

ENGLISH CLUB

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B2 weekly topic for 02/12/2020:

SMARTPHONES AND TEXTING

Are smart phones good or bad? What do you think?

We'll take a look at the pros and the cons of smartphones. We'll also take a look at some of the texting jargon and acronyms commonly used on messaging apps such as WhatsApp.

If you want some extra practice (or are looking for some more ideas) before our meeting, you can try the following online listening exercise:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english/ep-180712>

OK, in order to prepare for our next English Club meeting, I would like you to read the following article (from <https://ulsterprstudentblog.com/>):

Today's society is hugely influenced by the use of smartphones. This is from everyday life, with how we interact with friends and family on a personal level, to how businesses and politicians send out messages and updates to their customers and followers through social media posts. This is clear today with US President Donald Trump's twitter posts often being a hot topic of conversation amongst many.

There are without doubts many positives through the use of smartphones. These are clear to see as everywhere you look there is always a number of people engulfed in their phones, and it's not just the younger generation, it is now throughout all age groups, from younger siblings to parents and now even grandparents. I am going to take a look at the pros and cons, in relation to how my age group use smartphones.

First of all, the pros of smartphones, which you could argue is a never-ending list of positives:

- The ability to connect with friends from all over the world. Whether it is a cousin in Australia or a friend in America, we can be face to face with them any time through the use of Facetime. We always stay in communication with these people through Facebook and Snapchat, making it a lot easier to keep relationships strong even though we may be thousands of miles apart.
- The use of a smart phone is something a lot of people could not do without. Friendship groups in today's society revolve around a Whatsapp group. Everyday plans are made in these groups, and it is definitely the easiest way to stay in touch. All football teams or class group projects will often have a Whatsapp group to send messages and updates.
- Another pro would be how you can keep all of your friends up to date on what you are doing with your life. Although some of your Facebook friends mightn't care if you climbed Slieve Donard at the weekend, it is still nice to be able to post this.
- The convenience would be a massive pro for me with a smartphone. Emails, online banking, Google maps etc are just an example of some of the apps which make our lives a lot simpler. There is no need for Sat Navs or trips to the bank as all can be done through our smart phones.

There are without doubt many more pros, but I don't want to turn this into an essay.

Now for the cons:

I feel there are many cons to smartphones, especially within our age group from 16-35.

- They are incredibly addictive. Personally, I am as bad as anyone. Throughout this post I have constantly been on my phone, on WhatsApp, Snapchat and Facebook just refreshing pages and reading posts which have no impact on my life. Also, this highlights how much of a distraction they are. Everything you do is interrupted by a notification on your phone. It is very hard to go a few hours without checking your phone.
- You hear people say phones have “ruined the art of conversation”. This amongst friendship groups my age is true. There could be 7 of us in a bar drinking pints, and at all times there are probably 4/5 people on their phones. Everything is put on Snapchat or Facebook and at times it becomes sickening. You could be going through Snapchat stories and see more or less the same thing on 4 different stories of the same 5 people.
- Another con would be that people can portray themselves as something they are not. We all have friends on Facebook or Instagram and they have a totally different way of going on online. So in a sense they’re people who can hide behind a smartphone and be seen as someone they are not. These apps can be seen as a way of convincing people your life is brilliant, and constantly look happy in all your posts and can disguise true emotions very well.

To listen to my list of cons you would swear I don’t do these things mentioned above, although I wouldn’t be as extreme as some people, I still do these to an extent. To say that I could do without a smart phone would be a lie. I am as reliant on it as the majority of my age group. But at times I can’t help but think it would be great if no one had them.