
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Wireless furniture for phones



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Rob

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Rob...

Neil

...and I'm Neil. Hello.

Rob

Hello, Neil! Now, Neil, could I borrow your phone charger, please? My phone's just died.

Neil

Er... I don't think my charger is compatible with your phone. **Compatible** means when you can use things together... I'm afraid there'll be no status updates for you today then Rob.

Rob

Oh dear. I can't believe it's run out of power already.

Neil

Well, you shouldn't have bought a state-of-the-art phone – it's a big drain on the battery.

Rob

State of the art means something that has the newest ideas and features, like my phone. So I should have stuck with a dinosaur like yours, eh, Neil?

Neil

And **dinosaur** here means something that is out-dated. You can laugh at my phone, but it's got plenty of battery life left – unlike yours, Rob!

Rob

Hmmm... OK, well, I might just pop out and ask if someone's got the same charger...

Neil

Stay where you are. We're recording a programme! And today's show is... you guessed it... all about phones!

Rob

Yes. That's right, Neil. And we're also talking about **wireless furniture**...

Neil

I beg your pardon?

Rob

Yes, furniture with built-in wireless charging technology – like a coffee table. **Built in** means the technology is included as part of the table. So you just pop your phone on the table, and technology does the rest!

Neil

Magic! And **wireless technology** is the way mobile phones work using radio waves to send and receive data. So that's what we need – a desk with a built-in charging spot for both our phones! But would it be compatible for both of them?

Rob Well, that's an excellent question – and I don't have the answer. But can you tell me the answer to this question: What do modern phone batteries contain? Is it...

- a) nickel
- b) lithium
- or c) lead-acid

Neil

Well, lead-acid sounds dangerous... so I think it's either nickel or lithium. I'll go with lithium.

Rob

OK, well, we'll find out if you're right or wrong later on. But now let's listen to journalist Daisy Buchanan who thinks that mobile phones have stopped us having conversations. And listen out for a phrase that means 'it's unlikely to happen soon'.

INSERT

Daisy Buchanan, journalist for the Telegraph & the Guardian newspapers

I was thinking yesterday how it used to be, you know, you used to sort of go into a café or a pub maybe and look for where the loos are but now the first thing we're looking for is sockets to try and find where you can charge if you ... you know, if you're having an emergency... And maybe with this, I might be being naïve – I suspect I am – especially with Ikea's new wireless charging furniture... that maybe if our batteries died a bit more frequently we are going to... you know... look up a bit more and have a few more conversations. I'm not holding my breath, but you can but hope.

Rob

Daisy said some really interesting things there, so let's listen to that clip again.

INSERT

Daisy Buchanan, journalist for the Telegraph & the Guardian newspapers

I was thinking yesterday how it used to be, you know, you used to sort of go into a café or a pub maybe and look for where the loos are but now the first thing we're looking for is sockets to try and find where you can charge if you ... you know, if you're having an emergency... And maybe with this, I might be being naïve – I suspect I am – especially with Ikea's new wireless charging furniture... that maybe if our batteries died a bit more frequently we are going to... you know... look up a bit more and have a few more conversations. I'm not holding my breath, but you can but hope.

Rob

So, did you get it? Another way of saying 'It's unlikely to happen soon' is **I'm not holding my breath**. Now, Daisy doesn't seem keen on the idea of wireless charging furniture. She thinks our phones are stopping us from having conversations.

Neil

It sounds ridiculous, but it's true, isn't it? We spend far too much time staring at our phones instead of talking to each other.

Rob

Sorry. What's that, Neil? I was just looking at my phone.

Neil

Come on, Rob! Put the phone away.

Rob

OK. Well, that's because phone **functionality** – that's what a phone can do – is increasing all the time. But let's move on now and **think green** for a minute. Are there any environmental factors to consider in relation to new mobile phone technology?

Neil

Let's listen to Fevzi Turkalp talking about the latest model of one mobile phone brand – and find out.

INSERT

Fevzi Turkalp, editor of tech advice website GadgetDetective.com

They've taken the decision to make it a sealed unit so no user-replaceable battery... And I guess ... you're more likely then to say you know what I won't replace the battery I'll just get a new phone.

Rob

So Fevzi says this new phone doesn't have a **user-replaceable** battery, meaning you can't take it out and replace it – and this is a problem for the environment.

Neil

That's right – environmentalists want products that are designed to be taken apart. Then they can be easily upgraded, repaired or recycled. But you can't do this with a **sealed unit** – a unit that cannot be opened.

Rob

And this means **toxic** – or poisonous – materials are often dumped in landfill. And you guessed it – that's really bad for the environment. Now, remember at the beginning of the programme I asked you: What do modern phone batteries contain?

Neil

And I said lithium...

Rob

And you know your batteries well because that's the right answer!

Neil

Wow. What a great guess! Now Rob, how about those words again?

Rob

OK, the words we heard today were:

compatible
state of the art
dinosaur
wireless furniture
built in
wireless technology
I'm not holding my breath
functionality
think green
user-replaceable
sealed unit
toxic

Neil

Well, that brings us to the end of today's 6 Minute English. We hope you're feeling charged up by today's programme. Please join us again soon.

Both

Bye.

Vocabulary

compatible

things that can be used together

state-of-the-art

using the latest technology

dinosaur

(here) someone or something that is very old-fashioned and no longer useful or effective

wireless furniture

furniture with built-in technology which allows you to charge your phone

built-in

part of something, and not separate from it

wireless technology

modern equipment and machines that can operate without wires

I'm not holding my breath

(informal phrase) don't expect something to happen anytime soon

functionality

things that a piece of equipment can do

think green

consider the environment

user-replaceable

allows the user of a gadget to change the battery

sealed unit

something that cannot be opened

toxic

poisonous