

The Internet



LEVEL D-5 • Written by Elfrieda H. Hiebert



**The Internet connects
people to each other.**

History of the Internet

For many people today, it is hard to imagine life without the Internet. The Internet connects computers around the world, helping people learn information, talk to each other, and buy things.

The Internet began in 1969, when four colleges linked their computers, forming a network. This network allowed people at the colleges and in government to communicate with each other through their computers. It was planned as a way for important people to keep in touch if the United States was attacked.

From that beginning, the Internet grew quickly. In 1976, the queen of England made history by sending an e-mail message through the internet. By 1996, 45 million people were using their computers to get on the Internet.

Key Notes:

Why was the Internet created?



**E-mail can be sent
or read from just
about anywhere.**

Sending E-Mail

Suppose you want to send an e-mail to a friend. Here is what happens after you type your message and click on Send.

First, the information in your message is broken into small pieces called packets. Each packet is identified by a heading that tells where it came from. The packets are sent separately through a network of computers.

When each packet reaches another computer, it is identified by its heading. Finally, when the message arrives at your friend's computer, the computer collects all the packets of information from your message and puts them back together. Often, the entire process takes only seconds. That's when your friend sees your e-mail message on her computer and can read your news.

Key Notes:

What is an e-mail message?



Companies that sell on the Internet may also have a store, or not.

Buying and Selling on the Internet

Fifteen years ago, most people had to go to stores to buy things. Today, though, people don't need to leave their home to make a purchase. Instead, they use the Internet to buy and sell everything from hammers to houses.

In the late 1970s, companies used the Internet to send orders and bills. In the 1990s, people began to use the Internet to purchase things directly from a company.

Some companies that sell through the Internet also have stores. Others only sell on the Internet. One Internet-only way of purchasing and selling is to bid on items on a Web site. On these sites, people buy and sell things from each other without every meeting.

Key Notes:

How has the internet changed the way people buy and sell things?



A firewall can stop a virus from entering a computer.

Safety on the Internet

As use of the Internet grows, so do problems for users. Among the worst problems are virus programs that enter your computer and destroy information. Some can even destroy your computer.

A virus can enter your computer through a virus-filled file that comes with an e-mail message. The virus can make copies of itself and destroy what's on your computer.

You can help keep information safe on your computer by taking a few steps. The first is to use a password that people cannot easily guess. The second is to make sure that your computer has a firewall, a tool that keeps others out. Finally, make sure you have software that can find and get rid of viruses.

Key Notes:

Why is it important to think of safety on the internet?

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ISBN: 978-1-959326-16-8



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