

Do you speak Netspeak? Here's a quick guide

?4U. 1DR if it's gonna be ADP 2D. WYWH. TTYL.

What would you think if you got this text message from your Internet-savvy friend? Did she have her fingers on the wrong keys?

Actually, your friend is using abbreviations that have developed over time to make it easier and faster to communicate with your BFF—that's Best Friend Forever. Her message to you says:

"I have a question for you. I wonder if it's gonna be another day in Paradise today. Wish you were here. Talk to you later."

You'll run into this new language of chatting not just in phone text messages but on Facebook and Twitter, in instant messages, email, chat rooms and discussion boards. Let's call it Netspeak, a term coined by philologists. Your grandchildren probably are quite fluent in slinging Netspeak slang across the Net. Their parents might know the most common abbreviations, but kids are expanding the vocabulary of Netspeak rapidly so they can chat privately with each other.



Every generation has its own special lingo. Did you ever use expressions like “groovy,” “That’s a gas” and “See you later, alligator”? Many of the expressions kids coined when they were growing up in the 1960s have become a permanent part of the language, but back then, they were a smoke screen between kids and their parents. So when you told a friend that you went to the submarine races last night, you were concealing from your folks what you really did.

LOL

Netspeak grew out of the era when phones weren't as smart as they are now and didn't have complete keyboards. Instead they were set up with three letters below each number. To text, you had to press the number key several times to input a letter. Using acronyms instead of whole words was a way to make communication easier and more efficient. Then, too, abbreviations like ASAP,

DYI and FYI have been common in written communications for decades.

Netspeak generally is made up of acronyms like BRB (Be Right Back) that are pretty easy to figure out from the context. IRL (In Real LIFE), they're usually not used as predominantly as in

our original example, but instead woven here and there into messages and posts. Numbers sometimes substitute for words, as in B4N (Bye For Now) and L8R (later).

If you doubt that Netspeak is a genuine language, consider that it's been the subject of academic studies and that there are online dictionaries—one of which, Webopedia, defines more than 1,400 abbreviations.

Common Netspeak Abbreviations

FWIW (For What It's Worth), here's a list of some of the most commonly used expressions in the Netspeak vocabulary:

- **BFF:** Best friend forever
- **BRB:** Be right back
- **BTW:** By the way
- **IMHO:** In my humble opinion
- **LOL:** Laughing out loud or Lots of Love
- **SWAK:** Sealed/Sent with a kiss
- **F2F:** Face to face
- **ISO:** In search of
- **IKR:** I know, right?
- **RBTL:** Read between the lines
- **TMI:** Too much information
- **VBG:** Very big grin
- **XOXOXO:** Hugs and kisses
- **ZUP:** What's up?
- **EM or PM me:** Email or Private Message me
- **143:** I love you.
- **ZZZ:** Tired or bored.



If you run into a Netspeak expression you can't ??? (understand), check out Transl8it.com ([Translate It](#)), where you can enter a term and find out what it means.

SUL8RA!