

The Second Life of an Old Phone

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. What do you do with an old phone when you buy a new one? Is it easy to repair or recycle technology where you live?

1. Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- | | | |
|-------------|-------|--|
| 1. device | _____ | A. information stored on a computer or phone |
| 2. replace | _____ | B. give something to help a person or organisation |
| 3. recover | _____ | C. put something new in place of something old |
| 4. valuable | _____ | D. worth a lot of money or very useful |
| 5. donate | _____ | E. get back something useful |
| 6. data | _____ | F. a piece of electronic equipment |

2. Read the article. The bold words are the vocabulary from Activity 1.

- When a new phone appears, many people feel pressure to **replace** their old one. The older **device** may still make calls and take photos, but a better camera or a larger screen can be attractive. As a result, drawers around the world are full of phones that are not broken, but are no longer used.
- An old phone can have several second lives. If it still works well, its owner might sell it, give it to a family member or **donate** it to a local charity. Some organisations prepare used phones for people who need a simple way to contact employers, schools or health services. A phone does not need to be the newest model to be useful.
- When a phone cannot be used again, recycling becomes important. Phones contain small amounts of **valuable** materials, including metals that can be used in new products. Special recycling companies can take the phone apart and **recover** some of these materials. Throwing a phone into ordinary rubbish makes this process much more difficult.
- However, recycling is not the only problem. Before giving away a phone, people need to remove personal **data**, such as photos, messages and saved passwords. This can feel confusing, especially for people who are not confident with technology. Shops and community groups can help by offering clear instructions or a safe place to reset devices.
- Keeping a phone for longer is often the simplest solution. A new battery, a protective case or a repaired screen may give it several more years of life. This is not possible for every phone, but it reminds us that a product can be old without being useless.

Vocabulary note: rubbish (UK) = trash (US).

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

3. Comprehension. Answer in complete sentences. Use the article to help you.

1. Why do people sometimes replace phones that still work?

2. Give two ways a working old phone can be useful to another person.

3. Why is special recycling important for old phones?

4. What should people do before giving away a phone?

5. What does the article suggest is often the simplest solution?

4. Discuss. Talk in small groups. Give reasons and examples.

- How often do people really need a new phone?
- Who should be responsible for making phones easier to repair?
- Would you buy a second-hand phone? Why or why not?
- What technology do people waste most often?

5. Homework: Write an advice paragraph.

Write 120-150 words giving advice to someone who has an old phone. Explain two possible next steps and recommend the best one, with reasons.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. device - F
2. replace - C
3. recover - E
4. valuable - D
5. donate - B
6. data - A

Comprehension answers

1. Why do people sometimes replace phones that still work?

They may want new features such as a better camera or a larger screen.

2. Give two ways a working old phone can be useful to another person.

It can be sold, given to a family member or donated to a charity or organisation.

3. Why is special recycling important for old phones?

It can recover valuable materials that can be used in new products.

4. What should people do before giving away a phone?

They should remove their personal data, including photos, messages and passwords.

5. What does the article suggest is often the simplest solution?

It suggests keeping a phone for longer and repairing it when possible.

Teaching note

Compare vocabulary answers before reading. Help learners plan advice about an old phone: two options and a recommendation with reasons. Accept accurate comprehension paraphrases and supported personal responses.