

The Right to Repair

B2 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. When a product breaks, should its owner be able to repair it anywhere? Why might a manufacturer disagree?

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

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------|---|
| 1. manufacturer | _____ | A. a company that makes products |
| 2. component | _____ | B. limit what someone can do |
| 3. restrict | _____ | C. something that encourages a particular action |
| 4. durable | _____ | D. one part of a larger machine or system |
| 5. disposal | _____ | E. the act of getting rid of something |
| 6. incentive | _____ | F. able to last a long time without damage |

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

- When a phone, washing machine or laptop stops working, the problem may be surprisingly small. A battery may be weak, a cable may be loose, or one **component** may need replacing. Yet many owners discover that repair is expensive, difficult or impossible. The growing movement known as the right to repair argues that this situation should change.
- Supporters want **manufacturers** to provide spare parts, repair instructions and software access for a reasonable period. They argue that people who buy a product should not be forced to return to one approved repair service. Independent repair shops could offer more choice, particularly in areas where official services are far away.
- Manufacturers respond that modern products are complex. They say untrained repairs can create safety risks or damage personal data. They also argue that some information must be protected from competitors. Critics accept these concerns, but say companies sometimes use them to **restrict** ordinary repairs that are neither dangerous nor technically difficult.
- The debate is also environmental. If products are more **durable** and easier to fix, people may keep them longer. This could reduce the **disposal** of old electronics and the need for replacements. However, repair only helps if parts are affordable and available. A repair manual is not useful if a customer cannot obtain the necessary part.
- The right to repair does not mean that every person must repair every product. It means that repair should be a realistic option. Clear information, fair prices and a financial **incentive** to make long-lasting products could give consumers more control over the things they own.

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

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

1. What kinds of small problems can make a product stop working?

2. What do supporters want manufacturers to provide?

3. Why do manufacturers say repair should sometimes be limited?

4. How could easier repair benefit the environment?

5. What is the article's main definition of the right to repair?

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

- Should repair information be free?
- Which products are easiest and hardest to repair?
- Would you pay more for a product designed to last ten years?
- Who should pay when a product is difficult to repair?

5. Homework: Write an opinion paragraph.

Write 140-170 words responding to this statement: 'Companies should be legally required to make products repairable.' Give your opinion, two reasons and one possible objection.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. manufacturer - A
2. component - D
3. restrict - B
4. durable - F
5. disposal - E
6. incentive - C

Comprehension answers

1. What kinds of small problems can make a product stop working?

A weak battery, a loose cable or one faulty component can stop a product working.

2. What do supporters want manufacturers to provide?

They want spare parts, repair instructions and reasonable software access.

3. Why do manufacturers say repair should sometimes be limited?

They say untrained repairs can create safety risks or damage personal data.

4. How could easier repair benefit the environment?

People may keep products longer, reducing electronic waste and the need for replacements.

5. What is the article's main definition of the right to repair?

It is the idea that repair should be a realistic option, with clear information and fair prices.

Teaching note

Compare vocabulary answers before reading. Help learners plan a repair policy: a position, two reasons and a possible objection. Accept accurate comprehension paraphrases and supported personal responses.