BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS · NO. 18

Texting & Messaging

Sending texts, sharing photos, and group chats — blue bubbles, green bubbles, and all — in plain English

Stay close to family, one message at a time

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For iPhone & Android texting · iMessage & RCS · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your texting manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there's no test, and you can't fall behind. It covers sending and receiving messages, sharing photos, those blue and green bubbles everyone wonders about, group chats, and how to spot the scams that arrive by text. It's written mostly for the iPhone's Messages app, with notes for Android (Google Messages) where things differ — but the ideas are the same on any phone.

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PART 1

What Texting Is

What a text message really is, the different kinds, and why some bubbles are blue and some are green. A little background that makes everything afterward click.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book — this is for **you**. Maybe the family keeps saying "just text me" and you're not quite sure how. Maybe you send texts fine but the group chats and the mysterious blue-and-green bubbles leave you puzzled. Or maybe you've gotten a strange text and weren't sure if it was safe. Whatever brought you here, you're in the right place.

I'm Bill. For more than 30 years I've helped folks feel at home with their technology, and texting is one of the things that changes lives the most — because it's how families stay in little daily touch now. A quick "thinking of you," a photo of the grandkids, a "home safe." I wrote this book the way I'd explain it beside you: slowly, plainly, with your phone in hand.

Why texting is worth learning

Here's the honest truth: the people you love often text more than they call. A text doesn't interrupt, it waits patiently, and it carries a photo in an instant. Once you're comfortable with it, you'll find yourself woven into the daily back-and-forth of your family in a way that a weekly phone call can't match. That closeness is what this little skill really buys you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this book does for you

By the end you'll send and receive texts with ease, share photos, hold your own in a group chat, use the fun little extras, and — just as important — spot and shrug off the scam texts that try to catch people out. You'll stop feeling left out of the family conversation.

The big promise: you can't break anything

You cannot break your phone, lose your photos, or cause any harm by tapping around in your messages and exploring. The worst that happens is you send a half-finished text by accident — and you can always send another saying "oops, sent that too soon!" Everyone does it. So relax and experiment.

And you're never stuck alone. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment. There's no such thing as a silly question.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

The Kinds of Messages

When you "text" someone, there are actually a few different behind-the-scenes ways the message can travel. You never have to choose — your phone picks automatically — but understanding them clears up almost every confusion people have, including those bubble colors.

Plain text messages (SMS and MMS)

The original kind of text — a short note sent through your phone company, the same way a phone call goes — is called **SMS** (for just text) or **MMS** (when it carries a photo). It works between *any* two phones, anywhere, old or new, Apple or not. It's the reliable common language that every phone speaks.

iMessage (between Apple devices)

If both you and the other person have an Apple device — iPhone, iPad — your texts travel as **iMessages** instead, over the internet rather than the phone company. These are free (they don't count against any texting limit), can send big clear photos, and show up in **blue**. You don't turn this on and off per message — your iPhone just uses it automatically when it can.

RCS (the modern upgrade for everyone else)

The newest kind, **RCS**, is like iMessage's good features but for texts between an iPhone and an **Android** phone (the non-Apple kind, made by Samsung, Google, Motorola and others). In the last couple of years iPhones learned to speak RCS, so texts between iPhone and Android finally got better — clearer photos, "typing..." dots, and read receipts. It still shows up green, but it works far better than the old plain texts did.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **You never pick — your phone does**
>
> Here's the relief: you do **not** choose between SMS, iMessage, and RCS. You just write a message and send it, and your phone quietly uses the best method available to reach that person. All this chapter does is explain the words you'll hear and the colors you'll see — so nothing ever feels mysterious again.

CHAPTER 3

Blue Bubbles & Green Bubbles

No single thing about texting causes more quiet worry than the bubble colors. Let's settle it completely, because once you understand it, you'll never give it a second thought.

What the colors actually mean

Color	What it's telling you
Blue bubbles	Your message went as an **iMessage** — meaning the other person has an Apple device. Free, big photos, all the fancy features.
Green bubbles	Your message went as a regular text or RCS — meaning the other person has an **Android** phone (or iMessage couldn't be used just then). Also works perfectly; just a different path.

That's the whole secret. **The color simply reflects what kind of phone the other person has** — it is not a grade, not a problem, and nothing you did. A green bubble reaches your friend exactly as surely as a blue one. Your message gets there either way.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **Don't let anyone make you feel badly about green**
>
> You may have heard younger folks tease about green bubbles. Pay it no mind. It only means the person has an Android phone instead of an iPhone — both are fine, both are everywhere, and your text arrives just the same. The color tells you about *their* phone, never about you or your message. I've never once seen a green bubble fail to deliver a 'Happy Birthday.'

Why a bubble might change color

Occasionally a conversation that's usually blue turns green for one message, or the other way. That normally just means one of you briefly lost internet, so the phone fell back to a plain text to make sure the message still got through. It's your phone being helpful, not a fault. If it happens a lot, Chapter 19's fixes sort it out.

PART 2

Sending & Receiving

The everyday heart of it: writing a message, replying, sending a photo, and letting your voice do the typing. Slow and clear, with your phone in hand.

CHAPTER 4

Sending Your First Text

Let's send a message together. On an iPhone this is the **Messages** app (a green icon with a white speech bubble); on an Android it's usually **Google Messages** (a similar blue-and-white bubble). The steps are nearly identical.

Step by step

1. Open the **Messages** app.
2. Tap the **compose** button — a little square with a pencil, usually top-right.
3. In the **To** line, start typing the person's name (if they're in your contacts) and tap their name when it appears — or type their phone number.
4. Tap in the box at the bottom (it often says "Text Message" or "iMessage"), and type your note.
5. Tap the **send** button — an up-arrow — and off it goes. Your message appears as a bubble on the right; their reply will appear on the left.

TIP

Replying is even easier

To answer a message someone sent you, just tap the conversation in your list, type in the box at the bottom, and hit send. You don't re-enter their name — the conversation remembers who you're talking with. Each person (or group) keeps its own ongoing conversation, so you can always pick up right where you left off.

CHAPTER 5

Sending Photos

Sharing a photo by text is one of the great joys — a sunset, a plate of dinner, the grandchildren. It takes just a tap or two.

Two easy ways

From within a message:

1. Open or start a conversation.
2. Tap the **+** or the little **camera**/photo icon near the message box.
3. Choose **Photos** to pick a picture you've already taken, or **Camera** to snap a new one.
4. Tap the photo you want, then tap **send** (the up-arrow). It travels right along with any words you add.

From your Photos: open the Photos app, find the picture, tap the **share** button (a box with an up-arrow), choose **Messages**, pick the person, and send. Same result, started from the other end.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Photos look best between the same kind of phone**
>
> A photo you send always arrives — but it looks sharpest when both phones use iMessage (blue) or both support RCS. Over the oldest plain-text path, a photo may arrive a little softer or smaller. It's still perfectly viewable; just know that's why a picture occasionally looks less crisp than the original. Nothing you did wrong.

CHAPTER 6

Let Your Voice Do the Typing

If hunting for letters on the little keyboard is a chore, here's a gift: you can simply **speak** your message and let the phone type it for you. For many folks this is the single thing that makes texting go from frustrating to easy.

Dictating a message

1. Tap in the message box so the keyboard appears.
2. Tap the little **microphone** button on the keyboard (near the space bar).
3. Speak naturally — "Hi Carol, dinner at six sounds wonderful, see you then." Say "period" or "comma" for punctuation if you like.
4. Tap the microphone again (or just stop), check what it wrote, fix any slips, and send.

> **TIP**
>
> **It's fine to speak the way you talk**
>
> You don't need to talk like a robot. Speak in your normal voice at a normal pace; the phone is surprisingly good. It occasionally mishears a name or a word, so give it a quick read before sending — but for most messages, speaking is far faster and kinder on the fingers than typing. Many people never go back once they try it.

Reading messages aloud, too

The flip side works as well: your phone can *read* your incoming texts to you — handy when your eyes are tired or your hands are busy. Our *iPhone* and *iPad* manuals cover turning on spoken content, and a voice assistant can read and even reply to texts hands-free.

PART 3

Group Chats

The family group text — how it works, how to keep it from overwhelming you, and how to leave or quiet one gracefully. Once you've got the hang of it, it's where the fun lives.

CHAPTER 7

How a Group Text Works

A **group text** is simply a conversation with more than two people — the whole family, the book club, the grandkids. Everyone sees every message, and anyone's reply goes to all. It's like a kitchen full of folks all chatting at once, and it's how a lot of families share news and photos.

Starting one

1. Tap **compose** as usual.
2. In the **To** line, add *several* people — type and tap one name, then another, then another.
3. Type your message and send. Now all of them are in one conversation together.

What to expect

- **Everyone's replies land in the same thread**, stacked up like a running conversation. Each person's name usually shows above their bubbles so you can tell who's who.
- **It can get busy.** A lively group can send a flurry of messages — that's normal, and Chapter 8 shows how to tame the buzzing.
- **Mixed phones still work.** An all-iPhone group gets the fancy blue features; a group with some Android phones uses RCS or plain text, which works fine but may lose a frill or two.

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to reply to everything

A common worry: "if I'm in a group, do I have to answer every message?" Not at all. Chime in when you've something to say, enjoy the rest like listening to family chatter across the room, and don't feel you owe a reply to each one. A heart or thumbs-up (Chapter 9) is a perfect way to acknowledge something without typing.

CHAPTER 8

Taming & Leaving a Group

A busy group chat is wonderful until it's buzzing your phone every two minutes during dinner. Happily, you're in full control.

Quieting the notifications (without leaving)

The gentlest fix is to **mute** the group — the messages still arrive and you can read them whenever you like, but your phone stops buzzing and dinging for each one. On an iPhone, open the group, tap its name at the top, and turn on **Hide Alerts** (a little moon appears beside the conversation). On Android, open the group's options and choose **Mute**. Peace restored, and you've left no one.

Leaving a group

If you'd rather step out entirely, you sometimes can — in an all-Apple (blue) group of three or more, tap the group name at the top and look for **Leave this Conversation**. In mixed groups, the "leave" option may not appear; in that case, muting it is the graceful equivalent — you simply stop hearing from it. There's no need to announce anything or hurt feelings.

> TIP
>
> **Mute first, leave rarely**
>
> My advice: reach for **mute** far more often than **leave**. Muting keeps you in the loop for the important news — a birth, a gathering — while sparing you the constant buzz. Leaving a family group can be hard to undo and can ruffle feathers. Quiet it, check it on your own schedule, and you've got the best of both.

Naming a group and seeing who's in it

Tap the group's name or the row of little faces at the top of a group conversation and you can see everyone who's in it, and often give the group a name ("The Smiths," "Bridge Club") so it's easy to spot in your list. Naming a group also helps you tell your several group chats apart at a glance.

PART 4

The Handy Extras

Reactions, read receipts, voice messages, sharing where you are, and the small touches that make texting warmer and easier. All optional, all delightful.

CHAPTER 9

Reactions, Typing Dots & Read Receipts

Modern texting has a few small signals that make a conversation feel more alive. None are required, but they're nice to recognize.

Reactions — a quick way to respond

Press and hold on a message someone sent and a little row of reactions pops up — a heart, a thumbs-up, a laugh, an exclamation. Tap one and it sticks to their message. It's the perfect way to say "got it" or "love that" without typing a word — and a gentle way to answer in a busy group.

Typing dots and read receipts

- **Three dots** (a little bubble with "...") mean the other person is typing right now — a reply is coming, so hold on a moment.
- **"Delivered" / "Read"** under your message tells you it arrived, and (if the person has read receipts on) that they've seen it. Reassuring when you're wondering if a message got through.

GOOD TO KNOW

You can turn read receipts off

Some folks don't like the other person knowing exactly when they've read a message — it can feel like pressure to reply instantly. If you'd rather keep that private, you can switch **read receipts** off in your Messages settings, and no one will see when you've read theirs. Entirely your choice; there's no wrong way.

CHAPTER 10

Voice Messages & Sharing Where You Are

Two more lovely extras worth knowing — one for when you'd rather talk than type, one for meeting up.

Sending a little voice message

You can send a short **recording of your voice** instead of typed words — warm and personal, and effortless. In a conversation, look for a **microphone** icon near the message box (on iPhone it may be under the **+** as "Audio"), hold or tap to record your message, then send. The other person taps a little play button to hear you. Grand for a loving "goodnight" or when your hands are full.

Sharing your location

When you're meeting someone, you can **share where you are** so they can find you — or see where they are on the way to you. In a conversation, tap the **+** and look for **Location**. You choose to share just once or for a set time, and you can always stop. It's a real comfort for families who like to know a loved one arrived safely.

STAY SAFE

You're always in control of location

Sharing your location is never automatic and never permanent unless you choose it. You pick who, and for how long, and you can turn it off at any moment. Share it with family you trust for peace of mind; never feel obliged to share it with anyone who pressures you to. Like everything here, it's your choice.

PART 5

Staying Safe from Scam Texts

The scam texts flooding everyone's phones, how to recognize them in a heartbeat, and how to block and report the junk. The part that protects you.

CHAPTER 11

Spotting a Scam Text

Along with the lovely messages from family come the junk ones from crooks — and texting has become one of their favorite tricks. The good news: they nearly all follow the same handful of patterns, so once you know the shapes, you'll spot them instantly.

The usual scam texts

What it looks like	The truth
The 'package problem'	"Your delivery couldn't be made — confirm your address / pay a small fee" with a link. Real carriers don't text payment links. Ignore and delete.
The 'unpaid toll'	"You have an unpaid highway toll; pay now to avoid a fine." A flood of these lately. Don't tap; check the real toll agency yourself if unsure.
The 'bank alert'	"Suspicious charge — reply YES or tap here to verify." Your bank won't sort fraud by text link. Call the number on your card instead.
The 'wrong number' that turns friendly	A stranger texts as if they know you, then chats warmly — the slow start of a romance or investment scam. Don't engage; delete.
The 'you've won' / 'refund owed'	A prize or refund needing your details or a link. If you didn't enter, you didn't win. Delete.
The 'it's me, I lost my phone'	Someone claims to be family on a new number, then asks for money or gift cards. Call the person's real number to check first.

SCAM ALERT

The one rule that defeats nearly all of them

Don't tap links in unexpected texts, and never send money, gift cards, or personal details because a text told you to. If a message might be real (a delivery, your bank), don't use its link — go to the company the normal way, through their app or by typing their real address yourself. And if a text creates fear or urgency and rushes you, that alone is the sign of a scam. When unsure, do nothing and ask me.

CHAPTER 12

Blocking, Deleting & Reporting Junk

You don't have to just put up with scam and spam texts. Your phone gives you simple tools to swat them away.

Reporting and deleting

When a junk text comes from a number not in your contacts, your phone often shows a **Report Junk** (iPhone) or **Report spam** (Android) link right under the message. Tapping it deletes the message and tells your phone company this sender is trouble, which helps block future ones. If there's no such link, simply deleting the conversation is fine.

Blocking a sender

1. Open the unwanted conversation.
2. Tap the sender's **number or name** at the top.
3. Choose **Block this Caller** (iPhone) or **Block / Block & report spam** (Android).
4. You'll hear nothing more from that number.

> **TIP**
>
> **Don't reply 'STOP' to obvious scams**
>
> For legitimate business texts you signed up for, replying STOP does unsubscribe you. But for an out-and-out scam from a random number, **don't reply at all** — not even STOP — because any reply tells the crook a real person is reading, and you'll get *more*. Just block and delete. Silence is the best answer to a scammer.

Cut down the flood at the source

On an iPhone, a setting called **Filter Unknown Senders** (in Settings > Messages) tucks texts from numbers you don't know into a separate list, so your main inbox stays just family and friends. Android's Google Messages has a similar spam protection. Turning these on quietly spares you most of the junk without any effort.

PART 6

When Something Won't Send

A message that won't go, a text you never got, or bubbles misbehaving — the short list of calm fixes for the common texting hiccups.

CHAPTER 13

A Message That Won't Send

Now and then a message gets stuck — a little red exclamation mark, a "Not Delivered," or it just sits there. It's almost always a simple connection hiccup.

What to try, in order

1. **Check your signal.** If you've no bars and no Wi-Fi, the message can't leave. Move to where you have a connection and try again.
2. **Tap the failed message** (the red "!") and choose **Try Again** / **Resend**.
3. **Check the number.** A wrong or mistyped number won't deliver — make sure it's right.
4. **Turn Airplane Mode on for ten seconds, then off** (in Control Center) to force a fresh connection.
5. **Restart the phone** — off and back on. Cures a surprising number of stuck messages.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **'Delivered' vs. no word at all**
>
> If your message says **Delivered**, it reached the other person's phone — if they haven't replied, they simply haven't gotten to it yet; nothing's broken. Only a red exclamation or "Not Delivered" means it didn't go. Knowing that difference saves a lot of needless worry about whether a message arrived.

CHAPTER 14

Texts You Never Got & Bubble Troubles

The other side of the coin: someone swears they texted you and it never arrived, or your bubbles keep turning the wrong color. A few things to check.

If you're missing texts

- **Check your connection** — a phone off Wi-Fi and cell signal collects messages only once it's back online.
- **Check Filter Unknown Senders** (Chapter 12) — a text from a new number may be waiting quietly in the filtered list, not lost.
- **Check you didn't block them** by accident — look in your blocked list.
- **Restart the phone** — it often shakes loose delayed messages.

If an iPhone stops showing blue for an Apple friend

If messages to a fellow iPhone user suddenly go green, iMessage may have switched off or lost its footing. On the iPhone, go to Settings > **Messages** and make sure **iMessage** is turned on (switch it off and back on if needed). Being on Wi-Fi helps it reconnect. If it won't settle, that's a perfect little thing to call me about.

FROM BILL

The 'I switched phones' gotcha

One specific case trips people up: if you move from an iPhone to an Android phone, messages from iPhone friends can get "stuck" trying to reach your old iMessage and seem to vanish. The fix is to turn iMessage off *before* switching, or un-register your number afterward. If you've changed phones and texts went haywire, don't fret — call me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll untangle it quickly. Our *Switching iPhone & Android* guide covers this too.

PART 7

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand helps, and a one-page summary to keep handy.

CHAPTER 15

When to Call Bill

I've written this so you can text with confidence on your own. But part of being truly helpful is being honest about when a hand saves you time or worry — here's my straight advice, no pressure.

Times it's worth a call

- **Getting comfortable to start** — I'll sit with you, set up your contacts, and practice sending texts and photos until it feels natural.
- **Setting up dictation and bigger text** so messaging is easy on your hands and eyes.
- **Taming scam texts** — turning on filtering, blocking the junk, and showing you the tells.
- **Bubble or iMessage trouble**, especially after switching phones — I'll untangle it quickly.
- **A scary or confusing text** you're unsure about — call me *before* you tap anything.

What working with me is like

I come to your home, here in Portage County, and I work at your pace — warmly, in plain words, never talking down to you. I'll always tell you honestly what's worth doing and what isn't. That's been my way for more than 30 years.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call or text **(330) 200-8042**, or book a visit at **billshometech.com/book**. Bill's Home Tech serves Portage County, Ohio. No question is too small — if it's keeping you from your family's conversation, it's worth a call.

Thank you for letting me help you stay close to the people you love. Take your time, and remember I'm only a message — or a call — away.

— Bill

CHAPTER 16

Your Texting Cheat-Sheet

Fold this corner and keep it handy. The whole book, boiled down.

The everyday moves

To do this	Do this
Start a new message	Tap compose (square with a pencil), type a name, write, tap the up-arrow.
Reply	Tap the conversation, type at the bottom, send. (No need to re-enter their name.)
Send a photo	Tap the + or camera icon, pick a photo, send.
Speak instead of type	Tap the microphone on the keyboard and talk.
React without typing	Press and hold a message, tap a heart/thumbs-up.
Quiet a busy group	Open it, tap its name, turn on Hide Alerts / Mute.

The bubble colors, settled

- **Blue** = the other person has an Apple device (iMessage). **Green** = they have an Android phone (or a plain text was used). Both deliver just fine — the color is about their phone, not you.

Staying safe

- Don't tap links in unexpected texts; go to the company yourself instead.
- Never send money, gift cards, or personal details because a text told you to.
- Don't reply at all to obvious scams — not even STOP. Just block and delete.
- Turn on Filter Unknown Senders / spam protection to cut the junk.
- When a text creates fear and rushes you, that's the sign of a scam — pause and ask Bill.

When something won't send

1. Check your signal / Wi-Fi.
2. Tap the failed message and choose Resend.
3. Airplane Mode on for 10 seconds, then off.
4. Restart the phone.
5. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You can now text, share photos, join a group, use the fun extras, and brush off the scams — everything you need to be part of the daily family conversation. Keep this book handy, text without fear, and remember I'm only a call away.