



Kid Tips: Teens text-messaging too much

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A GRANDMOTHER raising her 13-year-old grandson contacted me recently after discovering that her grandson had amassed more than 8,000 text messages during the past month. The bill looked more like a phone book. Besides the cost, the real shocker was what she found in the lengthy, detailed bill. He had been text-messaging constantly during his school classes, late at night (often after 1 a.m.) and even during church services.

Texting is so popular and often addicting for teens that some wireless phone companies have raised the limit of 5,000 monthly text messages to an unlimited number for an additional monthly fee (around \$30).

Today's teens are quick and nimble with their fingers, which they use with great dexterity for communicating. They also have their own abbreviated texting code, such as cu2moro (See you tomorrow) and PIR (Parents in room). Some code words, like "u" for "you," have even found their way to my college students' term papers, which I thoroughly enjoy marking down. Also, employers have noticed a drop in oral communication skills in recent years.

I have a sneaky feeling that my two college-age daughters call me the BHOF (hint — first word is "bald"). To find the answer and more text-messaging codes, go to www.netlingo.com/emailsh.cfm.

Set limits for text-messaging: If your preteen or teen spends too much time text-messaging, set firm limits. The easiest way to keep track of the text-messaging is to frequently review your current bill. By looking at your paperless bill online, you can see the exact times when your child was texting. If it's during a school class period or late at night, take your child's cell phone away or apply other restrictions. For example, my middle-schooler cannot bring his cell phone to school anymore because of his prior misconduct with it. — C.J., Discovery Bay