

# Essay on The Telephone

The telephone has undergone many changes since it was invented by *Alexander Graham Bell* just a few decades ago. It is one of the most important and useful inventions ever. It has changed our lives in so many ways ever since we could communicate instantly with each other over vast distances.

Today we take the telephone for granted. It sits in an unobtrusive part of the house waiting for us to use it. Then by simply picking up the receiver and pressing some numbers, we get to speak to someone a mile or a thousand miles away almost instantly. If someone a mile or a thousand miles away wants to speak to us, he or she just have to press the correct numbers and presto, we get to speak to each other. It is indeed a miracle of modern science.

Using the telephone was not always as convenient as it is today. My grandfather tells me that in his young days, very few people had telephones. So if one had a telephone in the house, one had to be someone of importance. Also, not everyone knew how to use a telephone. Many had not heard of or seen a telephone before. So only the rich and educated could afford a telephone and knew how to use it.

Telephones in those days had no dials nor buttons. One simply picked up the receiver and spoke to an operator at the telephone exchange. The telephone numbers were single or double digits, so there was no problem remembering the numbers. If one forgot, one could always tell the operator the name of the person one was calling and chances were the operator would know the number. Imagine that.

Today telephone numbers have six or seven digits and dialing is automatic. Even overseas call is automatic. There is hardly any need

for operators, except for emergencies or other services. Everyone knows how to use the telephone, even four-year-old kids. If the telephone was a luxury in the older days, it certainly is not today. It is a very necessary part of living in the modern world.

The days of coin-operated public telephones seem numbered. Nowadays more and more card-operated telephones are available. Perhaps one day all public telephones will be card-operated. Who knows? Time will tell.

Telephones have gone mobile too. No longer are we restricted to using the telephone in the house or public booth. Mobile telephones are available and more and more people are seen using them.

No one can be sure what sort of new developments will occur on the telephone. One thing we can be sure of is that the ease of use will be further increased. Perhaps one day everyone will wear a wristwatch-size telephone with a television screen that enables the user to see the person he is talking to. This is not too far-fetched. Such telephones already exist. It is only a matter of time when the masses get to use it.

Anything further than that I cannot foresee. Anyway, I cannot live forever to see these things. Perhaps something else will be invented that will make the telephone obsolete. No one can tell.