



Smartphone Addiction

a Talking Points lesson for English reading & speaking



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Smartphone Addiction.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	7
Essential Vocabulary.....	9
Discussion Questions.....	10
My Three Favourite Apps.....	12
What Is Your Opinion?.....	13
Role Play.....	15
Debate.....	17
Writing.....	19
Credits.....	20

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?

Smartphone Addiction

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 the addiction to smartphones.

How did this begin?

And what can be done about it?

Some research has found that it may have started with the use of social media on smartphones.

Young people — ***and not-so-young people*** — connect with their social media accounts on their phones hundreds of times a day.

This is great news for the owners of companies like Facebook, Instagram, etc.

But for everyday people, it is a major disruption to their lives. They cannot 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 take place daily. And not just from walking.

Driving becomes a real danger to the public, too.

It didn't take long before people realised that smartphones are 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 discussing their addiction issues with other smartphone addicts online throughout the night.

Finally, people looked for professional help from psychiatrists.

But smartphone addiction was such a new phenomenon that 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, and how many hours each day you use your phone. Other apps can 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.

The psychological addiction to their phones is so strong it makes them addicted.

And the users of smartphones are getting younger and younger each year. It is not unusual to see a five-year-old child tapping away on their mother's phone.

They know their way around the apps.

And it is even easier for a small child to become addicted.

They lack the self-awareness to stop themselves from using the phone all day.

The smartphone manufacturers accept no responsibility for this. And neither do the companies that create the social media apps.

So what can we do?

Reading Comprehension Questions

Does smartphone addiction affect young people or older people?

What kind of things did people usually think about when talking about addiction?

Later on, what kind of bad habits were regarded as addictions?

What is the specific problem of smartphone addiction?

What do young people like to look at on their smartphones?

What kind of companies are happy to hear this?

What everyday tasks does the article mention that smartphone addiction can affect?

Where did people first seek help with smartphone addiction?

Later on, who did people talk to about smartphone addiction?

Did doctors know what to do about smartphone addiction in the early days?

What three things can apps do to prevent users from becoming addicted to their smartphones?

What do other addicts think of smartphone addiction?

What are the youngest people that could be affected by smartphones?

Do young children know how to use apps on smartphones?

What is the one thing that children do not have that could stop them from using a smartphone all day?

Do smartphone manufacturers take any sense of duty over smartphone addiction?

What about the app companies?

Essential Vocabulary

smartphone	addiction	heroin
cocaine	shrouded in fear	ignorance
soap operas	research	social media
connected	accounts	Facebook
Instagram	disruption	mundane
tasks	endanger	professional
psychiatrists	phenomenon	blown up
condition	frequently	unfortunate
chemical	psychological	tapping
self-awareness	manufacturers	responsibility

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.”

Discussion Questions

Do you check your phone first thing when you wake up?

Do you sleep with your phone next to your bed?

How do you feel if your phone is not with you all the time?

Maybe in another room?

Do you check your phone in class or while at work or doing some other tasks?

If you leave your phone at home, do you feel a great sense of anxiety? Do you ever leave your phone at home??

Where is your phone right now? Why?

Do you while away the time by checking your phone?

At mealtimes, do you look at your phone instead of talking to your family or friends?

Do you use your phone to tell the time? How often do you check?

Do you take your phone to the toilet? Why?

When you are eating, is your phone always in your hand or on the table next to you?

Do you feel lonely if you don't get any messages or notifications in a while?

You are offered a great new job, but one of the rules is no smartphones on duty. Do you take the job?

My Three Favourite Apps

This is a presentation activity.

Make a list of the apps that you love to use on your phone.

- ***What are these apps?***
- ***What is their function?***
- ***How often do you use them? Do you use them every day?***
- ***And why do you like them?***
- ***Do other people use these same apps?***
- ***Could you live a normal life without these apps?***
- ***If so, why are these apps a strong part of your life?***

Take a look at the questions above and try to answer all of them as honestly as you can.

You can use this as the basis of your presentation.

Prepare a short talk about your favourite apps.

When you are ready, stand at the front of your class and make your presentation.

Ask your classmates and teacher for feedback!

What Is Your Opinion?

This is a class discussion activity.

Go through all the statements below. Take it turns reading each of the statements out loud.

Then discuss whether you agree or disagree with each of the statements.

Smartphones have had a positive effect on the way people engage on a social level.

Using a smartphone while driving a car is highly irresponsible. It should be banned!

Smartphones are essential in the classroom.

Taking selfies with a smartphone is just harmless fun.

Smartphones are a main cause of insomnia and poor sleep.

Listening to music on your smartphone is perfectly acceptable.

Smartphones can be very useful in an emergency situation.

Smartphone addiction is real.

You can use the following phrases to express your ideas and opinions.

- ***I think that...***
- ***I strongly believe...***
- ***In my personal opinion...***
- ***Many people have said...***
- ***There is much research done on...***
- ***It is widely believed that...***
- ***I agree...***
- ***I disagree...***
- ***There are two sides to this...***

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

There are two characters in this role play.

Character One

You are a teacher and you have noticed that one of your students is always looking at his/her phone. They don't do this in class, as phone use is prohibited during class time.

But as soon as the class ends, this one student cannot stop staring at the phone screen.

As the student's teacher, you are concerned, and you wish to help the student.

Character Two

You are a student in school. You have a smartphone, and you are an active member of many social media apps.

You don't believe that you use your smartphone more than anyone else, but you do use it a lot.

The Situation

A student and their teacher have a private talk after class. The teacher talks to the student about how much and how often the student uses their phone.

But the student believes they do not use their phone any more

than the other students in the school.

In pairs, take some time to prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show the class!

Debate

This is a debate activity.

The Situation

Many parents have now come to the conclusion that kids in schools in your hometown spend far too much time on their smartphones.

They all use apps like TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat.

Parents — and some teachers — now believe this is affecting their studies and may result in the students getting poor grades.

The town hall has called a meeting to decide whether smartphones should be banned in all schools.

This means that NO STUDENT is allowed to have a smartphone while on school premises.

Of course, the town is divided in this.

But the meeting will continue until they reach a decision.

Team A

You are strongly opposed to the use of smartphones in schools.

The students are getting poor grades on tests, and their ability to concentrate on studying is waning.

It is also affecting basic skills like reading and mathematics.

You want all smartphones banned in schools except for teachers and staff.

Students need to spend more time in the library, and less time on their phones!

Team B

You understand that students may spend a lot of time on their smartphones, but these days smartphones are also essential for social connection.

Kids today use their phones to interact with each other and if we take away their phones, we are depriving them of any social life.

Also, many students use their phones in school to do research. There are very useful apps for learning that students also need. And teachers can make use of smartphones in terms of doing assignments and homework.

Yes, young people use smartphones, but it is up to the parents and the teachers to ensure that they use their phones sensibly.

Divide the class into two teams of equal size.

And choose one person to be the debate chairperson. The chairperson should make sure there is order during the debate and that every person has the opportunity to speak during the debate.

In your team, take some time to prepare the things you want to say and your lines of argument.

When you are ready, begin the debate!

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

You are going to write a short story. The title of the short story is

The Phone

In your story, the main character (who can be anyone you want) has a new phone.

They start to receive messages from the phone itself telling the main character to do certain things.

Eventually, the phone takes over the life of the main character.

- *What could the outcome be?*
- *Does the main character get help?*
- *Can the main character just lose the phone? Why/why not?*

Write your short story.

When you have finished your writing exercise, read it out loud in front of your classmates and teacher and ask them for feedback.

Or you can submit it to your teacher and ask for a private critique.

Credits

This lesson plan is courtesy of ManWrites.

This content is copyright ManWrites 2023 — ManWrites©2023

For more information, go to www.manwrites.com

Or join my mailing list below and I will send you more ESL teaching ideas.

[ManWrites Mailing List](#)