

1. The apps explosion

This week's lesson is on mobile phone 'apps' (short for *applications*), which have of course become the object of great enthusiasm among the ever-growing ranks of smartphone owners.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Presuming at least some of your students own mobile phones, ask them what they use from for, apart from to make and receive calls. How difficult do they think they would find it to live without a mobile phone? (If you have any students who have chosen not to have a mobile phone, it might be interesting to ask them to explain why.) Introduce the word *smartphone* (a mobile phone with internet access, storage of audio and video files, touchscreen etc) and ask how many of your students have them. Do the smartphone owners already feel they *need* their phones' extra functions or do they see them just as enjoyable extras? What are their favourite apps, and why? Have the students heard of any apps that strike them as particularly original, useful, strange or ridiculous?
2. Hand out Worksheet A and give the students as long as you think is necessary to read through the text, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to answer a series of questions on the text, but that they shouldn't write anything down at this stage.
3. Divide the students into pairs and hand out Worksheet B. Ask them to work together to complete the two different types of comprehension questions in Exercises 1 and 2.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Keeping the students in their pairs, ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheet A, or to hand them back to you temporarily. Then ask them to attempt Exercise 3 on Worksheet C, which contains the text from Worksheet A with fifteen incorrect words that they have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are five other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write any additional words.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. F 2. T 3. D 4. T 5. F 6. D 7. T 8. D 9. F 10. D

Exercise 2

1. Green.
2. Because it is common for them to come with the smartphone as built-in apps.
3. Toddlers.
4. There have been more than 15 billion downloads of apps since the App Store was created in 2008.
5. Less than \$3 (three dollars).

Exercise 3

1. wireless 2. billion 3. doubt 5. familiar 6. perform 8. GPS 9. forecasts
10. downloaded 12. average 13. toddlers 14. networking 15. allow 17. data
19. launched 20. addictive

Words in bold that are correct: 4. for 7. in 11. downloads 16. exchange
18. details

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.rovio.com/index.php?page=angry-birds>

The official Angry Birds website, with screenshots and videos of the game.
Accessible to all levels.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_9360000/newsid_9366800/9366867.stm

From BBC Newsround, a very short article (January 2011) on the 14-year-old American who designed the game Bubble Ball, a huge hit in Apple's free apps chart.
Accessible to Intermediate level.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/13045709>

From the BBC Radio 1 website, an article (April 2011) on the 'Appy Awards' for the best smartphone apps in different categories. Challenging for Intermediate level.