



Smartphone Addiction

a Talking Points lesson for English reading & speaking



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Introduction

How often do you check your smartphone?

How many apps do you use?

Do you think you are addicted to your smartphone? Why/why not?

Reading

Smartphone addiction today is a very real problem among younger people.

In the past, when people talked about addiction they usually meant serious drugs like heroin or cocaine. The word was shrouded in fear and ignorance.

But then people started using the word to talk about any bad habit they might have — for example, eating too much chocolate or watching too many soap operas on TV.

The word addiction became very common but now there is a new addiction that many people are worried about and that is addiction to smartphones.

How did this begin? And what can be done about it?

Some doctors believe that it started with the use of social media on the smartphone. Young people — and not so young people — connected with their social media accounts on their phones hundreds of times a day.

This was great news for the owners of companies like Facebook, but for everyday people, it was a major disruption to their lives. They could not get on with the most mundane tasks without checking Facebook or Twitter.

A simple task like walking to the shop might endanger a person's life.

Accidents took place daily. And not just from walking. Driving became a real danger to the public.

It didn't take long before people realised that smartphones were causing some serious problems.

At first, people sought help online. But where did they go to ask questions?

That's right — social media.

It got to a point where people were losing serious amounts of sleep over their phone addiction as they stayed up all night discussing their addiction issues with other smartphone addicts online through the night.

Finally, people sought professional help from psychiatrists.

But smartphone addiction was such a new phenomenon the doctors had no idea how to treat it.

Now it has blown up into the condition we all know today.

There are now apps to measure how many times you pick up your phone, how many hours each day you use your phone. There are other apps that block apps you may use too frequently.

Smartphone addicts make use of these apps to help them control their habit.

Other addicts — unfortunate people addicted to drugs or alcohol — say that an addiction to a smartphone is not a real addiction at all. That there is no chemical addiction, only a psychological addiction.

But phone addicts say it is very much an addiction like any other.

Essential Vocabulary

smartphone	addiction	shrouded in fear
serious drugs	heroin	cocaine
ignorance	bad habit	soap operas
social media	everyday people	disruption
mundane tasks	endanger	psychiatrists
phenomenon	blown up	psychological

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Questions

1. Do you check your phone first thing when you wake up?
2. Do you sleep with your phone next to your bed?
3. How do you feel if your phone is not with you all the time? Maybe in another room?
4. Do you check your phone in class or while at work or doing some other tasks?
5. If you leave your phone at home, do you feel a great sense of anxiety? Do you ever leave your phone at home??
6. Where is your phone right now? Why?
7. Do you while away the time by checking your phone?
8. At mealtimes, do you look at your phone instead of talking to your family or friends?
9. Do you use your phone to tell the time? How often do you check?
10. Do you take your phone into the toilet? Why?
11. When you are eating, is your phone always in your hand or on the table next to you?
12. Do you feel lonely if you don't get any messages or any notifications in a while?
13. You are offered a great new job, but one of the rules is no smartphones on duty. Do you take the job?

Teacher's Notes

Start by talking about your own smartphone. Talk about how many hours a day you use your phone. Tell the students what apps you use and which ones you think are time-wasting, which ones are productive.

Go through all the apps and describe them and what they are for.

Tell the students about your emotional attachment to your phone — maybe you feel like it is a chain around your neck. Or you are a dog on the end of a lead/leash. You can introduce these idiomatic phrases to the students.

Tell them what you could do instead of wasting time on your phone. What other productive things could you spend time on?

Credits

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