
The apps explosion

WORKSHEET A

The number of people who own smartphones (mobile phones that have lots of extra functions, including wireless internet access and storage of audio and video files) is increasing so quickly that by 2015 there might be two billion of them, which is to say almost 30% of the world's population. If you and your friends are among them, no doubt you have already had conversations about useful or entertaining 'apps' for your phones.

Smartphone and *app* (short for *application*) are both words that were hardly used five years ago but are now very familiar. An app is a piece of software that operates inside a smartphone, allowing the phone to perform a specific function. Some, but not all, work only when the phone is connected to the internet.

Smartphones come with some apps already built in – GPS, a calendar, weather forecasts and YouTube are common examples – but there are a huge number of extra apps that can be downloaded, with dozens of new ones invented every day. The Apple App Store, used by owners of iPhones, has more than 400,000 apps – and is so popular that there have been more than 15 billion downloads since its creation in 2008. Many apps are free, and those that have to be paid for are generally not expensive; the average price is currently less than \$3.

It seems that whatever a person's age or interests, there is an app that has been designed for them. There are even apps for people too young to use a phone themselves – such as the ones that show pictures of animals, say their names and play the sound they make, which unsurprisingly have been a big hit with toddlers worldwide.

In the lists of the most popular apps you will generally find those for social networking sites (Facebook, Myspace, Twitter etc), useful apps such as those that allow phone users to exchange data (for example, people's contact details), and at least a couple of games. One of the most successful games, launched in December 2009 and since downloaded by millions of people, is Angry Birds, where the player sends birds to attack green pigs that have stolen the birds' eggs. It is so addictive that some people now spend more time using their mobile phones to destroy pigs than to talk to other human beings.

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WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Decide whether the following statements are true (*T*) or false (*F*), or if the text doesn't say (*D*).

1. *App* is short for *appliance*.
2. New apps are invented every day.
3. About half of all apps are free.
4. The Apple App Store was created in 2008.
5. The Angry Birds app has been available since 2008.
6. More than a billion people currently own a smartphone.
7. Smartphones can access the internet.
8. No app costs more than \$5.
9. No app can work if the phone is not connected to the internet.
10. Angry Birds is a free app.

Exercise 2

Answer the questions below.

1. What colour are the pigs in the game Angry Birds?
2. According to the text, why would smartphone users not usually need to download apps such as a calendar and weather forecasts?
3. According to the text, who likes the apps that show pictures of animals?
4. What statistic does the text use to show the popularity of the Apple App Store?
5. What is the average price of an app from the Apple App Store?

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 3

The text from Worksheet A has been copied below, but contains some mistakes. Fifteen of the words in bold are incorrect, and five are correct. Decide which are incorrect, and correct them.

The number of people who own smartphones (mobile phones that have lots of extra functions, including (1) **wirenot** internet access and storage of audio and video files) is increasing so quickly that by 2015 there might be two (2) **billions** of them, which is to say almost 30% of the world's population. If you and your friends are among them, no (3) **doubts** you have already had conversations about useful or entertaining 'apps' for your phones.

Smartphone and *app* (short (4) **for application**) are both words that were hardly used five years ago but are now very (5) **family**. An app is a piece of software that operates inside a smartphone, allowing the phone to (6) **form** a specific function. Some, but not all, work only when the phone is connected to the internet.

Smartphones come with some apps already built (7) **in** – (8) **GSP**, a calendar, weather (9) **fourcasts** and YouTube are common examples – but there are a huge number of extra apps that can be (10) **download**, with dozens of new ones invented every day. The Apple App Store, used by owners of iPhones, has more than 400,000 apps – and is so popular that there have been more than 15 billion (11) **downloads** since its creation in 2008. Many apps are free, and those that have to be paid for are generally not expensive; the (12) **rage** price is currently less than \$3.

It seems that whatever a person's age or interests, there is an app that has been designed for them. There are even apps for people too young to use a phone themselves – such as the ones that show pictures of animals, say their names and play the sound they make, which unsurprisingly have been a big hit with (13) **boddlers** worldwide.

In the lists of the most popular apps you will generally find those for social (14) **working** sites (Facebook, Myspace, Twitter etc), useful apps such as those that (15) **low** phone users to (16) **exchange** (17) **date** (for example, people's contact (18) **details**), and at least a couple of games. One of the most successful games, (19) **lunched** in December 2009 and since downloaded by millions of people, is Angry Birds, where the player sends birds to attack green pigs that have stolen the birds' eggs. It is so (20) **addicted** that some people now spend more time using their mobile phones to destroy pigs than to talk to other human beings.