

# Emoji Etiquette

Add fun and flair to texts without putting your foot in your smiley face's mouth

BY MATT ALDERTON

When retired schoolteacher Martha McLoughlin turned 60, her smart-phone buzzed with birthday wishes. Most of them were the standard, "Happy birthday!" A few, however, included the SMS equivalent of a noisemaker and confetti: emojis.

"I got texts with birthday cakes, thumbs-ups, balloons, party hats — all kinds of things," enthused McLoughlin, of Altamont, N.Y., who says the emojis

added "a little more pizzazz" to the messages.

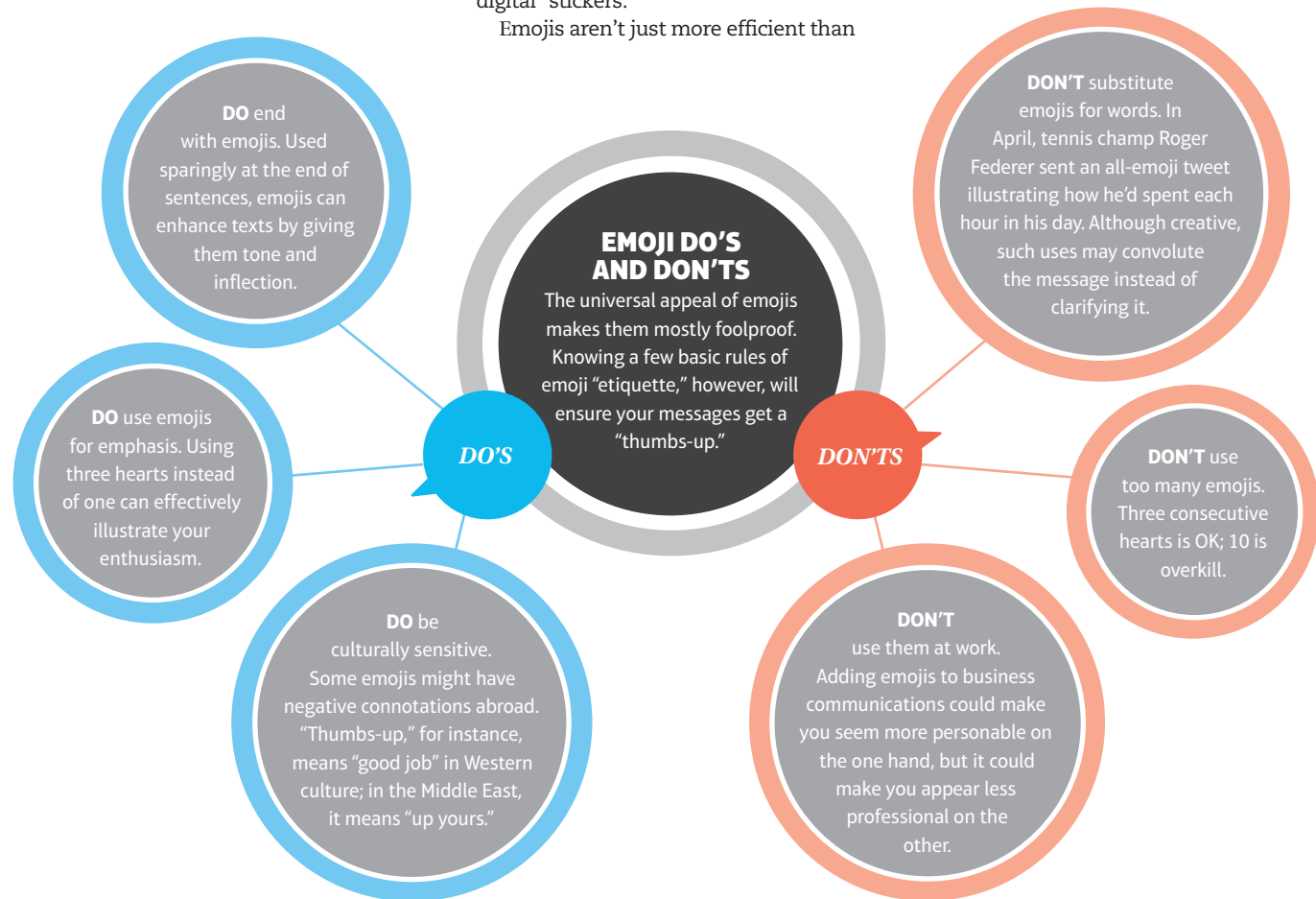
Emojis — small, full-color pictures used in text messages, chat and social media to indicate emotions, activities or objects — originated in Japan. Emojis are basically 21st-century hieroglyphics (the word is Japanese for "picture letter").

"Emoji are really the first international language," says Tom Smith, co-founder and CEO of Imoji, an app that lets users create custom emojis in the form of digital "stickers."

Emojis aren't just more efficient than

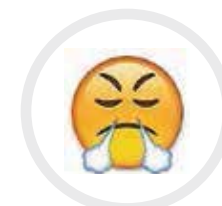
words — in many cases, they're also more effective, says Smith. "With emoji, when you're happy you send a smiley face, when you're being supportive you send a thumbs-up and when you're annoyed, you send a frowny," he says. "It's very clear because we all have the same universal emotions."

According to Emoji keyboard maker Swyft Media, 74 percent of Americans have used emojis in their online communications, and 35 percent do so daily.



## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

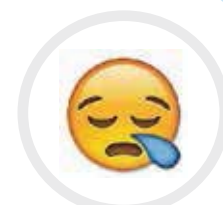
Currently, there are 1,281 official emojis. Some, like the smiley and frowny, are easy to interpret. Others? Not so much. Here are some of the most commonly misused emojis:



**Face with look of triumph:** The face blowing steam from its nostrils isn't intended to evoke anger; rather, it's meant to convey "winning."



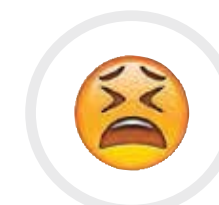
**Face with OK gesture:** This girl could be a ballerina, but she's really indicating the Japanese gesture for "OK" by creating an "O" over her head.



**Sleepy face:** The "drip" on this face isn't a tear; it's a snot bubble, which signifies sleep in Japan.



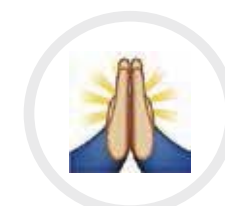
**Dash:** You use it for flatulence, but it actually denotes speed.



**Tired face:** Although this emoji looks anguished, he's just yawning.



**Women with bunny ears:** These ladies look innocent, but they're not just dancers or friends. They're "Bunny Girls," Japan's version of Playboy bunnies.



**Person with folded hands:** Folded hands in Japan signify gratitude. Although it looks like praying or high-fiving, it's meant to convey "please" and "thank you."



**Eggplant:** Technically, it's just a vegetable. Though be prepared for a snicker; most people use it as a phallus.

## UP YOUR EMOJI GAME

Here are five resources that will make you an emoji expert



**Mogee:** This free app sends animated emojis, such as a dancing smiley or a smiley eating a cheeseburger. [mogeapp.com](http://mogeapp.com)

**Imoji:** Use this free app to turn any image — pictures of your kids or pets, for example — into an emoji-like sticker that you can text to others. [imojiapp.com](http://imojiapp.com)

**Emojipedia:** Look up what each emoji is and how to use it, and see what emojis look like across platforms — iOS, Android, Google, Microsoft, Twitter. [emojipedia.org](http://emojipedia.org)

**Emoji Type:** This 99-cent keyboard app for devices running iOS 8 automatically suggests emojis as you type. [emojitype.co](http://emojitype.co)

**Keymoji:** This free keyboard app for devices running iOS 8 automatically "translates" phrases and sentences into a series of emojis. [keymojiapp.com](http://keymojiapp.com)

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