

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

Catherine

Hello and welcome to Six Minute English! I'm Catherine.

Rob

And I'm Rob – and today we bring you a techy topic along with six up-to-date vocabulary items.

Catherine

And today's techy topic is smartphones. So Rob, can you tell me which age group have been buying smartphones at the fastest rate over the last five years here in the UK? Is it...

- a) 15-35 year olds,
- b) 35-55 year olds or
- c) 55-75 year olds?

Rob

It's got to be the youngsters. It's got to be the 15-35 year olds.

Catherine

Oh well we'll see whether you got that right or wrong later on in the show. Now Rob, a question: how old is your smartphone?

Rob

OK mine, I bought it a couple of years ago.

Catherine

And are you happy with it?

Rob

Yes, I am. It works just fine – it does everything I need it to do.

Catherine

So you're not worried about not having the latest model?

Rob

Not at all. My phone works really well – it has all the functionality I need. And I'm not convinced that the latest model offers any more than the one I've got, to be honest.

Catherine

Functionality refers to the range of functions a computer or other electronic device can perform. So, let's listen now to Andrew Orlowski, from the tech news website The Register. He explains why people are holding onto their phones longer – instead of rushing out to buy the latest model of phone.

Andrew Orlowski, The Register

What's happened is that prices have gone up at the high end. And it's kind of a cycle where people hang onto their phones for longer, therefore manufacturers charge more. Then people hang onto them longer to justify that higher purchase.

Rob

So big brand names like iPhone and Samsung make phones at the high end of the market – meaning the expensive ones. So once people have bought a handset, they hang on to it! If you **hang onto something**, you keep it. I've been hanging onto my phone for a couple of years – and am hoping I won't need to change it for another year or so, at least.

Catherine

But what happens is, if people aren't replacing their phones, the phone manufacturers don't make a big enough profit. So they start charging more...

Rob

... and this, in turn, makes people hang onto their phones even longer! So that's why Andrew Orlowski calls it a **cycle** – that's where one event leads to another, and then often repeats itself.

Catherine

So where will the cycle end?

Rob

Good question! Let's listen to Andrew again, talking about where he thinks the smartphone market is heading.

Andrew Orlowski, The Register

I think it's a very mature market now. And you have to compare, say, a £900 Galaxy Note or a £1000 iPhone with a spectacular TV you can... a 49 inch TV you can get for £450. It no longer has that kind of must-have lustre that it might have had 4 or 5 years ago.

Catherine

What does 'mature' mean, Rob?

Rob

Mature means fully-grown – we're mature adults for example, Catherine! And in a business context, a mature market is where supply is equal to demand.

Catherine

And if something has 'must-have lustre'? What's that?

Rob

A **must-have** item is something you feel you must have. And **lustre** means shine.

Catherine

I love shiny new things, especially when it's a piece of new tech. But £1000 is a lot of money for a phone. A spectacular 49-inch TV for only £450 sounds like a bargain though! My TV only has a 30-inch screen.

Rob

Stop there, Catherine! It's time for the answer to today's question.

Catherine

OK: Which age group have been buying smartphones at the fastest rate over the last five years here in the UK? Is it... a) 15-35 year olds, b) 35-55 year olds, or c) 55-75 year olds?

Rob

I said 15-35 year olds.

Catherine

And you were wrong, I'm afraid, Rob! The answer is 55-75 year olds! Although research also highlighted that this age group tended to use their smartphones less than younger people. The study was based on a sample of 1,163 people questioned between May and June in 2017.

Rob

Interesting. OK, I think it's time we looked back at the words we learned today. Our first word is 'functionality' – which refers to the range of functions a computer or other electronic device can perform.

Catherine

'These two computers are similar in terms of both their price and functionality.'

Rob

Good example Catherine. Number two – if you hang on to something, you keep it. For example, 'You should hang onto your old TV, Catherine. There's nothing wrong with a 30 inch screen!'

Catherine

Thanks for the advice, Rob. And our next word is 'cycle' – that's where one event leads to another, and then often repeats itself. For example, 'I'm in a bad cycle of going to bed late, then oversleeping in the morning.'

Rob

You need to sort yourself out, Catherine! You're spending too much time on social media – and all that blue-screen time makes it very hard to fall asleep. The last thing you need is a bigger TV!

Catherine

You're probably right. OK – the adjective 'mature' means fully grown or fully developed. Here's an example of the verb form– 'My investments have matured and they're worth a lot of money now!'

Rob

Right moving on, a 'must-have item' is something you feel you must have! For example, 'Check out the latest must-have tech bargains on our website!'

Catherine

And finally, 'lustre' – which means shine.

Rob

For example, 'I polished my brass doorknob until it shone with a pleasing lustre.'

Catherine

OK before Rob heads off to polish his doorknob, and I nip out to buy a new big-screen TV, please remember to check out our Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages.

Rob/Catherine

Bye!