

Read these statements from students and discuss the questions below.

Paula says:

"I couldn't live without my cell phone. I think I'm addicted to it in fact! I make over twenty phone calls a day and send at least forty text messages. I like to be in touch with all my friends. It used to be more expensive to send texts but I've got a plan with unlimited texting. I wouldn't give it up my cell for all the money in the world."

Discussion: Is it really possible to get addicted to a cell phone? Do you feel "naked" without your phone? How many phone calls and texts do you send every day? Do you have a plan that allows for unlimited calling and texting?

Maria says:

"I have a cell phone, but I try not to use it too much. When I do have to use it for a long time I worry about what's happening to my brain. Sometimes my ear gets really hot and I get a headache. I'm sure it's not good for you to use a cell phone for long periods of time. We all use them but there hasn't been much research into the possible dangers. Another thing that worries me is people driving while they're talking on their phones. I know that causes accidents. I've even see cyclists using cellphones – that's just so dangerous!"

Discussion: Some research shows using cell phones for extended periods can be dangerous for your health. Does this worry you? How do you feel about driving and calling or driving and texting? Should there be a law to prohibit it? Do you ever do it?

Hakim says:

"I think they're really useful. It's great to be able to call a friend and tell him you'll be a bit late to meet him. The other day my car broke down on the freeway and it was great to be able to phone for help. I got lost on the way to a friend's house the other day and she told me the directions as I was walking along. That was really handy."

Discussion: What do you think the biggest advantages to cell phones are? Have you ever used your cell phone in an emergency?

Steven says:

"I have never had a cell phone. I work from home, I'm a writer, so I really don't need one. My girlfriend keeps trying to convince me to get one, but I won't. She's got an iphone and raves about the 'fantastic' apps and touch screen. She wants to get me one for my birthday but I'd rather have a new laptop. People think I'm a bit strange because I don't have a cell phone, but I don't want people to be able to know where I am and what I'm doing every minute of the day. I like to be un-contactable!"

Discussion: Do you identify with Steven or do you think he is weird? Do you ever turn your cell phone off so people can't contact you? Do cell phones rob you of your privacy?

Anna says:

"I have a cell phone but I'm really careful about switching it off when I'm in public places. I hate having to listen to other people's conversations on the train and on the bus. I try not to listen but it's impossible when people speak loudly. Often they have really personal conversations and I just don't want to know

their private business. It can be embarrassing. I think they should be banned in restaurants, art galleries and on public transport. The whole cell phone culture is out of control and we shouldn't accept it. It's noise pollution."

Discussion: Do you agree cell phone use should be banned in public places? Do you talk on the phone in public places? How do you feel when other people talk on cell phones in a restaurant or on the bus?

Josh says:

"I'm a teacher in a secondary school and cell phones really annoy me. The students send text messages to each other in the class and last month I caught two of my students cheating on an exam by sending messages to each other. Some students even bully others via text messages these days – that's really sad. In theory, students are not allowed to bring them to school but it's nearly impossible to stop them. I don't think parents should buy cell phones for their children. It's crazy to see eleven year olds with their own mobiles. It must cost a fortune for their parents too."

Discussion: Do your kids have cell phones? What are some advantages to children having cell phones? Does it make children safer? How old should a child be before having a cell phone? How could Josh get around some of the problems he is having with kids and their phones? Were you allowed to have a phone in your school classes?

Additional Discussion:

1. Do you have a landline in addition to a cell phone?
2. Is your phone number unlisted? Why would you want an unlisted number?
3. Are there any functions on your phone that you don't know how to use?
4. How often do you get a new cell phone?
5. Is having the latest technology really important to you?
6. Is your cell phone a fashion statement?

Idioms:

1-When you "listen in" on someone, you "eavesdrop". That is, you listen to someone who is not talking to you. EX: This is a private conversation, please don't listen in.

2-If someone is "all talk", they talk about doing something important or brave, but never do it. They are "all talk and no action". EX: Brad says he's going to go bungee jumping, but I don't believe him. Brad is all talk.

3-If someone is "speaking out of both sides of their mouth", they say different things according to whom they are talking to. In other words, they tell everyone what they want to hear. Politicians are the worst about this. EX: Don't believe the governor. He talks out of both sides of his mouth. When he is talking to women, he talks about women's rights. When he speaks to men, he talks about the importance of women staying home to raise the children.

4-If someone says, "Look who's talking" they are saying you are criticizing someone for something that you do. Example:

Jane: Victor, you must get to work on time. This is your second time to be late this month.

Victor: Look who's talking! Jane, you are late twice that much.