

Network email in Cambridge

1971 | Grade 2 · Read & notice

Words to know

message — information sent to someone

network — connected people, places, or machines

invent — create a new tool, process, or idea

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

Ray Tomlinson worked in Cambridge on early computer networks. He sent an early network email and used the at sign to help identify the user and computer. Messages could move between connected machines.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. What happened in this reading? Tell one fact.
2. Who or what is this reading mostly about?
3. Choose a word from the word bank. Explain it in your own words.
4. Look at the picture and its caption. What does it help you notice? Is it from the time of the event?

Follow-up reading: Boston school desegregation

1974

A federal judge ordered changes after finding that Boston schools had been deliberately segregated. Busing became part of the response. Students and families experienced conflict, danger, and efforts toward fairer access.

How are the two readings alike or different? Tell a partner one connection. Which event came first?

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.2.1: ask and answer questions; RI.2.2: identify a main topic; RI.2.7: use images and words; W.2.2 and SL.2.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Ray Tomlinson worked in Cambridge on early computer networks. He sent an early network email and used the at sign to help identify the user and computer. Messages could move between connected machines. Earlier systems already had forms of electronic messaging. Tomlinson's milestone concerns network email between computers. Explain the specific innovation rather than calling every computer message the first email.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.