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# What's the best way to incorporate mobile phones in teaching English?



It is true that the use of mobile devices have become an integral part of life for many people since they let us be constantly in touch with colleagues, friends and family. Nevertheless, they are also being considered as a serious distraction, especially at school because they take students attention away from learning.

As a result of this situation, the best countermeasure to neutralize this so far has been to ban the use of mobile phones in class.

The best solution is not to prohibit but to promote the use of mobile phones in a responsible and productive way.

**In fact, there are some positive outcomes when using mobile devices for educational purposes, for example:**

- Enhance students' digital literacy and 21st-century skills.
- Enrich classroom activities with authentic language resources.
- Develop learner autonomy.
- Encourage out-of-school learning.
- Align teaching practices with the real world.

In order to make the most of these technological devices, it is necessary to consider the following factors to decide whether to include mobile devices in your class and to what extent:

- The lesson and learning goals
- The availability of devices for all students
- The reliability of the network
- The familiarity of students and teachers with the app or tool to use



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Apart from the aforementioned, the following are some teaching practices that are well worth taking into account when using mobile devices:

**1** Profile your class. Although nowadays we live in a digital era, many adult students might not be keen on using mobile devices for learning purposes, or they might be too young to own one.

Make sure you know your class very well so mobile devices activities help achieve the learning goals of your class.

**2** Learn how to use every website and app before attempting to use them in class. Creating a list of FAQs is an excellent idea to have solutions in case of any problems.

**3** Avoid websites or apps with long load times. This will negatively affect the class pace and timing.

**4** Keep activities short and concise. Remember actual time on the device is not the principal learning aim; the main idea is to practice language. For this reason, always include follow-up activities like pair or group discussions to generate active language.

**5** Create simple activities which are easy to understand and follow. Complex tasks might involve more TTT for directions and instructions, especially when students are not tech-savvy.

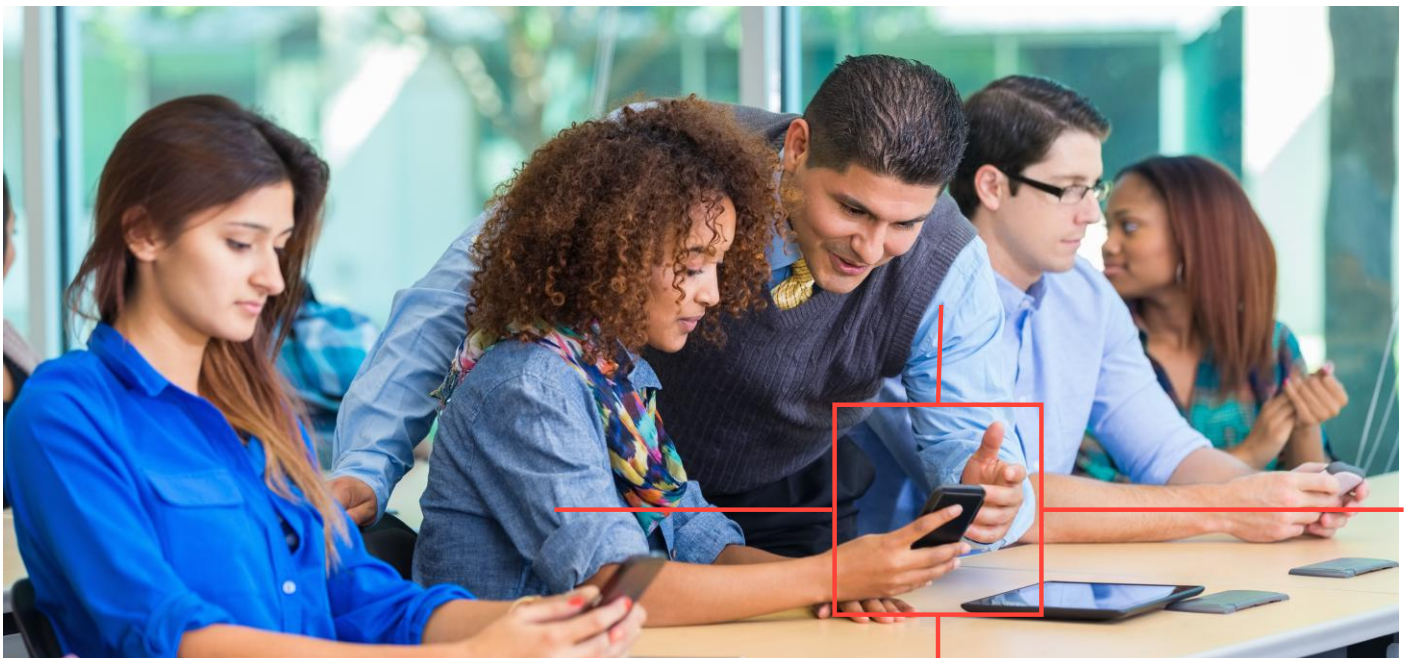
**6** Collaborate with colleagues and share ideas. Learning how to use mobile devices tools requires time and preparation. By sharing experiences and techniques, the learning process can be considerably shortened.

**7** Take advantage of the technological resources the coursebooks offer. Many courses now have apps and games which are accessible on mobile phones, unfortunately some teachers just do not know what the coursebooks offers. Take time to know your teaching material and dare to use them in class. Variation is essential for a dynamic and meaningful class.





**8** Incorporate mobile phones as a usual tool in your class. For this you need to train and educate your students, establish rules so they know when they are allowed. Many teachers use mobile phones for simulations and role plays (for example, practicing telephone calls) but they can also be used for recording communicative activities to check pronunciation and appropriacy of language.



Mobile phones can also be very useful if students need to quickly check the meaning of a word, do a translation or find out some information using a search engine.

Thinking about the teacher, mobile phones are useful for timing activities in class, checking the meaning of words and using LMS features on courses.

Bear in mind that teacher training is needed to learn best practices in merging pedagogy and mobile technology; moreover a greater obstacle is teachers' attitude toward mobile phones.

To ensure the success of the incorporation of mobiles phones in class, the teacher must at first feel comfortable with them. Collaborating with a more experienced teacher can help introducing this technology in your classes.