

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 Cole & 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:-