Just a Joke?

Is it harder to tell if someone is joking or being sarcastic when you're online?

Can that make it harder to push back when people are being mean, hurtful or prejudiced online?

Do the same things make it harder to tell if you've hurt someone's feelings when you're online?

According to language expert Vyvyan Evans, **"60 to 70% of our emotional expression comes not from language itself, but from verbal cues: eye gaze, tone of voice, gesture and facial expression."**

In the 1980s, scientists started using the internet and quickly found that it was hard to tell whether or not someone was being serious.

They invented what we now call emojis to make it more clear what people meant and how they were feeling.
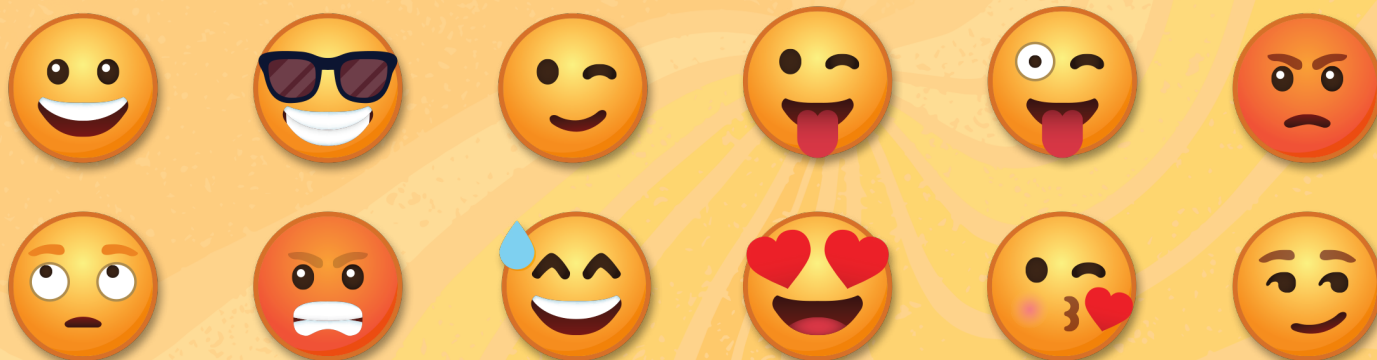
Now you can try designing a new emoji, that you could use for one of four things:

- to avoid accidentally hurting someone's feelings
- to keep a misunderstanding from turning into a fight
- to push back when someone says something mean or offensive
- or to comfort someone who's been the target of it.

Think about:

- How can you get across the idea visually?
- Does it make more sense to use a facial expression emoji (like a smiley or winky) or something else (like the thumbs up or fire emoji)?
- How can you make it clear that you mean this and not something else?

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