

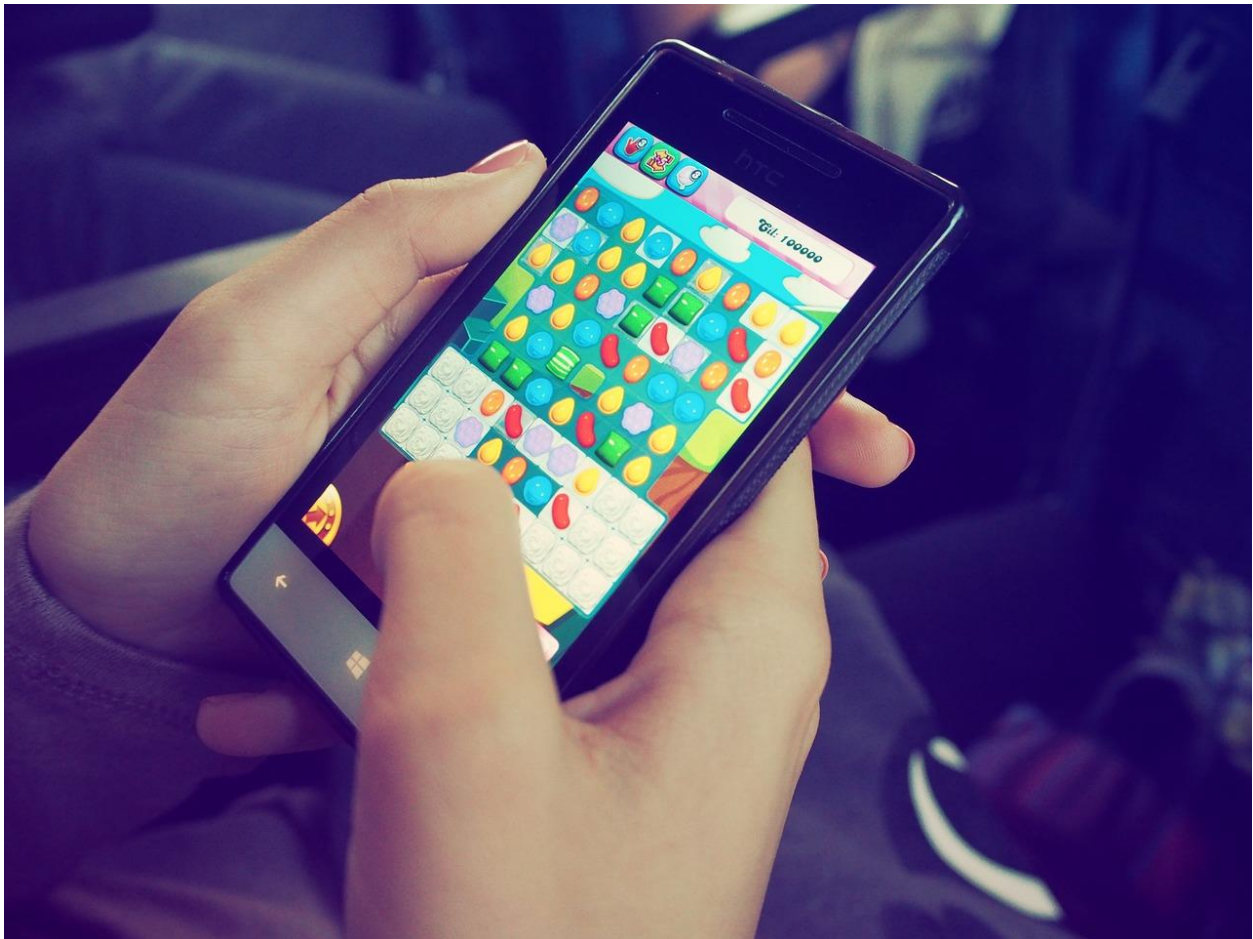
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First Tip for Decoding Emotions in Text Messages

Is she mad at you? Is he in love with you? Here are some ways to find out.



How do you decode emotions in text messages? It's easy when people say they are angry or sad or excited, or if they tack an emoji to the end of a text.

But when they don't? Given that even face-to-face communication can be confusing, it should not surprise us that these truncated, dashed-off messages can result in disastrous misunderstandings.

In the age of technology, we not only need to decode in-person interactions, but textual transmissions as well. How do we know what a person is feeling when we can't see their faces or body language?

Tip 1: Explore the emotional undertones of the words themselves.

The words people use often have emotional undertones. Think about some common words like *love*, *hate*, *wonderful*, *hard*, *work*, *explore*, or *kitten*.

If a text reads, "I love this wonderful kitten," we can easily conclude that it is expressing positive emotions. If a text reads, "I hate this hard work," that seems pretty negative. But if a text reads, "This wonderful kitten is hard work," what emotion do we think is being expressed?

One approach to detecting emotions when they appear to be mixed is to use the "bag-of-words" method. This just means that we look at each word separately. How positive are the words "kitten" and "wonderful"? And how negative are the words "hard" and "work"? By looking at how positive and negative each word is, we may be able to figure out the predominant emotion the texter is trying to express.

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