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Silver surfers
by Heather Bowley

Age:	Teenagers / Young adults
Level:	Pre-intermediate – intermediate
Time:	75 – 90 minutes
Objective:	to acquire technical vocabulary; to discuss issues related to the technological exclusion of older people.
Key skills:	reading, speaking
Materials:	one copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the text in activity 4 per small group of students (optional); one textbook or other large book per pair

Rationale

Many young people will have experienced the frustration of trying to teach an older family member how to use modern technology. But how often do we consider the frustrations of the older people themselves, dealing with such profound technological change? This lesson centres around these themes.

Preparation (optional)

Cut up the extra copies of the text in activity 4 into strips.

Procedure

1. Speaking (10 mins)
Write the term 'silver surfer' on the board. Invite the class to guess what it means.
(Answer: a term used to describe an older person who uses the internet on a regular basis; 'Silver' refers to grey hair and 'surfer' refers to someone who surfs the internet.)
Tell the class that today's lesson will be about older people using the internet.

Hand out the worksheets. Put students in groups of two or three and direct them to activity 1. Students discuss the questions in their groups.

2. Vocabulary (10 mins)
Direct students to the picture in activity 2. Students must write the correct piece of vocabulary on the correct label.

Note: You could do this activity as a board race to make it more dynamic. You will need to make enlarged photocopies of the image, one for each team. Students then take it in turns to run to the board and write a word on a label. The first team to do this correctly wins the game.

Key: 1. keyboard; 2. screen; 3. cable; 4. mouse; 5. drop-down menu; 6. icon; 7. username; 8. password

3. Reading (15 – 20 mins)
Ask the class the following questions:

- Do older people usually know how to use the internet?

- Why do you think some older people don't know how to use the internet?

  (Possible answers: *intimidated; not interested; difficulty absorbing new information; physical problems*)

- What do you think are some of the advantages of learning to use the internet for an older person

  (Possible answers: *independence; keep in touch with relatives and friends; keep an active mind*)

Explain to students that they are going to do a quiz about older people using the internet, to see how much they know. But before they do so, direct them to the table in activity 3. Tell them that they are going to find phrases in the text (in bold) that have a similar meaning to the expressions in the left-hand column.

Students complete the task, matching the expressions with the bold phrases from the text. They then compare answers with a partner.

Key: 1. internet access; 2. uploading content; 3. hand-held device; 4. internet purchase; 5. on the go; 6. single-person household

Students answer the quiz alone, guessing the answers (activity b). Then, they compare the answers they gave with a partner's.

Write the answers to the quiz on the board for students to check. Ask students if they are surprised by any of the answers to the quiz. Why? Why not?

Key: 1. c (compared with 9% in 2006); 2. a (followed by uploading content, then social networking); 3. b (compared with 14% of households in general); 4. a (although only 29% have accessed internet on the go); 5. b (followed by clothes, then travel arrangements)

4. Reading and vocabulary (15–20 mins)
Direct students to the text in activity 4. They should try to guess what the article is about from the title.

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(Answer: It is a step-by-step guide for older people, explaining how to use Skype.) Ask students if they know the meaning of the word heaven. Explain that, in this case, it is used metaphorically to mean a desirable state.

Students fill in the gaps with the vocabulary in the boxes.

Students number the steps. (If you've cut up extra copies of the text into strips, students can physically reorder them in small groups.)

Check all answers with the class.

Key: *In this article, we'll show you how to talk to a friend on Skype. Tip: You can only do this when you've downloaded the software and **set up** (v) an **account** (n).*

*Step 1 – Make sure the laptop is **plugged in** (v). Open the laptop and **press** (v) the 'on' button to start up the computer.*

*Step 2 – Use the mouse to move the **cursor** (n). When all the icons are displayed on the screen, **click** (v) on the Skype icon. It looks like a blue cloud with an 'S'.*

*Step 3 – A box should appear in the middle of the screen. **Type** (v) in your **username** (n) and **password** (n). Press 'enter' to log on.*

Tip: Use a password you can easily remember so you don't have to write it down but try not to make it too easy to guess!

*Step 4 – Now you've **signed in** (v), you need some people to talk to! In the search bar on the top left-hand side of the screen, type the name of the friend you would like to **add** (v) and press 'search'.*

*Step 5 – When you find your friend, press '**send request** (n)'. Tip: If there is more than one person with that name, look at the photographs.*

*Step 6 – Once your friend accepts your request, you can start chatting. Simply click on your friend's picture and then on the **icon** (n) that looks like a blue circle with a picture of a camera to make a video call.*

*Step 7 – If your friend answers the call, you should now be able to see them and talk to them. When you've finished the conversation, click on the red phone icon to end the call. To **log off** (v), click on*

*the **drop-down menu** (n) in the top left-hand corner called 'Skype' and click 'sign out'. Happy Skyping!*

5. Speaking (15 mins)
Ask students if they have ever had to explain a piece of technology to an older relative. What was the most difficult thing about it?

Refer students to the role cards in activity 5. Set the scene for the role-play. Student A is a grandparent living in a retirement home. Student B is the grandchild, who wants to teach the grandparent how to use a laptop to access a social network like Skype or Facebook. What's implicit in this activity is that the grandparent is a difficult student, perhaps because they don't understand or they don't want to understand. Students can use any large textbook to represent the laptop, perhaps using a whiteboard pen as the mouse.

6. Whole class discussion (5 – 10 mins)
After the activity has finished, ask the students (in character) if there was anything they found difficult to explain or understand.

Will students have more patience for their technologically-challenged relatives in the future?

Finally, ask students if they encountered any concepts that were difficult to explain in English. Write any new vocabulary or expressions covered on the board.

Homework (5 mins to explain)
Students create their own 'how to' guide to a social network of their choice, using the text from activity 4 as a template.

• The guide should be aimed at over 65s with little or no computer knowledge.

• It should be written in the imperative form.

• Students should aim for between five and ten steps, each step being one or two sentences long.

Extension
Technological inclusion for over 65s – for young adult classes in an English-speaking country, you could organise a workshop with the help of your students to show older people the benefits of new technology. Your students could give demonstrations to show how each device works and provide tutorials for older people who want to improve their computer skills.
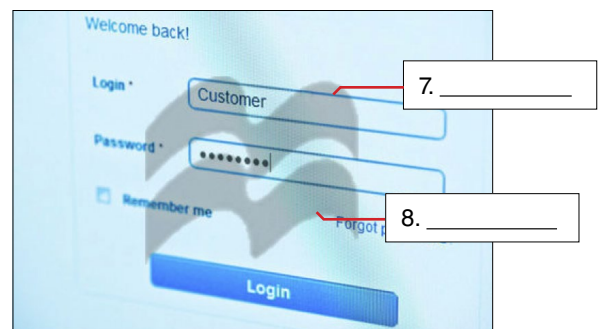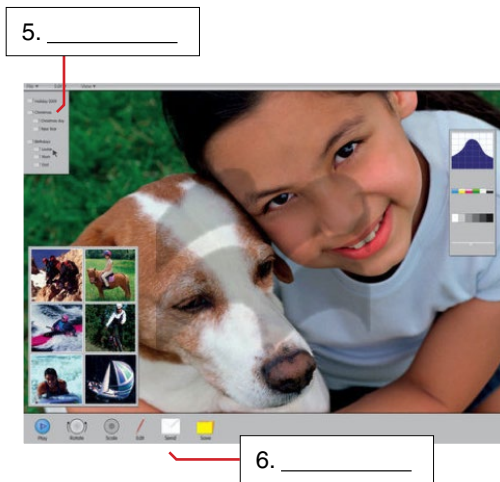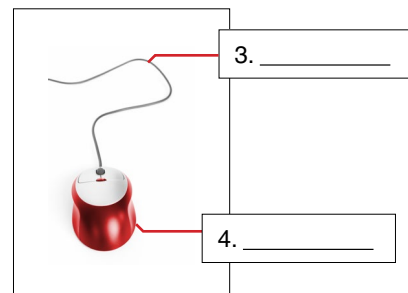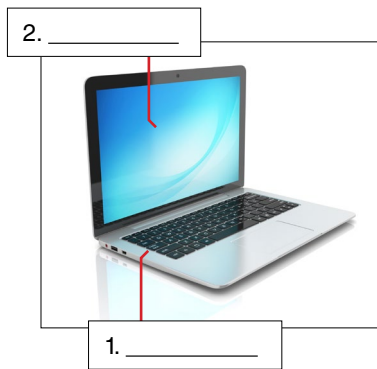
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1 Speaking

Discuss the following questions with a partner.
- How often do you use a computer (this could be any device)?
- Which device do you use the most? PC, laptop, tablet, smartphone, e-reader …?
- What activities do you use the computer for?
- Do you know any older people (e.g. grandparents) who use a computer on a regular basis?
- If so, what do they use it for? Do they know how to use the internet?

2 Vocabulary

2. _____

1. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Welcome back!

Login *   Customer

Password *   ••••••••

Remember me   Forgot p

Login

7. _____

8. _____

screen	*drop-down menu*	*username*	password	cable	icons	keyboard	mouse

Lesson Share WORKSHEET 1

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3 Reading

a. How much do you think you know about older people's internet habits? In 2015, the UK government did a survey to find out about the internet usage of older people (aged 65 and over). Look at the quiz below. Try to match the expressions in the table with the phrases in bold in the quiz.

	expression	phrase in the text
1.	the availability of internet services	
2.	putting content (images etc) online	
3.	a small, portable computer	
4.	something you buy online	
5.	out of the house / while travelling	
6.	a home with just one occupant	

QUIZ

1. What percentage of older people reported using a computer every day?
   a. 15%   b. 25%   c. 45%

2. Which activity did older people say they used the internet for the most?
   a. reading online newspapers or magazines
   b. social networking (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
   c. **uploading content** to a website to be shared

3. What percentage of older people in a **single-person household** did not have **internet access?**
   a. 22%   b. 51%   c. 78%

4. Which device did older people prefer to use to access the internet **on the go**?
   a. portable computer (e.g. laptop or tablet)
   b. mobile phone
   c. other **hand-held device** (e.g. games console)

5. What was the most common type of **internet purchase** for older people?
   a. video games software
   b. household goods
   c. films and music (including downloads)

b. Now, try to guess the correct answer to each question. Then, compare your answers with a partner. Do you agree?

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4 Reading and vocabulary

a. Look at the title of the text below. What could it be about?

b. Complete the text using the words in the boxes. V shows you that you need a verb; n shows you that you need a noun.

c. Working with a partner, put the steps in the correct order.

Verbs

press	click	sign in	type	add	log off	set up	plug in

Nouns

cursor	icon	username	password	request	drop-down menu	account

THE SILVER SURFER'S SEVEN STEPS TO SKYPE HEAVEN

In this article, we'll show you how to talk to a friend on Skype.

> Tip: You can only do this when you've downloaded the software and _____ (v) an _____ (n).

STEP ___ – Now you've _____(v), you need some people to talk to! In the search bar on the top left-hand side of the screen, type the name of the friend you would like to _____(v) and press 'search'.

STEP ___ – Use the mouse to move the _____(n). When all the icons are displayed on the screen, _____(v) on the Skype icon. It looks like a blue cloud with an 'S'.

STEP ___ – If your friend answers the call, you should now be able to see them and talk to them. When you've finished the conversation, click on the red phone icon to end the call. To _____ (v), click on the _____(n) in the top left-hand corner called 'Skype' and click 'sign out'. Happy Skyping!

STEP ___ – Make sure the laptop is _____(v). Open the laptop and _____(v) the 'on' button to start up the computer.

STEP ___ – A box should appear in the middle of the screen. _____(v) in your _____(n) and _____(n). Press 'enter' to log on. Tip: Use a password you can easily remember so you don't have to write it down but try not to make it too easy to guess!

STEP ___ – Once your friend accepts your request, you can start chatting. Simply click on your friend's picture and then on the _____(n) that looks like a blue circle with a picture of a camera to make a video call.

STEP ___ – When you find your friend, press 'send _____(n)'. Tip: If there is more than one person with that name, look at the photographs.

Lesson Share WORKSHEET 2

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5 Speaking

You are now going to role-play a situation with your partner, using the vocabulary you have learned. Decide which role you would like to play.

Role card A – Grandmother or grandfather

- You live in a **retirement home**. Sometimes, you feel very lonely.

- **You wish you could talk to your old friends** but they all live very far away **and you have difficulty understanding modern technology**.

- **Today is your 80th birthday**. You have a visitor ...

Role card B – Granddaughter or grandson

- You are going to visit your grandmother or grandfather, who lives in a retirement home.

- Today is her or his **80th birthday**. You have brought her/ him **a new laptop** as a present, although you aren't sure if he or she knows how to use it.

- Try to explain how it works.