

# 1 INVALSI | Reading

## Never without my mobile phone

Can you imagine a world without mobile phones? It just seems impossible, because nowadays almost everybody has one. Mobile phones are used mainly to keep in touch with friends and family members, to have a chat or just for fun, but also for business and important calls. However, mobile phones are really a quite recent invention. Dr. Martin Cooper and his team were the inventors of the first handheld mobile phone at Motorola in 1973, and most ordinary people bought their first cell phone at the end of the 1990s.

Mobile phones, or cell phones as they are also called, are a combination of a radio and a telephone. The name cell phone comes from the fact that they work inside a 'cell', a hexagonal geographic area that is usually situated a couple of kilometres from your mobile phone. Each cell has a base station that consists of an antenna and a building containing radio equipment. When the cell phone signals arrive at the base station, they are transformed into telephone signals and sent to the public telephone network to the person you are ringing. If you move, you are reassigned to another base station inside another cell.

Mobile phones make use of a battery that can be recharged in a few hours by plugging the cell phone into an electrical wall socket. The battery can last a couple of days, but this depends on how much the phone is used. With a cell phone you can make and receive phone calls wherever you are.

Today there is a great variety and choice of cell phones. They vary in size and can offer different services. Some are simple telephones with which you can send and receive calls and text messages; texting is now very popular with young people. Others have some extra devices such as MP3 players, web browsing and downloading, digital organisers and cameras. The latest models offer better performance and new technology at a cheaper price.

Some people say that mobile phones are not good for your health. According to some studies, if they are overused, they can cause anxiety, exhaustion and eye strain. Some research has also shown that people who use them while they are driving, are more distracted and can easily lose control of their cars and cause more accidents, even if they have the so-called 'hands-free' systems. For this reason laws in many countries have limited their use in cars.

Overuse of cell phones today causes disturbance at work and school and in public places too, such as theatres. Another problem is economic; people often spend too much money on the latest phone and on phone calls, they also spend time on the phone when instead, they should be working or studying. So, all in all, are mobile phones such a good thing?

### Glossary

**handheld:** *portatile*

**plugging into:** *collegare a*

**socket:** *presa*

**devices:** *dispositivi*

**web browsing:** *navigazione in Internet*

**exhaustion:** *stanchezza*

**eye strain:** *affaticamento della vista*

## PARTE A: Comprensione del testo

- 1** When were handheld mobile phones invented?
- A in the 1990s
  - B in 1973
  - C in the 1960s
  - D in 1960
- 2** Most ordinary mobile phones are a combination of...
- A a telephone and a computer.
  - B a computer and a radio.
  - C a telephone and a radio.
  - D a telephone and a TV signal.
- 3** How long is typical battery life?
- A two days exactly
  - B it really depends on how much it is used
  - C a few hours
  - D about a week
- 4** What word means the same as 'put energy back in'?
- A plugging in
  - B electrical
  - C wall socket
  - D recharge
- 5** What is a cell?
- A a mobile signal
  - B a hexagonal area
  - C a base station
  - D something made of plastic
- 6** What word in the text involves sending an 'SMS' (short message service)?
- A MP3
  - B web browser
  - C texting
  - D downloading
- 7** What does the text say the latest models of mobile phones offer?
- A less powerful technology at a low price
  - B better technology with less cost
  - C better technology at increased price
  - D better performance at higher price
- 8** The text says that a 'hands-free' system in the car...
- A makes drivers more distracted.
  - B makes drivers lose control.
  - C doesn't make the use of cell phones completely safe in a car.
  - D is against the law in all countries.
- 9** Cell phones are...
- A dangerous if they are not used too much.
  - B not dangerous for your vision.
  - C not the cause of stress.
  - D dangerous if they are overused.
- 10** Which of the following conclusion is NOT correct?
- A Cell phones can cause distraction in public places.
  - B Cell phones can cause economic problems for users.
  - C Cell phones can cause problems at work.
  - D Cell phones can cause people to not communicate.

### ●● J. K. Rowling

J. K. Rowling is the pen name of Joanne Rowling, a British writer famous for being the author of the Harry Potter series of books. Her publisher decided to change her name when they published the first Harry Potter book, because they were afraid that boys would not buy a book written by a woman.

5 Joanne was born in England in 1965. She had wanted to write books since she was a child and she actually started writing when she was six, and read her stories to her younger sister Dianne. She studied French and Classics at university, then she studied in Paris for a year and when she returned to London, she worked for Amnesty International. After her mother's death, due to multiple sclerosis, she moved to Portugal, where she worked as an English teacher. There she met her first husband, a television journalist, and had a daughter, Jessica. The marriage ended after a short time and she moved  
10 to Scotland. During this period she suffered from depression. At that time she had already written her first Harry Potter book.

The idea for the fantasy series had suddenly come to her one day in 1990, when she was sitting on a train in Manchester. She was going to London and the train was delayed. By the time she reached London, the whole story was in her mind and she immediately started writing it. She sent the manuscript of the first  
15 book to twelve publishers in 1995, but it was rejected by all of them. A year later, a small British editor decided to publish it, but told her that she would not make much money writing books for children.

In 1997 she won her first literary award and it was the first in a long list. Her fourth book sold 3 million copies in the USA in the first 48 hours. The sixth book sold 9 million copies in the first 24 hours. The seventh and last book of the series was published in 2007 and it was the fastest-selling book of all time.  
20 The eight film versions of the Harry Potter series have been extremely successful.

Joanna has received honorary degrees from a great number of universities all over the world. Her books have been translated into 65 languages, sold 400 million copies and she has earned £7 billion, which has made her the 12<sup>th</sup> richest woman in Great Britain. But her greatest achievement is that, thanks to her books, reading among the young has become very popular, in a time when most of them are  
25 usually more interested in television and computer games. She has also proved to be an extraordinary philanthropist, donating a great amount of money to different charities to help children, one-parent families and research on multiple sclerosis. She married her second husband, a doctor, in 2001 and has had two more sons.

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### Glossary

**suddenly:** *improvvisamente*

**philanthropist:** *filantropa, donatrice*

## PARTE A: Comprensione del testo

- 1 She used the letters J.K. ...**
- A to be like Tolkien, a famous writer of stories.
  - B to sound like the sound OK which is very positive.
  - C so that people would not understand that she was a woman.
  - D because it was her mother's name.
- 2 She started writing for the first time...**
- A in 1965.
  - B when she was 6.
  - C in 1990.
  - D when she was 46.
- 3 The text says that J.K. Rowling...**
- A has never been to France and Portugal.
  - B has certainly been to India.
  - C does not know French.
  - D has travelled a lot.
- 4 J.K. Rowling now has...**
- A only two boys.
  - B three children.
  - C only a daughter.
  - D no family.
- 5 In the text we discover J.K. Rowling was in the past...**
- A an Amnesty soldier.
  - B a journalist.
  - C an English teacher.
  - D a doctor.
- 6 Her first Harry Potter book...**
- A was accepted immediately.
  - B was never accepted.
  - C was rejected more than 13 times.
  - D was accepted by a small publisher.
- 7 She first had success in...**
- A 1997.
  - B 1995.
  - C 2007.
  - D 1990.
- 8 Which is true?**
- A There are 7 Harry Potter books and 7 Harry Potter films.
  - B There are 8 Harry Potter books and 7 Harry Potter films.
  - C There are more Harry Potter books than Harry Potter films.
  - D There are more Harry Potter films than Harry Potter books.
- 9 Today J.K. Rowling...**
- A is not very rich.
  - B has given lots of money to charity.
  - C keeps all her money.
  - D makes translations in 12 countries.
- 10 She is considered important for society because...**
- A she has a lot of universities.
  - B she believes in magic.
  - C she has 400 million books.
  - D she has made reading popular for young people.

## ●● St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated every year on March 17<sup>th</sup>. It is a national holiday in Ireland because St. Patrick is the patron saint. A bit like Halloween, it seems to have been reintroduced to the world by Americans. In fact the festival is also celebrated in the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina and New Zealand. It is actually an important festivity for people of Irish descent all over the world and it is becoming an important festivity even for people who have no connections with Ireland.

Green is the colour usually associated with Ireland and so it is very important during this festivity. Green ribbons and shamrocks have been used during this festivity since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Today even the waters of some rivers (for example in Chicago), canals and fountains are dyed green during this celebration. People eat specially coloured green food, drink Irish beer like Guinness and Irish whiskey. They also take part in parades, especially in the USA and in Canada. In the past St. Patrick's Day was only a Christian festival, a religious holiday, but in 1903 it became a national public holiday in Ireland.

But who was St. Patrick and why is this festivity celebrated on March 17<sup>th</sup>?

St. Patrick was born in Great Britain around 385 A.D. When he was a teenager, he was captured and taken to Ireland where he worked as a slave. After some years he managed to escape and went to France. First he became a priest, then a bishop. Some time later he went back to Ireland as a missionary where he converted a lot of Irish to Christianity. According to the legend, he used the shamrock (today a symbol of Ireland) to explain the Trinity during his missionary work and he also introduced the Roman alphabet to this country. People say he destroyed all the snakes in Ireland. He probably died in Downpatrick, in Ireland, on March 17<sup>th</sup> 461 A.D.

There are a lot of Irish immigrants in the USA where the tradition is very popular too, so a large number of parades are organised in different cities. People dress in green and listen to Irish music. The very first parade in the USA was held in 1762 in New York and today it is the most famous parade. The first St. Patrick's festival was organised in Dublin in 1996 and it was such a great success that now it is a five-day long event and it attracts almost 700,000 people.

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### Glossary

**ribbons:** *nastri*

**shamrocks:** *trifogli*

**dyed:** *tinti*

**bishop:** *vescovo*

**PARTE A: Comprensione del testo**

- 1 Which statement is true?**
- A St. Patrick's Day is not celebrated in the United States.
  - B St. Patrick's Day is not celebrated in Canada and Australia.
  - C St. Patrick's Day is only celebrated in Ireland.
  - D St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in Ireland and other countries.
- 2 Today it is celebrated...**
- A by Irish people.
  - B by people of Irish descent.
  - C by people who have no connection with Ireland.
  - D by all of the above A, B and C.
- 3 The text does NOT say that...**
- A food is sometimes coloured green specially for the festival.
  - B drink is sometimes coloured green specially for the festival.
  - C a river is sometimes coloured green specially for the festival.
  - D all of Chicago is sometimes coloured green specially for the festival.
- 4 The text says that Ireland is famous for...**
- A canal and fountains.
  - B green food and fruit.
  - C whiskey and Guinness.
  - D ribbons and rivers.
- 5 Saint Patrick's day...**
- A is a national holiday in America.
  - B is a national holiday in Ireland.
  - C is only a religious holiday in Ireland.
  - D is mainly a religious holiday in the USA.
- 6 Which of these is true?**
- A St. Patrick was British by birth.
  - B St. Patrick was Irish by birth.
  - C St. Patrick was French by birth.
  - D St. Patrick was Roman by birth.
- 7 What is the correct order of Patrick's life?**
- A slave, priest, bishop, missionary
  - B missionary, slave
  - C priest, bishop, missionary, slave
  - D slave, bishop, priest, missionary
- 8 What did St. Patrick do?**
- A He only converted a few people.
  - B He used the Shamrock in all celebrations.
  - C He introduced snakes to Ireland.
  - D He introduced a new form of writing.
- 9 The first really big parades were...**
- A in New York, USA.
  - B in Downpatrick, Ireland.
  - C in Chicago, USA.
  - D in Dublin, Ireland.
- 10 The text says the big festival in Dublin...**
- A is a really old tradition.
  - B is really a new tradition.
  - C lasts three days by tradition.
  - D is not very successful.

# 4 INVALSI | Reading

## ●● Computers

Computers have completely changed the way people live. Modern computers were only developed during the Second World War (1940s) and began to be used at home about 40 years after that. The first laptops using the flip form appeared in the early 1980s but were not common until 10 years ago. Netbooks and tablet PCs are even more recent. Do you have one? Computers can do a lot of things for us, some quite simple, others very complicated: they can count, store information, translate, play chess, check spellings, make music, guide a spacecraft, check fingerprints, link us to the Internet and many, many other things.

But how do they do all these things? Basically by adding, subtracting and comparing numbers. Computers are made up of four basic parts, the input device, for example the keyboard, the memory (RAM and ROM), the central processing unit (CPU) and the output device, for example the screen or the printer. They can do millions of calculations very fast. They turn everything into numbers, but the only numbers that they use are 0 and 1. This is called the 'binary system' and it is the language of computers. Computers use this system because they work with electrical currents and they can recognise the difference between a current flow (number 1) and no current (number 0). Whenever you type something on the computer keyboard or you give the computer any kind of input, you make electrical currents flow through little circuits in microchips. The computer takes the input, processes it, and returns it as output, millions of times per second.

Input can come from the keyboard, the mouse, the microphone and the Internet. All the input in the computer is sent to the central processing unit, called CPU. Data from the hard drive of the computer (which remembers information), the CD or DVD drive (where you put disks that you want the computer to read) and other parts of the computer are sent to the CPU, too. When all the data have been processed, some of them go to the outputs and others go inside the computer to tell all the other parts of the computer what to do. The outputs of the computer are connected to external devices, like the screen and the speakers.

The computer was not the invention of a single person. Wilhelm Schickard built a calculating machine at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Charles Babbage worked on his analytical engine in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Konrad Zuse designed a computer that could be programmed. The first 'personal computer' was the Datapoint 2200 made by the Computer Terminal Corporation. Modern computers are made by many different companies, but their operating systems are generally either Windows or Mac OS made famous by Bill Gates and Steve Jobs respectively. There are also a large number of programming languages like Basic, Pascal and C++. Which ones do you know?

Surfing on the Internet has now become the most common activity for the home computer. Modern computers are extremely helpful and are designed to do things that need very fast and precise mathematical ability and memory, but they do not possess creativity. They can do very complicated things, but they are still not able to do very simple ones, like smiling or telling a lie and they do not have common sense, so use your computer wisely.

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### Glossary

**chess:** *scacchi*

**current flow:** *flusso di corrente*

**keyboard:** *tastiera*

**wisely:** *saggiamente*

**PARTE A: Comprensione del testo**

- 1** Computers became common in the home...
- A during the Second World War.
  - B during the 1940s.
  - C in the 1980s.
  - D only very recently.
- 2** The most recent computer developments are...
- A home computers.
  - B laptop computers.
  - C netbooks and tablet PCs.
  - D flip tops.
- 3** Which best describes a computer? They are capable of...
- A doing only simple things.
  - B doing only complex things.
  - C storing a limited amount of information.
  - D doing a variety of things.
- 4** The four basic parts of a computer are...
- A the input device, the memory, the central processing unit, and the output device.
  - B the keyboard, the RAM, the CPU and the Internet.
  - C the RAM and ROM, the memory and the CPU.
  - D the input, the memory, the screen and the printer.
- 5** Computers use...
- A 0, 1 and 2.
  - B the binary system.
  - C only big numbers.
  - D the simple system.
- 6** Two important computer input devices are...
- A the mouse and the keyboard.
  - B the microphone and the screen.
  - C the Internet and the speakers.
  - D the touch screen and the CPU.
- 7** According to the text the first person to work in the field of calculating and computing was...
- A Bill Gates.
  - B Konrad Zuse.
  - C Charles Babbage.
  - D Wilhelm Schickard.
- 8** Which one is true?
- A There are more types of computers than operating systems.
  - B There are more types of operating systems than computers.
  - C Operating systems are more common on computer languages.
  - D Each computer has its own specific operating system.
- 9** A computer can...
- A tell the truth or a lie.
  - B be funny.
  - C make emotional decisions.
  - D be very useful to its user.
- 10** The text says that computers have no...
- A creativity.
  - B problems.
  - C memory.
  - D history.



## ●● Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was one of the greatest English novelists. He was an intelligent boy at school, but when he was only twelve, his father was sent to prison for his debts and he had to start working in a factory to help his family. The factory work was hard and far from home and after work he had to walk home through London. He wrote about these experiences in many of his novels.

5 When his family's financial situation improved, he finished his education and became a clerk. He started working for a newspaper at the age of 16, became a parliamentary reporter and was soon a journalist for various papers. He also started writing creative short stories that were published in magazines.

10 His stories are a lively picture of life in Victorian England in the middle of the 1800s. Some are about children, especially unfortunate children and orphans. Dickens tried to improve the lives of the poor by making their suffering widely known thanks to his books. He often used pathos to try and fight indifference. His books were not only a form of entertainment, but also a way to educate the readers.

15 In his first novels, he was very worried about the social problems of his time, above all poverty and injustice, but he was not trying to be revolutionary and actively attack the society of his time. At the end of the books he expressed hope for the improvement of the conditions of the poor, thanks to less meanness, egoism and hypocrisy. However, in his last books there is more social criticism and less optimism.

20 His books were first published part-by-part in weekly magazines and this was an advantage for him, because he could see the reaction and expectations of his readers before he continued writing his story. He understood how to hold the reader's attention and often ended his chapters with suspense. He created some of the best known characters in English literature: they are unforgettable, very vivid and full of colour. Some are even caricatures. The good people are always rewarded and the bad are punished. Some of his most famous books are *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations* and *A Christmas Carol*.

25 He travelled in America, England, Switzerland and Italy, where he was very successful. He also gave public readings of his books in England and America. He did not stop writing until the day of his death. Some of his novels have been made into films (among the most recent, *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol*).

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### Glossary

**clerk:** *impiegato*

**widely:** *ampiamente, considerevolmente*

**meanness:** *avarizia, meschinità*

**PARTE A: Comprensione del testo**

- 1 Charles Dickens...**  
A went to school when he was 12.  
B went to work when he was 12.  
C returned to school when he was 16.  
D helped his family business.
- 2 Factory life was...**  
A better than school.  
B far from school.  
C difficult for Charles.  
D interesting.
- 3 When Charles Dickens grew up he...**  
A continued to work in a factory.  
B worked for many years as a clerk.  
C immediately became a famous journalist.  
D soon started writing short stories for newspapers.
- 4 Most of his stories were set...**  
A in England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.  
B in America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.  
C in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.  
D in Victoria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5 His books were often about...**  
A only children in factories.  
B poor children and children with no parents.  
C rich children and their parents.  
D children with good parents.
- 6 Dickens is said to have had a social conscience because he wanted to...**  
A cause a revolution.  
B criticise educated people.  
C help rich people.  
D help poor people.
- 7 Which one of these statements is true?**  
A All his books had happy, optimistic endings.  
B Generally his first books had sad endings.  
C His later books had less optimism.  
D His later books criticised society less.
- 8 Publishing in magazines in instalments (week by week)...**  
A was a big disadvantage.  
B made the complete book very short.  
C allowed Dickens to modify his story.  
D made the story very inflexible.
- 9 The characters in Dickens's works are...**  
A all very realistic.  
B forgettable.  
C like sketches.  
D memorable and interesting.
- 10 Dickens...**  
A made his books into films.  
B read his books in public to many people.  
C didn't travel very much.  
D stopped writing books when he was old.

## ●● Bullying

Everybody has heard of bullying, but are you sure you know exactly what it is, why it happens and who bullies are? Do you know what the consequences of bullying are?

5 Bullying is an act of repeated aggressive behaviour by an abuser who has more power (either physical or social) against a victim with less power. It is usually repeated over time and always intentional. Bullying can be verbal, physical and emotional and it can include manipulation.

10 According to the USA National Centre for Education Statistics, there are two categories: direct bullying (where physical aggression is predominant) and indirect (where social isolation is the punishment used against the victim). In this case 'name-calling' and exclusion from social activities or situations are used against the victim together with verbal, written or physical abuse, coercion, gossip, criticising, laughing and humiliating.

15 Why does bullying take place? Sometimes because the abusers themselves have been victims of other abusers (children may be bullied at home, adults at work – this is also known as 'mobbing'). On other occasions they behave this way in order to get attention, to look popular or tough or simply because they are jealous. Other bullies feel isolated and this is the only way they have found to belong to a group. Bullies can hurt people/children (who are either smaller or bigger than them) virtually anywhere.

What are the effects of being bullied? They can be very serious. Victims often suffer from serious problems, including depression, stress and low self-esteem. Sometimes bullying can even lead the victim to commit suicide.

20 Who are the bullies and who are the victims? Apparently this kind of behaviour has origins in the childhood of the abusers. Usually adult bullies have a strong personality and a strong need to control and dominate people and things. They frequently have high self-esteem, but sometimes this kind of behaviour can hide anxiety and shame. Child bullies are often part of gangs at school. They isolate their victim with the help of other students who do not want to become the next victims. The victims are people who can, in some way, be considered different from the others, because of their physical appearance, race, religion, sex, disability or other reasons.

25

Bullying has existed for a long time, but it has not been recognised as a real form of violence until recently. Some programs have been studied to prevent it in schools, for example by teaching social cooperation. In some US states there are laws against it.

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### Glossary

**happen:** *succedere*  
**tough:** *duro*

**self-esteem:** *autostima*  
**childhood:** *infanzia*

**need:** *bisogno*  
**shame:** *vergogna*

## PARTE A: Comprensione del testo

### 1 According to the text a bully is...

- A an abuser with less power than the other person.
- B a victim with less power than the other person.
- C an abuser with more power than the other person.
- D a victim with more power than the other person.

### 2 Bullying is NOT...

- A a type of aggressive behaviour.
- B always an intentional type of behaviour.
- C of a verbal, physical and emotional type.
- D a type of behaviour done on a single occasion.

### 3 What do you understand by the expression 'name-calling'?

- A using a victim's real name
- B giving the victim a strange or humiliating name
- C giving the victim an important name
- D calling the victim's name on the telephone

### 4 The word 'mobbing' (line 12) means...

- A bullying at the work place.
- B bullying both adults and children.
- C bullying your parents at home.
- D bullying on the Internet.

### 5 People generally become bullies...

- A so as to avoid attention.
- B to look friendly.
- C because they are happy.
- D because they are unhappy themselves in some way.

### 6 What is generally considered to be the most serious effect of bullying?

- A being depressed
- B not having high confidence
- C deciding to kill yourself
- D feeling stressed

### 7 Adult bullies...

- A appear to be strong but often are not.
- B appear to be weak but are very strong.
- C don't have anxiety and shame.
- D don't want to have high esteem.

### 8 How do bullies isolate their victims?

- A They make them part of gangs.
- B They use other children who want to avoid being bullied.
- C They help other students.
- D They use adults.

### 9 Victims of bullies are chosen because of...

- A their physical aspect.
- B their racial origin.
- C their religion.
- D all of the above and for other reasons like sex or disability.

### 10 The text says that bullying...

- A didn't exist in the past.
- B has only recently been recognised.
- C is against the law everywhere in America.
- D is worst in schools.