

Mobile phones: teacher's notes and tips – Upper Intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Ask students, in pairs, to make a list of the five most *essential* (completely necessary) possessions in their lives. Don't mention mobile phones – just see if they come up with this.
- b Then ask pairs to compare their lists – have they written the same things? Do they agree about what's essential and what's non-essential? Do they really need a car or can they catch the bus?
- c Get a student to read their list out – and ask others if they have anything different to add. What's considered to be the most essential possession by the students?

Tip: encourage discussion

Getting students to disagree and compare their ideas is a good speaking activity – it will also help students to interact with the text later on.

- d Read out the first two paragraphs of the reading aloud and get students to call out the missing item – can they guess correctly (*mobile phone*)?
- e Ask students to put their hands up if they agree with the writer – or do they think a mobile is essential? *Don't* hand out the reading yet.
- f In small groups ask students to think of all the reasons why somebody would be so against mobile phones. Again, when they have finished get them to compare their ideas with another group.

Tip: provide opportunities for personalization

If necessary, prompt students: What problems could mobiles cause? Are they always practical? When could they be seen as nuisance? Why are mobiles not allowed in some public areas?

2 First reading tasks

- a Now give each student the reading. Ask them to read the article *as quickly as possible* and to compare the ideas they mentioned in pre-reading task f with those in the text. Do this by asking them to summarize the paragraphs. The first one could be *Mobiles aren't always as useful as we want them to be ...* Had the students suggested that? They don't need to write – they can just chat with their partner.

Tip: motivate students to read more quickly

Explain to students that they will get the general idea of a text more easily if they read quickly. Slower readers will worry about the individual words and their meaning and fail to get the gist. Also tell students they will be able to read it again (and again!) so not to worry that they don't understand it all after the first reading.

3 Second reading tasks

- a Ask students why they think the author wrote the text. (*To amuse / complain / justify / criticize / inform? For sympathy?*) What message does the writer want to deliver? (*Mobiles are terrible? Mobile users are inconsiderate?*) Who

- is the target audience? (*Mobile users? Friends? Sympathizers?*) Give them a little time to think about these points.
- b Students read again and underline the points of view they agree with and underline with a wobble the points they disagree with.
- c In small groups get them to compare – have they underlined the same bits in the same way? Encourage them to explain why they agree / disagree.

Tip: raise awareness of a writer's intention

Students should be aware of the reason for a text and to recognize opinions that are expressed. And of course, they should be encouraged to compare their own views to those of the writer.

4 Third reading tasks

- a Finally, ask students to look at the style of the text. If it's agreed the writer is complaining, how does this affect the writing? The students have read the text twice now – what have they noticed about the text that may be different to other readings they have done? Can they see that it's more like someone speaking than writing?
- b Then get students to:
- find examples of rhetorical questions, e.g. *So what's the point?*
 - find examples of aside remarks, e.g. *(and this is a true story)*
 - notice the length of the sentences, e.g. *They are very long in places*
 - notice the use of intensifiers, e.g. *really hate / simply couldn't / so expensive*
 - notice the use of italics for emphasis, e.g. *a real emergency*
 - find examples of informal language, e.g. *come in handy / guy / stupid thing*

5 Post-reading tasks

- a Individually get students to think about their own 'bugbears' (things or situations that annoy them). What really annoys them and makes them angry? Give students some time to think. Their answers needn't be serious and if they can't think of anything they can make something up.

Tip: link the reading to writing

Reading should always be linked with the other skills. Refer to the points in third reading task b before starting.

- b Then have a go at speed writing – basically students write for about 10 minutes non-stop without worrying about language, grammar or punctuation. They just need to concentrate on their ideas – in this case their complaints about something. Have a look at www.onestopenglish.com/Skills/Writing/ for more information on speedwriting and have a go!
- c Students can then read their complaints to each other. They then edit and make necessary changes together, and then write it up for homework. Get them to add an appropriate title, too.