

Those emojis don't mean what you think they mean



By Amy Iverson, Deseret News

Emojis have taken over our texting lives. I, for one, have been a fierce hater of emojis since the good old days of :). But I have acquiesced to some degree, realizing that it makes someone feel good to see a little kissy face with a heart once in a while.

See, it made you feel good, right?

And I am not alone. According to a [report](#), 92 percent of the online population admits to using emojis. Women may use them a bit more than men, but age isn't really a factor. Grandpas and tween girls alike will throw in a heart or a "laughing until you cry" face once in a while.

But, as always, people have turned much of the fun playfulness of emojis into something often more sinister or carnal.

Earlier this month, Apple [replaced the pistol emoji](#) with a lime-green water gun. While [some yelled about free speech](#), Apple may be saving people from themselves. A 12-year-old Virginia girl [faced charges](#) after she posted an Instagram message referencing the library, followed by the pistol, knife and bomb emojis.

The emojis people can use as symbols of violence are obvious: bomb, skull, knife. But just as worrisome are the emojis texters are using for sexual references. I guess it's one thing if adults in committed relationships are using these as playful banter, but I doubt many parents would approve of teenagers sending these to one another.

Rule of thumb: If an emoji looks like a certain body part, that is how the younger generation is using it. It is essential parents know the meanings behind these emojis. If we let ignorance prevail, there's

no need for Mom and Dad to occasionally check teen's texts, because they won't be able to decipher them anyway. I understand some children may be perfect, but even if parents choose to believe that, they surely don't believe other people's children are perfect.

So while moms and dads may not need this emoji-translation to translate their kids' outgoing texts, at least they can admit it may be necessary to flag texts coming in to their teens' phones.

Now, if you are faint of heart, proceed with caution, because some of the following explanations may make you gasp and clutch your pearls.

- Banana, eggplant or rooster emojis — male sexual organ
- Peach emoji — buttocks or female genitalia
- Taco emoji — female genitalia
- Filmstrip emoji — request for nude pictures
- Movie camera emoji — inappropriate video
- Computer emoji — inappropriate Skyping

Some combinations depict sexual acts. For instance, the hand emoji followed by two peaches refers to sexual touching.

There are many more. I am just skimming the surface here. Mind you, some of these are easy to figure out if someone uses them in context. But parents should simply be aware that emojis can have more than one meaning and may spell trouble if thrown on to the end of a seemingly innocent text.

Maybe parents will luck out and never see any of these used inappropriately on one of their kids' phones. It's good precautionary knowledge to have just in case. Similar to how [Urban Dictionary](#) helped parents figure out a lot of slang and acronyms kids started using in texting and real life, there are emoji-type dictionaries to use as reference.

Here are some popular ones:

- [Emojipedia](#)
- [Emoji Dictionary](#)
- [Emojisaurus](#)
- [Emoji Translate](#)

This whole idea of people using emoji in sexual or violent ways will be ever-changing. When iOS 10 comes out in September, [72 new emojis](#) will likely come with it. Included will be a Pinocchio face, a carrot, a shopping cart and, my favorite, bacon.

But who knows in what lascivious context teenagers will use these new symbols. I'm not sure parents can ever be ahead of the game on this. But, moms and dads should do their best to at least keep up with the times so they can help navigate their kids through this magnificent, sometimes scary, digital world.

Amy Iverson is a graduate of the University of Utah. She has worked as a broadcast journalist in Dallas, Seattle, Italy, and Salt Lake City. Amy, her husband, and three kids live in Summit County, Utah. Contact Amy on Facebook.com/theamyiverson

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