

The end of New York's pay phones

20th March, 2020



The end is coming for New York's public pay phones. New York City officials say workers are currently removing all public pay phones from the city's streets. Pay phones used to be everywhere in the city - on every street corner and in every park and public place.

Engineers have started the removal work by taking away 30 pay phones from the Hell's Kitchen area of the city. In the coming months, the remaining phones will go. New York City spokesman Corey Johnson told the CNN news agency that: "The antiquated and outdated pay phone booths take up much-needed sidewalk space. Removing these booths is a win for pedestrians who navigate these crowded blocks."

Many New Yorkers probably won't even notice the phones are going. Most younger people have never used one. They may have to read the instructions to use a phone, and scramble for coins to feed it. Modern technology means the public phone is no longer needed. Over 95 per cent of Americans have a mobile phone. Mr Corey said New Yorkers no longer want the phones. He said: "My office has received numerous community complaints from local residents about these antiquated pay phones, which present public safety and quality of life issues. Additionally, they take up sorely needed sidewalk space that could better serve people with disabilities and families with strollers."

Sources: cnn.com / gothamist.com / nypost.com

Writing

We don't need public pay phones or land lines. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

the end / pay phones / officials / workers / park / city / outdated / space / pedestrians / notice / instructions / coins / technology / office / complaints / safety / disabilities

True / False

- a) The article said the end has come for pay phones in the USA. T / F
- b) Pay phones used to be on every street corner in New York City. T / F
- c) The phone removal will start with 30 phones. T / F
- d) Removing the pay phones will free up space on sidewalks. T / F
- e) The article said most New Yorkers will notice the phones have gone. T / F
- f) The article said young people may need instructions to use a pay phone. T / F
- g) An NYC official said his office had many complaints from locals. T / F
- h) The article said sidewalk space was sorely needed for public pay phones. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. currently | a. matters |
| 2. area | b. packed |
| 3. remaining | c. see |
| 4. take up | d. directions |
| 5. crowded | e. many |
| 6. notice | f. presently |
| 7. instructions | g. help |
| 8. numerous | h. district |
| 9. issues | i. use |
| 10. serve | j. surviving |

Discussion – Student A

- a) How important are pay phones?
- b) Do cities need pay phones?
- c) Are there any public pay phones in your town?
- d) What is the best thing about your phone?
- e) Do we need landlines?
- f) How important is sidewalk space?
- g) What do you think of pedestrians using their phones while they walk?
- h) Are phones on watches better than smartphones?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. The end is | a. corner |
| 2. Pay phones used to be everywhere | b. disabilities |
| 3. on every street | c. crowded blocks |
| 4. In the coming | d. notice |
| 5. pedestrians who navigate these | e. instructions |
| 6. probably won't even | f. in the city |
| 7. Most younger people have never | g. residents |
| 8. read the | h. coming |
| 9. complaints from local | i. used one |
| 10. people with | j. months |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How important is your phone to you?
- What is the best phone in the world?
- Should New York keep some pay phones for tourism?
- Do young people know how to use public pay phones?
- What would life be like without your mobile phone?
- What do you think of New York?
- What questions would you like to ask the New York officials?

Spelling

- New York City fioscifal
- started the avmerlo work
- the einginamr phones will go
- ddatuote pay phone booths
- Removing these booths is a win for datpsenire
- navigate these wdcoder blocks
- read the tuionitsrnsc
- Modern tlgeooycnh
- received nreusmuo community complaints
- public eyfsta
- tauqyil of life issues
- people with istdabiiseil

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. h	3. j	4. i	5. b
6. c	7. d	8. e	9. a	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Pay Phones

You think pay phones are the most important things to have on streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): art, toilets or lights.

Role B – Art

You think art is the most important thing to have on streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): pay phones, toilets or lights.

Role C – Toilets

You think toilets are the most important things to have on streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): art, pay phones or lights.

Role D – Lights

You think lights are the most important things to have on streets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as necessary. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): art, toilets or pay phones.

Speaking – Streets

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things needed on streets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| • lights | • pay phones |
| • local maps | • toilets |
| • seats | • police stations |
| • art | • no parking signs |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.