Here's an excerpt from: "Back in the Good Old Days."

Your students might know a lot about computers and technology, but it's always a good idea to remind them of proper "netiquette".

Proper Netiquette

When Tim Berners-Lee was playing on his computer in the late 1980s, it probably never occurred to him that he was on the verge of changing the world. That's exactly what he did, though, when he introduced the World Wide Web in early 1991. Before long, seemingly endless amounts of information became accessible to anyone with a computer—and "surfing the web" became a new sport.

By the late 1990s, there weren't too many people who didn't have access to some sort of internet browser. Getting onto the computer was like entering into a crowded room with thousands *(or millions)* of conversations going on at once. You had the option of joining in whatever conversation interested you most.

There was one drawback, unfortunately. A crowded room can often be a place of high tension. If everybody isn't using proper etiquette, a fight can easily break out, turning the entire room into chaos. The same is true on the Internet. If one person in any network is determined to start trouble, it's not long before a war breaks out in cyberspace. Pretty soon, everyone is angrily typing away on the keyboard.

To keep everything at peace on the computer network, everyone must agree to behave in a certain way when on-line. This network etiquette is more commonly referred to as "netiquette." It includes the basic guidelines that a person should follow when sending e-mail, posting messages on blogs or on Facebook, or sending texts. In fact, netiquette encompasses everything from network security, privacy issues, accuracy, and just all around politeness.

In recent years, freedom of speech over the Internet has become a source of debate—this has made network etiquette an especially hot topic. Basically, if all users don't follow a certain level of *netiquette,* it's possible that certain privileges (or even rights) could be revoked from everyone.

An Extra Tid-Bit about "Netiquette"

Here are some basic things to keep in mind in order to practice good **"Netiquette"** *over the computer:*

- **Remember that you are communicating with a human being with feelings, not just a computer screen—** *know your audience.*
- **Send accurate information. If it's a joke, be clear it's a joke (and that it's not hurtful)**
- **Respect the privacy of others.**
- **Protect yourself...don't send anything too personal, such as passwords, social security numbers, or financial information.**
- **Don't send or attach any material that is suspicious, too large to handle, or can be damaging to other computers.**