BEFORE Reading:
1. Write a short paragraph to describe YOUR personal experience with emojis. Do you use them? Do you have a favorite? Least favorite? Why do you or others use them? Type here OR On your own paper!

Random emoji generator: [https://perchance.org/emoji](https://perchance.org/emoji)

OR

DURING Reading:

How Are Emojis Made?
This bite-sized nonfiction text explores the fascinating story of who decides which emojis will be created.

Once a year, some of the most powerful men and women in the world gather in one room. Everything they discuss is top secret. Not a word can be spoken to the public. The decisions they make will affect you—and billions of others—for many years to come.

Who are these people, and what mysterious work are they doing? They are the Unicode Consortium, and they are in charge of the world's emojis.

What We’re Feeling
The Unicode Consortium is a nonprofit organization made up primarily of leaders from tech companies such as Apple, Google, and Spotify. Beginning in 2011, in addition to its responsibilities concerning software development, the Consortium began to manage emojis. Each year, part of the Consortium meets and votes on which new emojis should be created and added to our devices.

This task may seem frivolous—after all, the Consortium is responsible for the creation of 👻 and 😸—but it is actually quite important. From the ❤️ to the 😊 and the 🤙, emojis are the most popular and fastest-growing form of visual communication in history. Ninety-two percent of people online use emojis. Each day, billions of these tiny pictures are sent around the world. In 2015, 😂 was named the Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries.

Why are emojis so popular?

The answer is simple: They help us communicate.

Today, most of our written communication happens digitally—through texts and social media like Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook. Emojis, as their name suggests, give us a way to add emotion and nuance to what we write. Like a digital form of body language, emojis help us express what we’re feeling when the person we’re talking to can’t see or hear us. If something makes us laugh, we send 😄. If we’re upset, 😞. Sleepy? 😴. These pictures can say it all.
Diverse and Inclusive

The first emojis were created in 1999 by a designer in Japan named Shigetaka Kurita. But the idea of using pictures to communicate has been around for millennia. Early humans told stories by painting images on the walls of caves. Ancient Egyptians used a system of writing made up of pictures and symbols called hieroglyphs. Even today, some aboriginal tribes in Australia draw pictures in the sand as they speak.

Still, no visual language has been as widely used or accepted as emojis.

Each emoji begins its journey at the Consortium as a written proposal. When deciding whether a proposal will be accepted, committee members consider several factors. Emojis, they say, should be easily recognizable, likely to be used by many people, and useful. The Consortium does not accept anything that includes a company logo or depicts a real person (living or deceased).

The Consortium also has the lofty job of making sure that emojis are diverse and inclusive—in other words, that they represent people from many different cultures and experiences. There is still much work to be done in this area, but progress has been made. In 2015, emojis became available in a range of skin colors. In 2016, a single dad and various female athletes were released. In 2017, a girl wearing a hijab was added.

The Consortium doesn’t come up with all these ideas on its own. Rather, it relies on us for inspiration. Anyone can submit an emoji proposal. Indeed, the hijab emoji was proposed by a 16-year-old girl from Saudi Arabia.

In 2018, 157 new emojis were approved—including a bagel, a superhero, and a lobster. What emojis do you think the world needs next? Send a proposal to the Consortium, and you might just see your idea on your phone one day.

AFTER Reading:

Directions: Read “How Are Emojis Made?” and then follow the steps below to write a response to the question.

Question: Why are emojis a popular form of communication?

Step 1: Write your claim.

Complete the sentence below to write your claim in response to the question.

Emojis are a popular form of communication because

Step 2: Provide text evidence with commentary.

Write two details from the article that support your claim. You can write them in the form of direct quotations or paraphrases. Include a citation for each detail. Explain how each detail supports your claim.

Detail 1:
Sentence explaining how this detail supports my claim:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Detail 2:
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Sentence explaining how this detail supports my claim:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Step 3: **Write a conclusion.**

Wrap it all up. End your paragraph with a strong sentence that will give your readers something to think about. One option is to refer to your central claim. Or come up with an idea of your own!
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Now it’s time to put it all together. And guess what? You’ve already done the hardest part! All that’s left is to take what you just wrote and put it together into one flowing paragraph. Write your final response on a separate sheet of paper.

Remember to:

- Use transitions between sentences.
- Read your paragraph to make sure your ideas are clear. Revise as needed.
- When you are satisfied with your paragraph, read it again to make sure there are no spelling or punctuation mistakes.