

# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## Not so smartphone

The 'dumb' retro phones that people are ditching iPhones and Androids for.



Photo by [Girl with red hat](#) on [Unsplash](#)

I was nineteen years old when I got my first mobile phone. My friend wanted a new phone and sold me his phone for **peanuts**. Otherwise I wouldn't have bought a phone when I did. I literally had no interest.

I was at college and living away from home so I thought it might be handy to have a phone in case of an emergency. However, I treated my new mobile, which was marketed at the time as small enough to hold between your index finger at the top and thumb at the bottom, as a **landline**. It never left the house. Different times.

Nowadays, people are rebelling against the **sleek** smartphone, in favour of their **clunky** predecessors. These 'dumb' phones are, in fact, becoming trendy. The brick-like Nokia is once again in vogue.

Nokia recently announced that it was starting to regain portions of the mobile phone market last year. The former fan-favourite phone brand has bowed to the popularity of Apple's iPhones and Google Android devices in recent years.

But a trend is gaining momentum among the smartphone generation—the people who

have mostly only known touch-screen **devices** with access to a whole library of apps. Now, a growing community of people are swapping out their devices for simpler brick and flip phones.

The popularity of 90s and **noughties** fashion has teens and young adults across the globe alive to how people's relationship with technology has changed since 'the good old days' - before the dawn of the smartphone. The days when you didn't get FOMO (fear of missing out) through social media apps, or become locked in a so-called '**doom scroll**'. The impacts smartphones and social media have had on mental health has helped drive the movement.

Some are calling it a 'dopamine diet'. This is where they try and limit their smartphone consumption after becoming addicted to features that grant users quick bursts of —the brain's happy chemicals—such as social media or games.

Meanwhile, others are introducing 'dumb' phones into their lives to be more present in the 'real world'.

One TikTok user, @skzzolno, said she and her friends have all adopted flip phones to use when they are going out to bars and clubs. They are then armed with only each other's numbers and emergency contacts, no social media and retro cameras. This helps to avoid drunken calls to **old flames**, embarrassing social media posts and unflattering pictures and videos in high-definition.



Adapted from [this article](#)  
by ECP coach

## Word list

**peanuts:** slang for very little money, much less than the real value

**landline:** a conventional telecommunications connection by cable laid across land

**sleek:** well designed and elegant

**clunky:** solid, heavy and old-fashioned

**device:** an object or a machine designed for a specific purpose

**noughties:** the period of years between 00 and 10 in any century, usually 2000-2010

**doom scroll:** the activity of spending a lot of time looking at your phone or computer and reading bad or negative news stories

**old flame:** someone with whom you once had a romantic relationship

## Let's chat about that!

1. How old were you when you got your first mobile phone? What phone did you get?
2. Do you think mobile phones have more pros than cons? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Would you consider changing to a retro style phone? Why/not?
4. What feature of your current mobile phone do you like most?
5. What's your favourite app? Explain why you like it.
6. What do you think mobile phones will look like in the future?

## Use of English: Talking about your age

### Which is correct?

I had nineteen years.

*I was nineteen years old.*

Saying "I had nineteen years" could be understood as: **"You had nineteen years of what? Experience?"**

It doesn't imply what age you are. If you say "I had 19", the listener could be left expecting more information, eg. "You had nineteen what? Nineteen cups of coffee for breakfast?"

### To Be + Age

When you want to say how old you are, were or will be, use:

- I am 25 years old
- I'm 25
- I was 19 years old when I got my first mobile phone
- I was 21 when I bought my first car
- Next year I'll be 46 years old
- I'll be 50 when my son starts university

### Correct these sentences:

*He had 18 on Tuesday. I think he really enjoyed the surprise party. ->*

*She'll have 12 when she starts secondary school. ->*