



Handout 1

The Selfie

Read the text and answer the questions below.

Everyone these days is taking selfies, either by using a stick or by stretching out their arms as far as they can. At first it seemed as though selfies might just be a craze, but now most people would agree that they are here to stay. But where do they come from, and why are they so popular?

You might be surprised to find out that selfies are not a modern phenomenon. In fact photographic self-portraits date back to the early days of photography in the 1800s. The process of taking a picture was so slow then that it was possible for a photographer to uncover the lens of their camera, run into the shot for a minute and then run back and replace the lens cap. We might not recognise this as the same as the modern selfie, but in fact the effect was similar. Later on, photographers also found ways to use mirrors to take photographs of themselves.

However, the selfie as we know it today really owes its existence to the invention of the smartphone, which has an integrated camera to take the photos, and an internet connection to make it possible to post them immediately. This has totally transformed the experience of photography and sharing photographs with other people. In the past, photography involved loading film into a camera, having it processed and then printing the pictures and putting them all in an album for other people to look at. Now the whole process can happen almost instantaneously.

Selfie-taking is becoming more and more popular. These days it is not uncommon, at any popular tourist site, to see hundreds of people using smartphones to take selfies with a famous building or landmark in the background, and posting them online. More often than not, people like to make sure that they take the most flattering picture of themselves possible, by holding the phone at a variety of different angles. This way they can produce an attractive photo of themselves in an interesting place and share with their friends online.

Critics of the selfie culture claim that the smartphone has made people vain and even more interested in their own appearance than ever. However, it seems likely that, whether you are a big fan or not, the selfie is here to stay.

1. How long have people been taking selfies?
2. Will people carry on taking selfies for a long time?



Handout 2

Vocabulary

Complete the gaps in the sentences with words from the box below.

craze	background
flattering	devices
lens	instantaneously
phenomenon	post
self-portraits	vain

1. I took a really good selfie while I was in London – the London Eye was in the _____.
2. I always try to smile when I take a selfie so it is as _____ as possible.
3. Even though my smartphone camera has a tiny _____, it takes great photos.
4. These days we take selfies with phones, but before photography was invented, many artists painted _____.
5. People think that selfies are a modern _____, but in fact people have been taking photos of themselves ever since photography was invented.
6. People who are _____ take a lot of selfies because they like to look at themselves.
7. I have got three electronic _____ in my bag – my phone, my computer and my tablet.
8. I think taking selfies is just a _____. People will give up soon and think of something else to do.
9. I like to _____ pictures on the internet as soon as I take them.
10. The best thing about sharing photos online is that other people can see them _____.

Learning vocabulary

Talk to another student about these questions:

1. What is the best way to record vocabulary?
2. How could you record the vocabulary above?
3. What can you do to help you memorise the vocabulary?
4. Have you tried using any apps or digital tools to memorise vocabulary?