

Mobile phones

Topic: Mobile phones and text communications

Aims:

- To develop students understanding of telephone and text communications
- To give students a chance to practise speaking

Level: Pre-intermediate and higher

Introduction

In this lesson the students will have plenty of opportunities to express themselves on the use of mobile phones in public and how they themselves use mobile phones. They will create and perform telephone conversations, decipher mini text messages, then write and send their own. The lesson considers the importance of mobile phones for people today and how 'texting' has changed the way they communicate.

Procedure

Introduction task:

- Begin the lesson by asking everyone to turn their mobile phones off. See how many people reach for their phones to get a general idea of how many people in your class have one. For those who don't move ask if their phone is already off and they'll tell you if they have one or not. Elicit from them why using a mobile phone in class or on the train can be inconsiderate.

You can use the questions below to get them interested.

1. Do you have a mobile phone?
2. If not, would you like to have one?
3. What do you think when you hear a mobile phone ring – in class? / On the train? / In the street?

- Hand out a copy of **Worksheet A**. As a class discuss the different uses of mobile phones and see if your students can think of any other reasons why people use their mobile phones.
- Distribute a copy of the grid per person. Check that they all understand the meaning of the reasons in the grid before they fill it in.
- Make sure they fill in the empty boxes in the second row first.
- You could feedback as a class on this part first before moving on to the type of communication they use.
- Once they've said whether they speak on their phone or send text messages most of the time they could compare their answers in pairs before doing so as a class.

Reasons people use phones	Reasons you use your mobile phone	Conversation or text message
To let their people know where they are		
To flirt with someone		
As a clock		
To play games		
Just to say hello		
To arrange to meet friends		
To find out about the cinema or football results		

Dialogue building task

- Prior to the lesson, cut up the dialogue from **Worksheet B** and put into an envelope.
Make sure you have enough sets of dialogues for one per pair of students.

Tip: This dialogue is to give the students a model conversation from which to work from and create their own telephone conversations.

- They should first try to put the conversation into the correct order and try to understand the gist of the conversation to do so. Make sure they check and correct the sequence before looking at the meaning of the conversation in more detail. The questions can be answered in their pairs. You may have to explain some expressions, which you could do with synonyms.

“Hello”

“Hi Sophie, it’s Justin.”

“Hi. How are you?”

“Fine thanks. Listen I haven’t got long because I’ve got a maths class in a minute. I just wanted to see if you are still coming tonight.”

“I’m not sure. I think my mum wants me to stay in tonight. We’re going to my aunt’s house tomorrow and we have to leave really early.”

“Why, where does she live?”

“Miles away!”

“Well, what about if you came early and then my dad could give you a lift home at about ten. Most people are coming around seven anyway and it would be cool if you came.”

“Ok well, let me speak to my mum and I’ll text you later.”

“Ok, cool.”

“See you later.”

“Yeah, bye.”

Role-play task:

- Put the students with someone they haven't worked with before so that they can speak to more people in the class.

Tip: For telephone conversations you can sit everyone back to back so that they don't have the advantage of seeing the person they're talking to and so better recreate speaking on the telephone.

- Number the students A and B and distribute the following situations randomly, one for each pair. This can be done as an improvisation or they can write a draft of the conversation first.

Tip: For lower levels especially they will get more out of this activity if they spend time before the conversation itself at least thinking about the content.

- You should monitor the conversations, helping in the preparation stages but let them speak spontaneously when actually doing the role-play. Give the students time afterwards to reflect on the conversation they had and the difficulties they came across when speaking.
- Encourage them to ask their peers for missing vocabulary and expressions before providing the answer yourself.

You need to cancel a trip to the cinema because your grandmother is coming for dinner.

Arrange with a good friend to go shopping on Saturday at the shopping centre.

You phone your best friend the morning of his/her birthday.

Phone your parents to ask them if you can be late for dinner to stay for an extra drama class after school.

Tell your friend that you're going to be late meeting them because of a train strike.

Phone your friend to find out where they are. You've been waiting for them in a café for twenty minutes.

- Choose a couple of pairs to re-do their conversation for the rest of the class. The others could try and guess what was written on their card after listening to the conversation.

Text messaging task:

- To begin with just show the extracts below (**Worksheet D**) taken from text messages and ask students to try and work out what they mean.
- They must then match the text messages to the 'English'.

- Then as a whole class brainstorm text messages in the first language of the students. Get a volunteer student to write on the board all ideas from his peers.

Tip: The idea here is that the students can make a direct comparison with texting in their own country and so it will become even more obvious how this subject is relevant to their own lives.

- You may find that different people use different 'codes' for texting. This will merely enhance the debate and they can argue why their version works best.
- Each time they work out what the message is they should translate it into English and then see how they would text the word differently in English.

GR8	Great
C u l8r	See you later
BBFN	Bye bye for now
KIT	Keep in touch
THNQ	Thank you
XLENT	Excellent

Text writing task:

- This is where the students can put into a context all the words and expressions they brainstormed earlier if they've deciphered the above text messages and their own.
- Put the class into pairs. Give each pair a different context for their messages on pieces of paper (See **Worksheet E**).
- Make sure they don't show their card to any one else in the class. If you have done the telephone role-plays with them they could use the same situation they had before and transfer it into a text message. Make sure they write it in English first as it helps to have a written support and will be needed for when they swap messages and need to check their understanding of the text messages they receive.
- If they actually have mobile phones on which they can send text messages they could use them to send their messages to each other.

Contexts for messages:

You need to cancel a trip to the cinema because your grandmother is coming for dinner.

Arrange with a good friend to go shopping on Saturday at the shopping centre.

Text your best friend the morning of his/her birthday.

Contact your friend to say that you're going to be late meeting them because of a train strike.

Send a text message to your friend to find out where they are. You've been waiting for them in a café for twenty minutes.

Discussion task

- Try to sit everyone in a circle for this discussion. You can put the questions (**Worksheet F**) onto separate pieces of paper and the students take it in turn to pick a piece of paper and ask the question to the others. This way each student can be in charge of leading the discussion.
- Make it clear from the start that you are going to listen rather than lead the discussion.
- If you think it would be more appropriate you can give the questions to students to discuss in pairs. Give one question to each pair and set a time limit of two minutes then get them to pass the question on to the next pair.

• How has texting changed the way you communicate with your friends?
• If you don't have a mobile phone do you think you communicate better with your friends and family?
• Texting is said to be more of a teenage pastime rather than an adult one. Why do you think this is?
• Some English teachers are worried that texting will make young people poor at spelling and grammar. Do you agree? Why / Why not?
• If you don't like using your mobile phone for texting why not?
• Some teenagers find they can't live without their mobile phone. Do you think this is excessive or can you understand why?
• What are the advantages of texting over making a telephone call?