

Summary Writing- 4

Have Mobile Phones Made Our Manners Worse?

There is no doubt that the mobile phone has transformed our lives. Just a few decades ago, telephones could only be used to contact someone at home or at work. If people were out and about, they were simply unreachable. That has changed dramatically. Now, we are always just a call or message away, no matter where we are. But is being constantly available really a good thing?

Many people feel torn about their relationship with mobile phones. On one hand, they enjoy the freedom these devices offer the ability to instantly access information, and the ease of staying in touch with friends through messaging apps and social media. For some, phones have also become a symbol of status. They are not just tools, but fashionable accessories that say something about the person using them. Photographing ourselves throughout the day and posting updates online has become a daily habit for many.

Still, the growing use of mobile phones has raised concerns about how it affects our behaviour and manners. Older generations often say that young people seem to have forgotten how to interact politely in person. It's not uncommon to see someone completely absorbed in their screen while ignoring the people around them. In public spaces, commuters often complain about others speaking so loudly on their phones that everyone is forced to listen. Even when it's obvious others are annoyed, many continue as if nothing is wrong.

In shops, customer service workers share similar frustrations. They report that some people continue phone calls while at the checkout, barely acknowledging the person helping them. Some don't even offer a thank you as they walk away with their purchases, too busy chatting on their phones to notice basic social cues.

Of course, mobile phones have brought many practical benefits as well. Travelling is far less stressful now, since help is just a phone call away if something goes wrong. Families living in different countries can see and speak to each other in real time, which has helped loved ones feel closer despite physical distance. Yet, ironically, in homes where people are physically together, silence often falls as each person becomes absorbed in their own screen. Even mealtimes can turn into quiet scrolling sessions instead of family conversations.

Mobile phones also offer powerful tools for personal convenience and growth. People can navigate unfamiliar places using maps on their phones. In unexpected situations, being able to quickly search for information is often a relief. Others find it useful for learning new skills or managing daily tasks efficiently. It has also become easier to stay on top of responsibilities through reminders, notes, and calendar apps. Some people even use their phones to monitor their health or track exercise, which helps support their well-being.

At the same time, other downsides are becoming harder to ignore. Distractions caused by phones are increasingly blamed for lack of focus at work or school. It's tempting to scroll endlessly or respond to messages, even when something important needs attention. Social media, too, can have an emotional impact. Seeing idealised versions of other people's lives may lead to feelings of insecurity or sadness.

There's no doubt that mobile phones are here to stay. But perhaps it's time to reflect on how we use them. As a society, we may benefit from setting clearer expectations for phone etiquette — not just to avoid being rude, but to protect the quality of our relationships and the time we spend together.

(a) Summarise the positive and negative impacts of mobile phones.

(b) Imagine you are Cold Palmer, a young teenager who has recently shifted to the states alone to pursue higher education. Your daily commute to college takes about 30 minutes on the train.

One day on the train, a journalist approaches you and asks you:

Journalist's question: Mobile phones are just the new addition to the list of viruses corrupting children's minds. Do you reckon you are a victim to the curse as well?

Palmer's Answer:-

Total points:-

Positive points (blue)

we are always just a call or message away, no matter where we are.

the ability to instantly access information,

Travelling is far less stressful now, since help is just a phone call away

people can navigate unfamiliar places using maps on their phones.

stay on top of responsibilities through reminders, notes, and calendar apps.

Some people even use their phones to monitor their health or track exercise, which helps support their wellbeing.

Negative points (red)

completely absorbed in their screen while ignoring the people around them.

commuters often complain about others speaking so loudly on their phones that everyone is forced to listen.

Some don't even offer a thank you as they walk away with their purchases, too busy chatting on their phones to notice basic social cues.

silence often falls as each person becomes absorbed in their own screen.

Distractions caused by phones are increasingly blamed for lack of focus at work or school.

Seeing idealised versions of other people's lives may lead to feelings of insecurity or sadness.

phones have also become a symbol of status.

Example Summary:-

Mobile phones have reshaped modern life by making people constantly reachable and giving them instant access to information. They make travelling easier and safer, as help is only a call away, and they assist users in navigating unfamiliar places. Phones not only help people manage responsibilities through reminders and calendars, but also support personal well-being through health-tracking features. These conveniences—coupled with the ability to stay connected across long distances—have made mobile phones invaluable.

However, their widespread use has also led to noticeable declines in manners. Many people become absorbed in their screens and ignore those around them; others disturb public spaces by speaking loudly on calls. Customer service workers often face rudeness from shoppers who remain on their phones, and even families at home fall silent as each person focuses on a separate screen. Phones also contribute to distraction at school or work, and social media may cause insecurity; thus, clearer etiquette is needed.

1. “we are always just a call or message away, no matter where we are.”

People can be contacted instantly wherever they go.
We are reachable at all times through calls or messages.
Distance no longer stops people from staying connected.

2. “the ability to instantly access information,”

Information can be obtained immediately through phones.
Phones allow quick access to any details we need.
Answers are available within seconds using mobile devices.

3. “Travelling is far less stressful now, since help is just a phone call away”

Travel is easier because assistance can be reached quickly by calling.
Knowing help is available by phone makes journeys more comfortable.
Phones reduce travel anxiety as support is always accessible.

4. “people can navigate unfamiliar places using maps on their phones.”

Phones help users find their way in new or unknown areas.
Digital maps on mobile devices guide people through unfamiliar places.
Navigation becomes simpler with map applications on phones.

5. “stay on top of responsibilities through reminders, notes, and calendar apps.”

Phones help manage tasks using reminders and organisational apps.
Daily responsibilities are easier to track with calendars and notes on mobile devices.
Mobile apps assist people in keeping organised and on schedule.

6. “Some people even use their phones to monitor their health or track exercise, which helps support their well-being.”

Phones allow users to check their health and monitor fitness activities.
Health and exercise tracking apps help people maintain their well-being.
Mobile devices support personal health through monitoring tools.

NEGATIVE POINTS

1. “completely absorbed in their screen while ignoring the people around them.”

People often focus on their phones instead of interacting with others nearby.
Mobile use can cause individuals to overlook those around them.
Face-to-face communication is ignored because of screen distraction.

2. “commuters often complain about others speaking so loudly on their phones that everyone is forced to listen.”

Loud phone calls disturb others in public spaces.
People talking at high volume on phones can annoy commuters.
Public areas become unpleasant when callers do not lower their voices.

3. “Some don’t even offer a thank you as they walk away with their purchases, too busy chatting on their phones to notice basic social cues.”

Phone users may ignore basic manners when buying things.
People on calls often fail to acknowledge customer service staff.
Being occupied on the phone can lead to rude or careless behaviour.

4. “silence often falls as each person becomes absorbed in their own screen.”

Shared spaces can become quiet when everyone is focused on their devices.
Families may stop interacting because each person is using their phone.
Screens can replace conversations in homes and social settings.

5. “Distractions caused by phones are increasingly blamed for lack of focus at work or school.”

Mobile phones interrupt concentration in school or the workplace.
People lose focus because they turn to their phones during important tasks.
Productivity drops when phones constantly draw attention away.

6. “Seeing idealised versions of other people’s lives may lead to feelings of insecurity or sadness.”

Social media comparisons can make people feel unhappy about themselves.
Viewing perfect online images may create insecurity.
People often feel inadequate when judging themselves against unrealistic posts.

7. “phones have also become a symbol of status.”

Some people use phones to show social standing.
Mobile devices are sometimes treated as fashion statements.
Owning certain phones is seen as a sign of prestige.