

## Reading 3

### Skills:

- Details
- Make inferences
- Author's attitude
- Understand vocabulary from context

**Getting started:** What is something you wish your cell phone could also do?

## FUTURE MOBILE PHONES: WHAT'S COMING OUR WAY?



The mobile phones of the future are expected to be more closely related to our day-to-day lives than ever before. Some futurologists and industry experts predict that in years to come mobile phones will become remote controls for our whole lives, while others say that in the future mobile phones will literally run our lives for us. One thing's for certain: the technology involved in mobile phones and mobile networks has developed so rapidly over the last few years that it's going to be an exciting ride. Here is a list of some of the things we might be able to expect from the phones of the future:

### **Holographic displays**

From Star Wars to Ironman, holograms have long been a regular feature in sci-fi and futuristic fantasy films. But how close are we to touch-free technology on smartphones? Back in March 2014, rumors were flying around about the then-unreleased iPhone 6 containing holographic functions that allowed you to beam virtual displays to interact with. Unsurprisingly, this technology didn't make it onto the iPhone 6 or later phones. Holographic phones could one day be a reality, though. Especially if the HoloFlex prototype showcased by researchers from Queen's University in Canada could see the light of day. As the name suggests, the HoloFlex is both holographic and flexible, allowing users to bend the handset to view the 3D display from different angles and interact with the images on screen. Named as the world's first holographic, flexible smartphone, the HoloFlex is still in development and won't be available any time soon.

### **Flexible Frames**

For a long time now, phone companies have talked of creating a smartphone that is so robust that it can actually be folded in two by the user. One such vision was Nokia's The Morph phone, a prototype that was showcased back in 2008 and promised to "transform the user's experience". Designed by Tapani Tyhanen, who was director and head of Nokia's Research Center Laboratory in Cambridge, The Morph could be folded, bent and reshaped to suit the user's needs. The Morph phone could be wrapped around your wrist, transformed into a GPS-enabled belt clip for hiking and extreme sports, or used as a flat screen for watching videos. Similarly, Samsung has been showing off other types of flexible **concept phones** at technology shows for years now, but so far, the closest it has come to bringing the technology to market was the Galaxy Round smartphone.

### **Educational tools**

Some experts believe that in the not too distant future, mobiles will change the way we learn and teach. With more than one-in-three school children having a mobile phone, a future where camera and voice recorder phones are both learning and teaching tools is highly possible. The multi-functional nature of mobile phones as both learning and teaching aids could be increasingly popular, especially as different types of apps are released every single day. It's possible that in the future, mobile phones will be used in the classroom as a collaborative tool that can help the teacher and the students work on different topics.

### **Eco-friendly smartphones**

Companies are always looking to make their products more environmentally friendly, and phone makers are no exception, with researchers looking into biodegradable materials and cleaner energy charging. At the Mobile World Congress trade show in Barcelona in 2016, Kyocera showed a solar-powered prototype. However, this technology won't replace the need for a wall charger anytime soon. This phone was primarily designed for users who work outdoors, as well as people who like to be away from a power source for an extended period of time, such as people hiking or camping. Still, the company claims that three minutes of sunshine will give you enough charge for a one-minute phone call, which could provide users with an emergency charging option if their mobile dies far from home. Another concept phone promising a green alternative to electrical charging is the 2009 Mechanical Mobile prototype by Mikhail Stawsky. **Unlike** the solar powered prototypes, the Mechanical Mobile runs on kinetic energy. The idea behind the design is that you spin it round on your finger to charge it up. The obvious benefit of this, besides helping the environment, is that you could charge this phone pretty much anywhere. However, it's unclear how much finger-spinning it would need to boost the battery significantly, and we can predict there will be many broken phones (and possibly broken noses) as the result of this activity.

### **Your new best friend**

From setting alarms and reminders to checking our Facebook feed, doing online shopping and managing our finances, we reach for our phones as soon as we wake up and don't really put them down until we're ready to sleep. As smartphone technology becomes ever more intuitive, we're growing increasingly attached to our mobiles. So, why not have a phone that you can interact with on a whole new level? Some years later, Julius Tarnig designed a prototype called the Modai, a modular handset aiming to turn your smartphone into your best friend. This companion device was inspired by human behaviors and designed to help users connect to it physically and emotionally. Remember the movie *Her*? The Modai phone would greet you in the morning, and keep silent at night, and would adapt to different situations in much the same way a human would. So, if you overslept, it would create a faster route to work using its GPS, or if you visited a new place, it would recommend stuff to do.

We see a future where everything is connected and our smartphones – or whatever replaces it – can communicate with virtually every possible device. As long as you have it with you, your front door will

open once you get near it, you'll be able to unlock your car and start the engine just by having your phone around. Who knows what else we will be able to see?

*\*Adapted from <https://www.uswitch.com/mobiles/guides/future-of-mobile-phones/>*

**Answer the following questions:**

1. What can be inferred from paragraph 2?
  - a. Holographic functions will be part of many cell phones in the next two years.
  - b. The holographic function will be patented by Queen's University and no other technology company will be able to use this feature.
  - c. The HoloFlex will be bought by Apple, and the new iPhones will include holographic functions.
  - d. Many years will pass until we can see cell phones that incorporate holographic functions.
2. What can be deduced about the term **concept phones** in paragraph 3?
  - a. These are very popular commercial phones.
  - b. They are phones released in the previous two years.
  - c. These are just prototypes that are not sold to the public.
  - d. There are phones used only by sportspeople.
3. How does the author seem to feel about using cell phones for educational purposes?
  - a. He/she thinks it is already happening as one out of three kids has a cell phone.
  - b. He/she believes a cell phone can be a tool to generate interaction in the classroom.
  - c. He/she seems to be against using cell phones in the classroom.
  - d. He/she thinks a cell phone is a tool to interact, but it's not an educational tool.
4. The word **unlike** in paragraph 5 is closest in meaning to
  - a. exact
  - b. similar to
  - c. inaccurate
  - d. different from
5. What is wrong with the charging technology proposed by Kyocera?
  - a. It could take a long time to be able to charge the phone completely.
  - b. The technology works only with emergency calls.
  - c. It could only be used in Barcelona, Spain.
  - d. This works only if you plug your phone into the wall for three minutes.

6. How does the author seem to feel about the idea of spinning your phone to charge it?
  - a. It is the best option in order to help the environment.
  - b. It may be practical, but it can cause accidents also.
  - c. It is a good way to exercise your fingers.
  - d. It is the worse idea ever.
7. What's the idea behind the Modai prototype?
  - a. It was a concept inspired by the movie *Her*.
  - b. It was a tool with improved functions like a better GPS and a modern alarm.
  - c. It should be an office tool that can help you remember all the meetings you have.
  - d. It is a device that can adapt to your daily activities and help you with different tasks.

**What do you think?**

Do you think cell phones should be incorporated into the classroom as a way to help kids learn?