mydans' article, what he is basing it on, why he feels it is important, and how it compares to what you have experienced or read about. You may address this question in any order, but be sure to respond to all parts of this assignment and to connect your thoughts into a single, clearly organized essay.

The New York Times

April 9, 2007

Op-Ed Contributors

Texting Shorthand Annoys Purists and May Have Lasting Impact

By Seth Mydans

NEW YORK — If u cn rEd ths, ur doin gr8. It is the newest variant of English, a compressed jumble of letters and numbers that has emerged in recent years as the language of the text message. Quick, inventive and utilitarian, it is a minimalist form of the language that some call irrelevant and many schoolteachers say is an insult to the English language. But with more than a trillion text messages sent every year, it is impossible to ignore. Texting also, according to linguists, has three characteristics—the rapid rate at which it generates neologisms, or new words, its “communicative efficiency,” or ease of use, and its global pervasiveness—that may make it a particularly effective agent for language change.

Texting has produced its own vocabulary of acronyms, homonyms and abbreviations, things like LOL (laughing out loud) and CUL8R (see you later) that have, in their own context, become new English words. WYGOWM (will you go out with me). MTFBWY (may the force be with you). PU (this stinks). SUP (what's up).

The vocabulary of text messaging realizes an old lexicographical dream—attempted and failed at by luminaries like George Bernard Shaw—the realignment of spelling with sound. No more rough, trough, thought, through—just ruf, trof, thot, thru. New conventions in spelling have emerged, like the use of a capital letter to denote a long vowel: ths is EzE to rEd.

And there is evidence that some spellings are leaking out into broader use. Last November, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, which sets standards for the testing of students, said phrases like 2B R NT 2B and I LUV U would be acceptable in exam papers. Also late last year education officials in New Zealand said they might accept some abbreviations like WOT or WANNA or CUZ on examinations.

There was, of course, a backlash. Newspapers called the Scottish proposal ridiculous. In New Zealand, Judy Turner, a member of Parliament, put her objection in writing: "Skoolz r ther 2 educ8 + raze litrac 2 certn standrds."

But there is no pristine version of English that must be protected from alien incursions, said Denis Pyatt, principal of Papanui High School in Christchurch, New Zealand, who is a linguist. "Text messaging is one of the more exciting developments of language that has occurred for a long time," Pyatt said in a telephone interview. "I think it's another wonderful example of how language grows, and it's another example of how language change cannot be stopped." He added: "Given the global village we are now part of, the immediacy of all communications now and how quick it all is, I can't see how this would not influence the future of the language."

For those who don't want to be left behind, any English word or phrase can be instantly translated into Text Speak at [www.transl8it.com](http://www.transl8it.com). "d qix brown fox jumped Ovr d lazy K9," for example. Even the British Council, one of the arbiters of the international use of English, seems to be giving ground. Its Web site offers a lesson plan for Valentine's Day that lets students "create their own romantic text message in English." This bastion of the Queen's English offered a couple of suggestions: WUBMV, it said—Will you be my Valentine? And xoxoxoxo—hugs and kisses.

*Seth Mydans is a reporter who covers socio-cultural issues for The New York Times.*