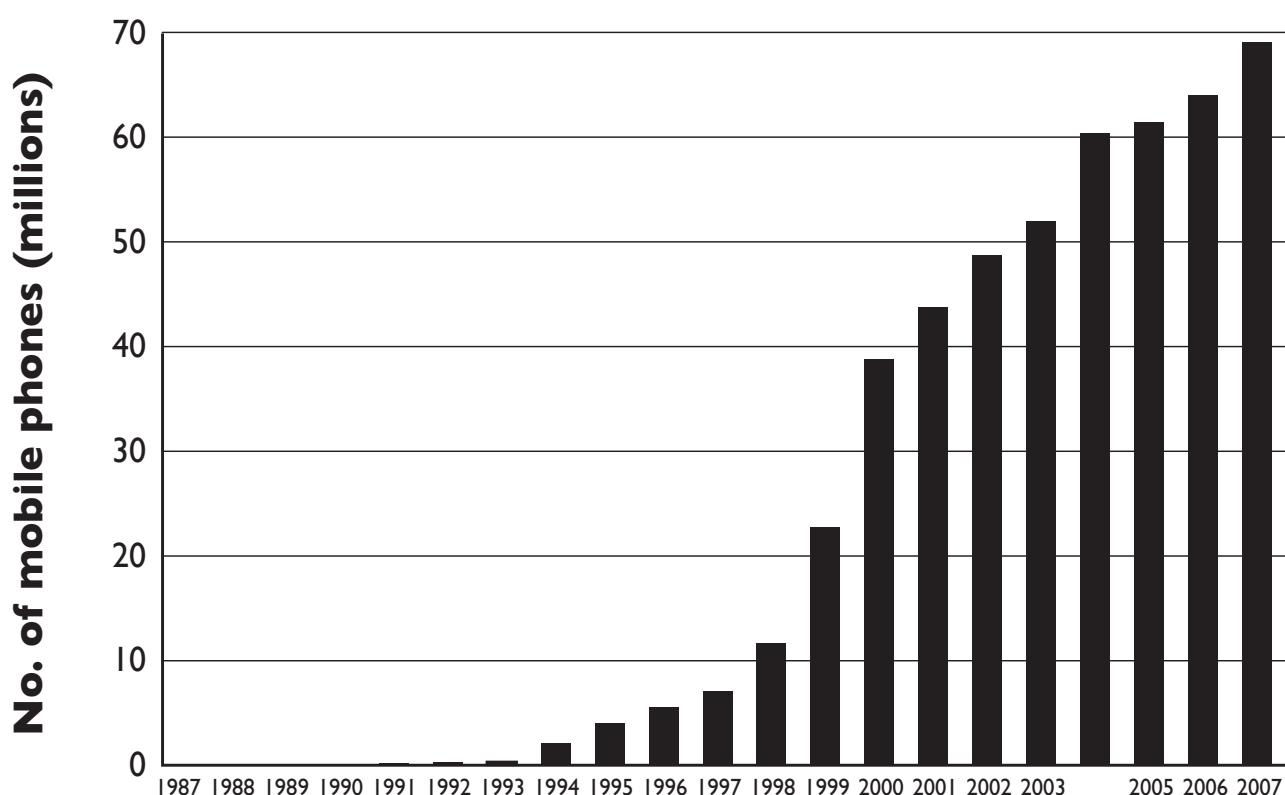


Mobile phones

Here is some information about mobile phones.

Cellular mobile phones are often regarded as a fairly recent innovation. However, they have been freely available in the UK for over 20 years. During the period between December 1999 to December 2000 a total of 46,000 new users a day joined the UK mobile phone network. 5.1 million phones were bought in the UK during the 2000 Christmas period.



Questions

1. About how many mobile phones had been sold by 1990?
2. About how many mobile phones had been sold by 1999?
3. About how many mobile phones had been sold by 2000?
4. About how many mobile phones had been sold by 2007?
5. About how many more mobile phones were there in 1999 than in 1990?
6. About how many more mobile phones were there in 2007 than in 2000?

Mobile phones

Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet.

Using the worksheet

Today, mobile phones are everywhere. In fact, many of your students probably have their own mobile phone. In the US, there is a mobile phone made especially for children under 8. However, mobile phones have actually been around for more than 20 years. While mobile phone use grows more every year, it was in the 1990s that it really took off. This is because of the introduction of smaller phones, and the deregulation of the industry, which made calls cheap.

According to Ofcom, there were 70 million mobile phone subscriptions in the UK in 2007. More UK households now have a mobile phone than have a landline phone and the proportion of households relying on mobile phones exclusively (9%) is greater than the proportion who only use landline phones (7%); 84% of adults reported personally using a mobile phone in the first four months of 2007; 35% of all UK calls were mobile-originated.

The average outbound calls per mobile connection rose to over 100 mins per month in 2006. The average mobile phone user is now sending more than 12 text messages a week.

In less than twenty years, the mobile phone has gone from being rare, expensive equipment of the business elite to a pervasive, low-cost personal item. In many countries, mobile phones outnumber landline phones. In some poor countries that lack infrastructure, making landlines rare and expensive, mobile phones have allowed many people to have phones for the first time.

In December 1993, the first person-to-person SMS text message was transmitted in Finland. Currently, texting is the most widely-used data service; 1.8 billion users generated around £40 billion of revenue in 2006 just from texting.

The new 3G services allow internet access via mobile phone, again, making the internet accessible for more people. In Europe, 30–40 per cent of internet access is via mobile phone.

Mobile phones are also a fashion item. Ringtone sales amounted to almost £2 billion in 2005.

Younger students

Students may need help in interpreting the graph.

Outcomes

The students can:

- See the increase in mobile phone usage.
- Think about how the mobile phone has changed people's lives.
- Appreciate that mobile phone usage increased rapidly in the 1990s.

Older students

The students could use secondary sources to research the rise of the mobile phone, how it has helped people in the developing world and some of the issues about mobile phones (such as are mobile phone masts dangerous to health).

Outcomes

The students can:

- See the increase in mobile phone usage.
- Think about how the mobile phone has changed people's lives.
- Appreciate that mobile phone usage increased rapidly in the 1990s.

Answers

1. **Less than 1 million**
2. **About 23–24 million**
3. **About 38 million**
4. **About 68 million**
5. **About 22–23 million**
6. **About 30 million**