

How much do you love *your* mobile phone? Could you live without it? Find out what British teenagers, parents and teachers say about the subject!

How old were you when you got a mobile? Everybody knows that teenagers love their phones. Here are some mobile phone facts.

- Two-thirds of 12-15-year-olds in the UK have a smartphone.
- People in the UK send 50 text messages a week on average.
- British 12-15-year-olds send an average of 200 messages a week.
- British girls aged between 12 and 15 text more than boys of the same age group. Girls send 221 messages a week!

Parents

Parents want their kids to be safe. Are teenagers safer with a mobile phone or without? Many parents want their children to have a phone so that they can be in contact at any time or in any place. On the other hand, for lots of parents a phone is a source of possible danger. Parents worry that their child may meet the wrong kind of 'friends' on social networking sites or that they might receive cruel messages from school bullies. Some parents have rules about their children's mobile phone and internet usage and bad behaviour can result in removal of mobile privileges.

'The great thing about my kids having mobile phones is that I can keep in touch with them. The worst thing about teenagers having phones is that some young people use them to send offensive messages to each other.'

William, from Coventry. William is a parent of two teenagers.

'A teenager feels lost without a phone. If my daughters behave badly, I confiscate their phones and their behaviour quickly improves.'

Kiera, mother of 15-year-old twins.

School

Mobile phones are permitted at school in the UK but pupils are not allowed to use them in class and they must be on silent during lessons. Teachers can take away phones if these rules are broken. School students can use their phones at break time and at lunchtime. Some teachers in British schools complain that pupils don't always follow the rules and that lessons are disrupted by people texting, making and receiving calls, looking at social networking sites, watching videos and even making videos in the class.

'My mum is scared that I'm going to lose my phone or that someone is going to steal it. She won't buy me the really cool phone that I want. I've got this rubbish one that doesn't do much. I suppose that makes sense but it's not fair that everyone else has a smartphone and I don't.'

Tam, 14, from Wrexham.

'I know that some people want mobiles to be banned at school but as a language teacher I find that phones can be pretty useful in class ... for educational purposes of course. For example, the students write a dialogue in French, they record it on a phone, then they listen to the recording and try to correct any mistakes or improve pronunciation. They love it!'

Stan, from Chester. Stan is a French teacher.

Messaging

A mobile phone contract in the UK usually comes with a number of text messages included in the price. Of course lots of people send messages completely free of charge using an app that's also free to download. If you want to send text messages in English you need to know some abbreviations. Here are some to get you started:

LOL	= laugh out loud
POS	= parent over shoulder
BRB	= be right back
TYVM	= thank you very much
BCNU	= be seeing you (meaning 'goodbye')
ASAP	= as soon as possible
OIC	= oh I see (means 'I understand')
TTFN	= Ta ta for now (means 'goodbye')
BFFL	= best friends for life

TYVM 4 reading this article. BCNU!