

Mailing lists.
What they can do for you.

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1. Description. What they are.

A mailing list is a virtual place where everyone who shares some interest meets to exchange ideas about that topic. You have to subscribe to it to be able to receive messages or to participate on it. For example, if you are a teacher and you need help on something, you may ask for help and you'll very likely get it. See the example below.

Date: Sat, 5 Jun 1999 11:03:12 -0300
From: Andrea Davies <andru@ADINET.COM.UY>
Subject: Listers help
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset="iso-8859-1"
Content-Transfer-Encoding: quoted-printable
X-No-Archive: yes

Listers,

I am working on a project about technology in the classroom. My students have found key pals and they have written introductory letters, have talked about their families and have asked for information about lifestyles. What else do you suggest?

Andrea Davies
Andru@adinet.com.uy
Montevideo Uruguay

Date: Thu, 10 Jun 1999 18:29:03 -0400
From: Maryanne Burgos <mburgos@ADELPHIA.NET>
Subject: Re: Listers help
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: text/plain; charset=ISO-8859-1
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
X-No-Archive: yes

Andrea,

Regarding ideas for your students' key pals, how about having each of them write a descriptive essay to send. For example, they could write about a person like a relative or a

place like their room or their house. Maybe this would prompt some questions from their key pals, or maybe their pals could write something similar to send to them.

Good luck.

The first thing you need is a personal e-mail account and access to a computer, it may be your own or any other one. You can get a free e-mail address at www.yahoo.com or many others¹.

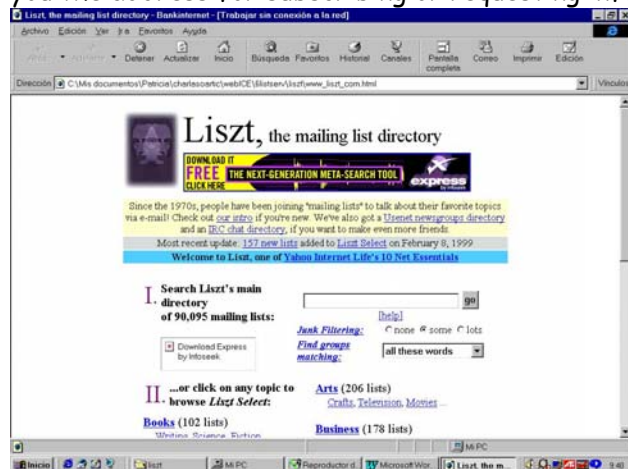
2. How to get a list of lists.

Go to your browser (Explorer, Netscape Navigator..), in the address/URL/Location type www.liszt.com where you'll be sent to LISZT, what is said to be the best mailing list directory. It gives you a list of lists, grouped according to topic, and each one into different sub-categories.

(see screenshot3)

Click for instance on Humanities/Languages/English-L. It's an International discussion list for learners of English. But you may be a teacher who is interested in writing to someone on a topic that is not teaching but astronomy, health or philosophy, a good way to brush up your English too.

If you happen to know the list's name, go to Liszt's section I, type the list's name and it'll give you the address for subscribing or requesting information.



3. Lists for teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

Some of them are²:

ACW-L	Computers and writing	listproc@unicorn.acs.ttu.edu
APPLIX	Applied linguistics	majordomo@cltr.uq.oz.au
ATELL	CALL	majordomo@cltr.uq.oz.au
DEOS-L	Distance education	listserv@psuvm.psu.edu
EST-L	English for science and technology	listserv@asuvm.inre.asu.edu
FLTEACH	Foreign language teaching forum	listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu
IECC	F-mail classroom connections (K-	IECC-request@stolaf.edu

¹ See Primera Clase n° 31.

² Graus, Johan. 1999. *An evaluation of the Usefulness of the Internet in the EFL classroom.* <http://home.plex.nl/~jgraus>

	12)	
LINGUIST	Applied linguistics	listserv@tamvml.tamu.edu
LLTI	Language learning and technology	listserv@dartmouth.edu
NETEACH-L	Teaching EFL on the Net	listproc@ukans.edu
SLART-L	Second Language Acquisition	listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu
TESL-L	General EFL	listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu

Together with the list's name there's the topic and the address where you have to send a message to subscribe. Most addresses correspond to listserv, a computer program, created by Eric Thomas, running, in the case of TESL-L, on CUNYVM (City University New York Virtual Machine). As you are dealing with a computer, you have to strictly follow the instructions/ commands.

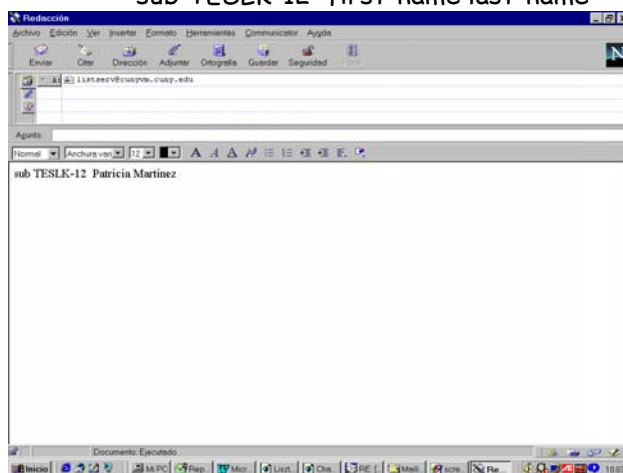
Let's go for instance to TESL-L, with about 22.000 members in 121 countries, being its manager Anthea Tillyer. TESL-L is an electronic discussion forum about topics related to the Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language. Being this field so wide, some netters may find some topics too specific and thus not relevant to all TESL-L members. That was the origin of the branches, special interest lists inside TESL-L .

- TESLCA-L →Technology, Computers, and TESL
- TESLFF-L →Fluency First and Whole Language Approaches
- TESLIE-L →Intensive English Programs, teaching and administration
- TESLJB-L →Jobs, employment, and working conditions in TESL/TEFL
- TESLMW-L →Materials Writers
- TESP-L →English for Specific Purposes

There's also TESLK-12, a "sister" rather than a branch, for teachers of English to children.

As I said before, when sending messages to listserv you are not talking to a person but a machine, so if you want for example to subscribe to a list, you have to send a e-mail to its address, leaving the subject line blank, with this message:

sub TESLK-12 first-name last-name



Where it says TESLK-12 you may put any other list's name, and very important, where it says asunto or subject you mustn't write anything.

Once you are subscribed, you'll receive the list of commands to "talk" to the computer program listserv to the whole list, then the addresses are different, how to:

- Ask for help
- Have access to previous postings or files (articles, surveys, lesson plans, course descriptions, conference listings and so forth, contributed by TESL-L members).
- Receive your TESL-L mail in one daily bundle, rather than piece by piece, using an option known as "digest".
- Send a message to your TESL-L colleagues around the world, whether as a reply to something you have read on TESL-L or to introduce a topic for discussion.
- Set yourself to receive no TESL-L mail temporarily, if you go on holidays...
- Set yourself to receive TESL-L mail again
- Sign yourself off TESL-L and its branches

4. Lists for students

The Student Lists were established in February 1994 to provide a forum for cross-cultural discussion and writing practice for college, university and adult students in English language programs around the world. There are currently ten student lists, but more may be added as the demand for them becomes evident:

INTRO-SL Discussion List for New Members (Registered classes only)
CHAT-SL General Discussion List (Low level)
DISCUSS-SL General Discussion List (High level)
BUSINESS-SL Discussion List on Business and Economics
ENGL-SL Discussion List on Learning English
EVENT-SL Discussion List on Current Events
MOVIE-SL Discussion List on the Cinema
MUSIC-SL Discussion List on Music
SCITECH-SL Discussion List on Science, Technology & Computers
SPORT-SL Discussion List on Sports

They were created because the learners of English could hardly participate on other lists, as the language used by native speakers was very difficult to understand.

The problem for us, teachers at Primary or Secondary school, is that the level is still too high for our students. The best thing to encourage our students' writing is finding keypals for them, rather than mailing lists.³

5. Some other concepts.

The topics around which people write are always indicated in the Subject line or Asunto. Then, when you receive the messages, if you are not interested on the issue, you simply do not open it, to save time and keep you focused. If you have the digest option⁴ you'll see it in an index at the beginning of your daily message.

³ See *Primera Clase* nº 31.

⁴ Remember it's receiving all postings in a single daily posting.

When a few people reply to a posting and they make a kind of chain, replying to one another, all about the same thing, that's called a thread.

Some of the most recent topics on TESLK-12 have been: keypals writing ideas, teaching English to children or writing activities for children, among which the second one has been a thread, with lots of postings about it.

These threads may be longer or shorter depending on the interest or anger they arise. A few weeks ago somebody "dared" to criticise a person who was well known and respected by the "wired" teachers' community, there were everyday 5 or more postings denouncing the criticised person. You have to be very careful and of course follow the rules of what is called netiquette⁵.

The Core Rules of Netiquette – Summary

Rule 1. Remember the human. Never forget that the person reading your mail or posting is, indeed, a person, with feelings that can be hurt.

Rule 2. Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life.

Rule 3. Know where you are in cyberspace. Lurk before you leap, that is read for some time till you get to know the kind of people and messages in that particular group..

Rule 4. Respect other people's time and bandwidth. Post messages to the appropriate discussion group, try not to ask stupid questions on discussion groups, read the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document, when appropriate, use private email instead of posting to the group, don't post subscribe, unsubscribe, or FAQ requests.

Rule 5. Make yourself look good online. Check grammar and spelling before you post and what you're talking about.

Rule 6. Share expert knowledge. Offer answers and help to people who ask questions on discussion groups and if you've received email answers to a posted question, summarize them and post the summary to the discussion group.

Rule 7. Help keep flame wars under control. Don't get angry

Rule 8. Respect other people's privacy. Don't read other people's private email.

Rule 9. Don't abuse your power. The more power you have, the more important it is that you use it well.

Rule 10. Be forgiving of other people's mistakes. You were a network newbie once too!

If you want to make yourself look an expert in this world, and to make your messages show some emotion, as writing via a computer is something quite impersonal, use some abbreviations and emoticons.

Emoticons

:-) Smile; laugh; "I'm joking"

:-(Frown; sadness; "Bummer"

:) Variant of :-) or "Have a nice day"

:(Variant of :-)

⁵ Shea, Virginia.

;-) Wink; denotes a pun or sly joke

:-O Yelling or screaming; or completely shocked

:-() Can't (or won't) stop talking

:-D Big, delighted grin

:-P Sticking out your tongue

:-] or :-} Sarcastic smile

%-) Confused but happy; drunk or under the influence of controlled substances

%-(Confused and unhappy

:'-(Crying

:'-) Crying happy tears

:-| Can't decide how to feel; no feelings either way

:-\ Mixed but mostly happy

:-/ Mixed but mostly sad

* Kiss

{ } or [] Hug

{{{***}}}

They are quite logical.

As far as abbreviations, they are easy to remember

AFAIK→As Far As I Know

AISI→As I See It

BOT→Back On Topic

CUL→Catch You Later

FIB→Fill In the Blank

HTH→Hope This Helps

IITYWTM WYKM→If I Tell You What This Means Will You Kiss Me?

IMHO→In My Humble Opinion

IMNSHO→In My Not So Humble Opinion

INPO→In No Particular Order

IOW→In Other Words

LOL→Laughing Out Loud

MYOB→Mind Your Own Business

OTOH→On The Other Hand

ONNA→Oh No, Not Again
POV→Point Of View
RTFM→Read The F.....Manual
TGAL→Think Globally, Act Locally
WTH→What The Hell

Nevertheless, three or four of them are the most frequent ones: AFAIK, HTH, IMHO and IOW.

And that's all for know. Happy subscription. HTH ☺⁶

⁶ If you are using Word, the three signs used for the emoticon “smile” transform automatically into this smiling face, but it doesn't happen with Messenger.