

## Research and Resources in Language Teaching

Series editors: Jill Hadfield, Associate Professor at Unitec, New Zealand and Christopher N. Candlin, Senior Research Professor at Macquarie University, Sydney.

*Research and Resources in Language Teaching* is a ground-breaking series whose aim is to integrate the latest research in language teaching with innovative classroom practice.

Dramatic shifts in our communication landscape have made it crucial for language teaching to go beyond print literacy and encompass the digital literacies which are increasingly central to learners' personal, social, educational and professional lives. By situating these digital literacies within a clear theoretical framework, *Digital Literacies* provides educators and students alike with not just the background for a deeper understanding of these key 21st-century skills, but also the rationale for integrating these skills into classroom practice. This is the first methodology book to address not just why but also how to teach digital literacies in the English language classroom. This book provides:

- A theoretical framework through which to categorise and prioritise digital literacies
- Practical classroom activities to help learners and teachers develop digital literacies in tandem with key language skills
- A thorough analysis of the pedagogical implications of developing digital literacies in teaching practice
- A consideration of exactly how to integrate digital literacies into the English language syllabus
- Suggestions for teachers on how to continue their own professional development through PLNs (Personal Learning Networks), and how to access teacher development opportunities online

This book is ideal for English language teachers and learners of all age groups and levels, academics and students researching digital literacies, and anyone looking to expand their understanding of digital literacies within a teaching framework.

Worksheets are also available online at the series website [www.pearsoned.co.uk/hockly](http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/hockly).

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# Digital Literacies

Dudeney, Hockly & Pegrum

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# Digital Literacies



Gavin Dudeney, Nicky Hockly and Mark Pegrum

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## Chapter 1

# From research to implications

We've always worried about the impact of new technologies on language, literacy, education and society at large. Socrates feared that writing, the new technology of his day, would lead to a decline in memorisation and an impoverishment of discussion. The Bible, ironically, includes one of the earliest complaints about books, wearily proclaiming that 'of making many books there is no end' (Ecclesiastes 12:12), while in ancient Rome Seneca warned that 'in reading of many books is distraction' (1917, p. 7). But it wasn't until the arrival of Gutenberg's printing press in the 1400s that the number of books really exploded – along with concerns about them. During the Renaissance, Dutch humanist Erasmus worried about printers flooding the world with 'stupid, ignorant, slanderous, scandalous, raving, irreligious and seditious books' (1964, p. 184). Martin Luther saw it this way:

*The multitude of books is a great evil. There is no measure or limit to this fever for writing; every one must be an author; some out of vanity, to acquire celebrity and raise up a name; others for the sake of lucre and gain. (1857, p. 369)*

Complaints of being overloaded with trivia continued for centuries, with French theologian John Calvin bemoaning the 'confused forest of books' (cited in Blair, 2010, Kindle location 1348), German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz protesting the 'horrible mass of books' (ibid., Kindle location 1411) and English poet Alexander Pope grumbling about a 'deluge of authors' (1729, p. 55).

But it's not just books that once seemed iniquitous. The same pattern has repeated itself with the arrival of each new communications technology. The deleterious effects of the telegraph were trumpeted in the *Spectator* in 1889: 'The constant diffusion of statements in snippets . . . must in the end, one would think, deteriorate the intelligence of all to whom the telegraph appeal[s]' (cited in Morozov, 2011, Kindle location 4588). Postcards, it was claimed, would undermine letter writing. The telephone, it was feared, would encourage inappropriate social contacts. Comic books, it seemed, would

lead to juvenile delinquency. And then came television, and CDs, and mobile phones . . .

With a few small changes, most of the comments quoted above could be drafted into the contemporary media assault on Wikipedia and YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, chat and text messaging. Like all past communications technologies, our new digital tools will be associated with changes in language, literacy, education and society. Indeed, they already are. Some observers perceive losses, such as a decline in more linear approaches to reading or more reflective approaches to writing. But others perceive gains, such as education through personal learning networks (PLNs), or collaborative projects based on collective intelligence. Eventually, the day will come when our new tools are so enmeshed in our routine language and literacy practices that we'll barely notice them any more. But that day is still some way off.

## A framework of digital literacies

We're preparing students for a future whose outlines are, at best, hazy. We don't know what new jobs will exist. We don't know what new social and political problems will emerge. However, we're starting to develop a much clearer picture of the competencies needed to participate in digitally networked post-industrial economies and societies. Governments, ministries of education, employers and researchers are all calling for the promotion of twenty-first-century skills such as creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem-solving; collaboration and teamwork; autonomy and flexibility; and lifelong learning. At the heart of this complex of skills is an ability to engage with digital technologies, which requires a command of the *digital literacies* necessary to use these technologies effectively to locate resources, communicate ideas, and build collaborations across personal, social, economic, political and cultural boundaries. In order to engage fully in social networks, gain employment in post-industrial knowledge economies, and assume roles as global citizens who are comfortable with negotiating intercultural differences, our students need a full suite of digital literacies at their disposal.

*Digital literacies:* the individual and social skills needed to effectively interpret, manage, share and create meaning in the growing range of digital communication channels.

Notwithstanding the views of politicians and pundits who cling to an older notion of literacy as a monolithic, print-based skillset, it is increasingly widely accepted that literacy is a plural concept (Kalantzis and Cope, 2012; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Pegrum, 2011), a point which has taken on added significance in the digital era. It has also become increasingly apparent that literacies are not just individual skills or competencies but social practices (Barton, 1994; Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Rheingold, 2012), another point which has become more salient thanks to the rise of the participatory *web 2.0* around the turn of the millennium. In the preceding decades we had already begun to talk of specific literacies like ‘visual literacy’, ‘media literacy’, ‘information literacy’ and ‘multiliteracies’, but with the advent of web 2.0 came an explosion of interest in new – especially digital – literacies. This has led to discussions of a whole slew of particular literacies ranging from ‘remix literacy’ (Lessig, 2007) and ‘personal literacy’ (Burniske, 2008) to ‘attention literacy’ (Rheingold, 2009b), ‘network literacy’ (Pegrum, 2010; Rheingold, 2009a) and ‘mobile literacy’ (Parry, 2011).

*Web 2.0*: a new generation of web-based tools like blogs, wikis and social networking sites, which focus on communication, sharing and collaboration, thus turning ordinary web users from passive consumers of information into active contributors to a shared culture (see Box 1.1).

‘Reading is an unnatural act; we are no more evolved to read books than we are to use computers’, Clay Shirky (2010b) reminds us. As he goes on to point out, we spend a great deal of time and effort developing reading (and, of course, writing) skills – in short, what we might call *print literacy* – in children, and it’s now time to do the same with digital literacies. Language and literacy are tightly bound up with each other: partly because the very notion of literacy is grounded in language, and partly because all literacies are connected with the communication of meaning, whether through language or other, frequently complementary channels. Neither language nor literacy is disappearing. As James Gee and Elisabeth Hayes (2011) observe, language is actually ‘powered up’ or ‘levelled up’ by digital media. Digital literacy, then, is even more powerful and empowering than analogue literacy. We need to level up our teaching and our students’ learning accordingly. For our language teaching to remain relevant, our lessons must encompass a wide variety of literacies which go well beyond traditional *print literacy*. To teach language solely through *print literacy* is, in the current era, to short-change our students on their present and future needs.



### Box 1.1 What hardware and software do I need?



More on web 2.0  
URL: [goo.gl/LOOJM](http://goo.gl/LOOJM)

In addition to an internet connection, teachers and students need adequate *hardware*. Gradually, *desktop computers* (which traditionally rely on hardwired internet connections) have lost market share to *laptops* (which mostly rely on wireless networks). In turn, laptops are now ceding space to *mobile handheld devices* (which rely on wireless and/or 3G and 4G networks). Mobile handheld devices encompass *tablets*, such as the iPad, and *mobile phones*, including *smartphones* like the iPhone, Android phones and BlackBerry phones. In high-tech educational contexts, there is a clear trend towards dismantling fixed computer labs and instead using laptops and mobile handheld devices, which are often student-owned rather than institutionally owned. Some institutions are starting to shift towards a *BYOD* (Bring Your Own Device) model, where each student brings their own device chosen from a range determined by the institution, or a *BYOT* (Bring Your Own Technology) model, where there are few if any restrictions on the range of web-enabled devices students can bring into the classroom to support their learning (see Chapter 3: *Teaching in technology-limited environments*). In low-tech contexts, some educators are also exploring the potential of mobile phones, as well as working with devices such as the inexpensive XO laptops developed by the *One Laptop Per Child* (OLPC) project to help address the global divide in digital access (see Box 1.4).

The *world wide web*, or simply *the web*, is one of the dominant services running on the internet. It is made of up of millions of interlinked *websites*. Nowadays many teachers primarily use free or low-cost *web 2.0* services in their lessons. The hardware devices mentioned above allow web access through *software* called a *web browser*; examples include Apple's Safari, Google's Chrome, Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Mozilla's Firefox. Although many mobile handheld devices also include web browsers, such devices increasingly work with *applications*, or *apps*, that is, small pieces of software which are downloaded from the internet, have specific and limited functionality (as opposed to the general functionality of a web browser), may run with or without web access, and are typically inexpensive or even free (see Chapter 1: *First focus: Language, Mobile literacy*).

Other common hardware includes *data projectors*, which project a computer's display onto a large screen, for example at the front of a classroom.



A more flexible option is offered by touch-sensitive *interactive whiteboards*, or *IWBs*, which, operating in conjunction with data projectors, can be used to display and interact with webpages or software running on the connected computer, as well as capturing and saving notes. *Clickers*, also known by the fuller name of *personal response systems*, allow student responses to questions to be displayed on a screen or smartboard. A new development with some educational potential is the emergence of *3D printers*.

The proliferation of digital hardware, software and internet connections, especially coupled with the availability of free or cheap web 2.0 services and mobile apps, is good news for teachers everywhere.

Neil Selwyn notes that there are *external* and *internal imperatives* for incorporating digital technologies into education. *External imperatives* concern the need to prepare our students for social life, employment and citizenship in the digitally networked world outside the classroom. It is largely due to such external imperatives, particularly economic ones, that school curricula around the world are beginning to emphasise the importance of digital competencies and new literacies (Belshaw, 2011; Selwyn, 2011). *Internal imperatives* concern the benefits digital technologies can offer within the classroom, chiefly by supporting constructivist, student-centred pedagogical approaches (see Box 2.1). Digital literacies, we suggest, are linked to both imperatives: they're essential skills our students need to acquire for full participation in the world beyond the classroom, but they can also enrich our students' learning inside the classroom.

In Chapter 1, we'll discuss the major literacies our students need to acquire (based on Pegrum, 2009 and 2011). The literacies are grouped loosely under four focus points – language, information, connections and (re-)design – and arranged loosely in order of increasing complexity under those focus points, as can be seen in Table 1.1. The considerations which have led to this particular ordering are examined in more detail later (see Chapter 3: *Choosing activities for different levels and contexts, Overall complexity*). The framework is not intended as a checklist of distinct literacies – many of these literacies blur into each other, as indeed do the four focus points – but rather as a map of key areas of emphasis we need to consider within the overall field of digital literacies. While many of the literacies involve elements of other literacies, those which are most obviously *macroliteracies* – that is, which pull together a number of other literacies – are shown in bold in the table. Whether we are teaching students about literacies or macroliteracies,

### Activity 5: Cryptic messages

Students decipher the textspeak used in SMS messages and discuss its appropriacy.

An awareness of textspeak is helpful for students if they are to take part in web 2.0 culture in English (see e.g. Activity 47, *LOLcats* and Activity 48, *Texting Hillary*). Text messaging linguistic conventions will frequently exist in the students' L1s, which can provide a useful point of comparison with English textspeak.

**Literacy:** Texting literacy (complexity: \*)

**Topic:** Textspeak

**Aim:** To raise awareness of L2 textspeak conventions

**Level:** Intermediate +

**Time:** 45 minutes

#### Language

<b>Areas</b>	<i>Vocabulary:</i> Textspeak, abbreviations and emoticons <i>Register:</i> Informal communication
<b>Functions</b>	Discussing; giving opinions
<b>Skills</b>	Reading, speaking, writing

#### Resources

<b>High-tech</b>	<i>Equipment:</i> Teacher mobile phone; student mobile phones (one each) <i>Documents:</i> Online worksheet ( <a href="http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/hockly">www.pearsoned.co.uk/hockly</a> )
<b>Low-tech</b>	Not available for this activity
<b>No-tech</b>	<i>Documents:</i> Printed worksheet (follows Activity)

### Digital risks

- Using a personal mobile phone to communicate with students may be forbidden or frowned upon in some educational contexts. In this case, use the no-tech version of this activity.
- Students may have to personally pay for any text messages they send during class, which could be prohibitive for some. The no-tech version of this activity provides a suitable alternative.

### Procedure

#### Before class

- If all of your students have mobile phones and are allowed and willing to use them in class, collect their phone numbers in advance of the class. Send them the messages in Task 1 of **Activity 5 Worksheet – Cryptic messages** from your own phone just before class begins, for use in Step 3 (high-tech version).
1. Ask students about their mobile/cell phones. What do they use them for? How often? Do they send SMS (text) messages? What are the advantages of using *textspeak* in such messages (e.g. speed, cost, informality, playfulness)? Can they give an example of a text message in their native language?
  2. Show the following mobile phone text message on the projector screen (high-tech version) or write it on the board (no-tech version):

Thx 4 gr8 eve & dinner :) Gd 2 c Steve&Jill 2. C u soon. xxx Sue

Tell students you recently received this message from a friend. What is it about? Can they decipher the text message in pairs?

Give feedback, pointing out some of the features of text messages in English, such as:

- common abbreviations: 'Thx' = 'thanks', 'c u' = 'see you', 'gd' = 'good'
  - common uses of numbers: 'gr8' = 'great', '2' = 'to'
  - emoticons: :) = a smiley face
  - symbols: '&' = 'and', 'xxx' = 'kisses'
3. Ask students to look at the phone messages you sent them before class and to work in pairs to interpret them (high-tech version). Alternatively,

refer them to Task 1 on the printed worksheet and ask them to complete it in pairs (no-tech version). Provide feedback.

4. Ask pairs to choose *one* of the appropriate text messages from the worksheet, and to compose a reply. Ask students to send their replies to you via their phones (high-tech version) or write their replies on the board (no-tech version).
5. Reply to the students, indicating any issues with their messages (high-tech version) or ask students to work in pairs to decipher all the messages on the board, and to match them to the original messages in Task 1 on the worksheet (no-tech version). Provide feedback.
6. Ask students to discuss Task 2 from the worksheet (see Appendix: Answer keys), either in small groups or as a whole class.
7. Work through Task 3 on the worksheet as a whole class.

### Activity 5 Worksheet – Cryptic messages

1. Look at these textspeak messages. Write them in standard English.

- Wot u up 2 2day?
- Had gr8 time w friends on hols
- Pls send me info re: ur Eng courses 4 nxt yr
- OK, midday gd. C u there!
- i want 2 apply 4 job in ydays nwspaper

What is the context for each message? Which two messages are *not* appropriate as SMS texts?

2. Look at the emoticons below. Can you work out what they mean in English? Which are also used in your language? Which are not?

Emoticon	Meaning in English	Used in your language? (✓ or ✗)	Alternative emoticon in your language?
:) or :-)			
:p or :-p			
:o or :-o			
:( or :-( or =(			
:/ or :-/			
:s or :-s			
:@ or :-@			
:D or :-D			
:* or :-*			

*Photocopying of this worksheet is permitted. Enlarge if necessary.*  
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3. Discuss:

- How many text messages do you send per day in your native language? Per week?
- Who do you text? When and why?
- Can you give an example of an emoticon which is the same in your language as in English? Can you give an example which is different?
- Can you give an example of a textspeak abbreviation which works the same way in your language as in English? Can you give an example which is different?
- In what situations is text messaging considered OK in your native language? Do you think this is the same in English?
- In what situations is text messaging *not* considered OK in your native language? Do you think this is the same in English?
- For homework, send your teacher a text message in English telling him or her what you thought of the class!

### Activity 38: Going viral

Students watch a TED talk about viral videos and contribute a description of their own favourite viral videos to a public TED forum.

This activity introduces students to the topic of viral videos through a TED Talk. TED Talk videos are an excellent self-study resource for students, and many have subtitles available in English (as well as other languages). Students discuss the topic of viral videos, and contribute descriptions of their own favourite viral videos to a public TED 'conversation' (forum). As an optional extension activity, students can be encouraged to produce their own short videos – which may potentially go viral!

**Literacy:** **Network literacy** and **Multimedia literacy** (complexity: \*\*\*)

**Topic:** Viral videos

**Aim:** To encourage students to explore the phenomenon of viral videos, and to contribute their views to a public forum

**Level:** Intermediate +

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Tech support:** Vodcasting/Video editing:

- General: [e-language.wikispaces.com/vodcasting](http://e-language.wikispaces.com/vodcasting)
- iMovie: [www.apple.com/findouthow/movies/](http://www.apple.com/findouthow/movies/)
- Movie Maker: [goo.gl/S6O2r](http://goo.gl/S6O2r)

Vodcasting/Videosharing:

- Vimeo: [vimeo.com/help](http://vimeo.com/help)
- YouTube: [support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en](http://support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en)

Word-processing software:

- Apple Pages: [support.apple.com/manuals/#iwork](http://support.apple.com/manuals/#iwork)
- Microsoft Word: [goo.gl/KXnLe](http://goo.gl/KXnLe)



Language	
<b>Areas</b>	<i>Vocabulary:</i> Videos and filming <i>Grammar:</i> Present simple tense; verbs of liking and disliking
<b>Functions</b>	Expressing likes and dislikes; giving opinions
<b>Skills</b>	Listening, speaking, writing, reading

Resources	
<b>High-tech</b>	<i>Equipment:</i> One internet-enabled teacher computer and data projector; internet-enabled student computers or mobile devices (one per pair) <i>Equipment (optional):</i> Digital cameras, or mobile phones with cameras (one per pair or group) <i>Tools:</i> Word-processing software (e.g. Apple Pages or Microsoft Word) <i>Tools (optional):</i> Video-editing software (e.g. iMovie or Movie Maker); videosharing site (e.g. Vimeo or YouTube); TED app; TEDiSUB app <i>Documents:</i> Online worksheet ( <a href="http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/hockly">www.pearsoned.co.uk/hockly</a> )
<b>Low-tech</b>	<i>Equipment:</i> One internet-enabled teacher computer and data projector <i>Tools:</i> Word-processing software (e.g. Apple Pages or Microsoft Word) <i>Tools (optional):</i> Video-editing software (e.g. iMovie or Movie Maker); videosharing site (e.g. Vimeo or YouTube); TED app; TEDiSUB app <i>Documents:</i> Printed worksheet (follows Activity)
<b>No-tech</b>	Not available for this activity

### Digital risks

Some viral videos, especially those freely selected by students, may contain content which is inappropriate for some educational and cultural contexts or, if viewed online, may be surrounded by inappropriate advertising material. If in doubt, you should preview videos before showing them in Step 6. Similarly, you may wish to offer students guidelines on appropriate videos to choose in Step 8.

## Procedure

### Before class

- Register an account or accounts to be able to create or contribute to ‘conversations’ (forums) on the *TED* website ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)), for use in Step 9. For more information, see the ‘About TED’ page ([www.ted.com/pages/about](http://www.ted.com/pages/about)). Note that if students are going to work in pairs (high-tech version), each pair needs a TED account. If students are going to work as a whole class (low-tech version), the teacher’s TED account can be used.
  - View Kevin Allocca’s talk, *Why Videos Go Viral* ([goo.gl/u2U2J](http://goo.gl/u2U2J)). Create a new conversation entitled ‘What’s your favourite viral video?’ or ‘The best viral videos’ if there is not already an existing conversation open on this topic; this will be used in Step 9.
1. Put the phrase ‘viral videos’ on the board and ask students what these are (*they are videos that suddenly become popular and attract a very large number of viewers very quickly; they are often posted on YouTube, with embedded versions or links being shared on Facebook and Twitter or by email*). Ask students:
    - Have you ever watched any viral videos?
    - If so, which ones?

Put a list of any viral videos that students mention on the side of the board, to revisit in Step 6.

2. Tell students they are going to watch a short TED Talk about viral videos, given by Kevin Allocca, YouTube’s ‘Trends Manager’. Tell students the title of the talk is *Why Videos Go Viral*, and write it on the board. Give students one or two minutes to brainstorm in pairs why they think videos go viral. Elicit their ideas and list them on the board.
3. Refer students to **Activity 38 Worksheet – Viral videos**. Explain that Kevin Allocca mentions three reasons why videos go viral. They will watch the video and note down the three reasons. Reassure them that although he mentions the reasons very quickly in the first few minutes, he revisits them one by one during his talk. He also shows clips from four viral videos during his talk, and students should note the names of these videos as well. Answers are given in Appendix: Answer keys.
4. Show students the video *Why Videos Go Viral* on the projector screen. Depending on the level of your students, you may decide to show the

video with subtitles in English. You can activate subtitles in the dropdown menu beneath the video frame.

5. Encourage students to check their worksheet answers in pairs, and then check with the whole class. Ask students:
  - Did you already know any of the viral videos? Which one(s)?
  - Which viral video from the talk did you like the most? Why?
6. Ask students to vote on one or two videos to watch from the list of viral videos elicited in Step 1 above. Show these videos on the projector screen. (Depending on the students and the context, it may be wise to check the content of the videos before showing them in class; see Digital risks.) Ask students to think about what made each of the videos viral. Conduct feedback.
7. On the projector screen, show students the ‘TED Conversations’ underneath the Kevin Allocca video window. These are public forums in which viewers who have set up an account (as described above under Before class) can leave comments about specific talks.
8. Tell students that they are going to participate in a conversation about the best viral videos. Ensure that you have set up a new forum conversation if necessary (see Before class). Ask your students to work in pairs to write approximately 100–150 words in a word-processed document (high-tech version), describing their chosen video and ensuring that they have included the title and a link. (Depending on the class, it may be appropriate to offer students guidelines on choosing a suitable video; see ‘Digital risks’ above.) Alternatively, vote on the class’s most popular viral video from Step 1 above, and prepare one text as a class in a word-processed document using the teacher computer and projector screen (low-tech version). Provide feedback on drafts as necessary, so that students have a well-edited and polished version of their text(s) ready to add to the TED conversation.
9. Add the posting(s) to the TED conversation. Encourage your students to visit the forum every few days to see whether others have replied or contributed. Keep an eye on it yourself, and show any new contributions to the forum at the start of subsequent classes.

### Extension 1

If your students have access to digital cameras, or mobile phones with cameras, encourage them to work in pairs or small groups to plan, film and

edit short sketches (using video-editing software like iMovie or Movie Maker) that they think might go viral. Note that students may need some pointers on digital safety, privacy and reputation (see Box 1.9) before doing so. Depending on their age, you may wish to suggest that they do not reveal their identities or show their faces and locations. Ask students to upload these short films to a video hosting service such as YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) or Vimeo ([vimeo.com](http://vimeo.com)), and monitor how many views they get in the coming weeks.

### Extension 2

Encourage students to add hyperlinks from their e-portfolios to any videos they create (see Chapter 3: *Assessing digital work, Assessing through e-portfolios*) (high-tech version).

### Extension 3

There are TED apps available for Android, Apple iOS and Windows devices, including TEDiSUB for subtitled videos (available for Android and Apple iOS devices). Encourage students with mobile phones or tablets to download the appropriate app and watch TED talks for listening practice; they could watch them with or without subtitles the first time, depending on their level.

**Activity 38 Worksheet – Viral videos**

You are going to watch a short TED Talk about viral videos, given by Kevin Allocca, YouTube's 'Trends Manager'. Its title is *Why Videos Go Viral*. While watching, answer the questions below.

1. What three reasons does Kevin Allocca give for why videos go viral?
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What are the titles of the four viral videos Kevin Allocca shows during his talk?
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) \_\_\_\_\_

*Photocopying of this worksheet is permitted. Enlarge if necessary.*  
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