

BBC Learning English  
6 Minute English  
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*Restart parties*



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- Rob:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English, I'm Rob and with me is Jen.
- Jen:** Hello Rob. Rob I'm having a problem with my mobile phone today.
- Rob:** Oh yes?
- Jen:** Yes – it's stopped working – it's so old so I was thinking of throwing it away and buying a new one.
- Rob:** No! Don't do that. That makes me angry – just throwing **gadgets** -or electronic items – away and not **repairing** them.
- Jen:** Repairing? You mean, fixing them?
- Rob:** Yes. Fixing things can save you money and is less wasteful. That's why today we are going to talk about 'restart parties' and looking at some of the words to do with fixing and repairing.
- Jen:** 'Restart parties' – that sounds interesting – I like parties!
- Rob:** Yes, but it might not be what you expect. But first, let's see if you know the answer to today's question.
- Jen:** Hmm, if it's about how to fix a gadget, I might not do very well.
- Rob:** Don't worry, it's not, but it is about mobile phones. Do you know approximately – so roughly – how many phones are thrown away in Europe every year? Is it:
- a) 1 million
  - b) 10 million
  - c) 100 million

**Jen:** I'll take a guess and say b) 10 million.

**Rob:** I'll give you the answer at the end of the programme. Now let me tell you more about 'restart parties'. These are being held around the world because of concerns or worries about the **disposable society** we're living in.

**Jen:** A disposable society – you mean we just throw things away when they break and then buy another one?

**Rob:** Exactly. We could fix them instead or at least recycle them and make new things out of them. I remember there used to be repair shops where people fixed broken things but it's not something you see much of in the UK now. So, that's why some people are learning **the forgotten art** – or the skill – of repairing things.

**Jen:** And is that what happens at a restart party?

**Rob:** It is. The word **restart** means to start something again or to make it work again. The party is where you go to share your knowledge and skills or just to get something repaired whilst learning about how to do it. So Jen, would you go to one?

**Jen:** Yes I would. It sounds like a great way to get something fixed.

**Rob:** I think it would be quite useful. Let's hear from Ugo Vallouri who organised one of these parties in London. Why does he think people don't try to repair their gadgets anymore?

**Ugo Vallouri, Restart project:**

*Less and less repair manuals that people can use, spare parts are not available to consumers or when they are they are priced in ridiculous ways that push people not to repair what they have and instead to upgrade and keep buying new stuff.*

**Jen:** OK, there aren't as many repair **manuals** now – a manual is a book of instructions on how to fix things. He also says the small bits, or the **spare parts**, needed to fix something are not available now – or cost a lot of money.

**Rob:** Yes, he said the price of spare parts were ridiculous – so silly prices! All this makes people buy new stuff – or they **upgrade** – so get a newer or more modern design of gadget. Let's hear Ugo give his reasons one more time:

**Ugo Vallouri, Restart project: (repeat)**

*Less and less repair manuals that people can use, spare parts are not available to consumers or when they are they are priced in ridiculous ways that push people not to repair what they have and instead to upgrade and keep buying new stuff.*

**Rob:** So Jen, is Ugo describing someone like you?

**Jen:** Well, personally, I don't have the skills to fix something – and anyway, it's often cheaper just to buy a new one.

**Rob:** But buying new gadgets creates waste which is what these restart parties are hoping to avoid. They don't want old gadgets to end up in the rubbish.

**Jen:** OK, it's a good point Rob but my worry is that if I went to one of these parties, they'd be full of **geeks** – you know boring people who are just interested in technology – and they usually wear glasses.

**Rob:** Well, I wear glasses and I like technology but I'm not a geek. And anyway, if someone can fix your broken phone then I wouldn't call them a geek – more of a hero!

**Jen:** If you say so. Shall we find out if I am a 'mobile phone geek' and see if I got today's question right?

**Rob:** A good idea. Earlier I asked you if you knew approximately, how many phones are thrown away in Europe every year?

**Jen:** I said 10 million.

**Rob:** And you were wrong. The answer, incredibly, is 100 million mobile phones – that's a lot of phones that could be repaired or just recycled – so the spare parts could be made into something else. OK Jen, could you now please remind us of some of today's vocabulary?

**Jen:** We heard: gadgets

repairing

disposable society

the forgotten art

restart

manuals

spare parts

upgrade

geeks

**Rob:** Ok that's it for this programme. Do join us again soon for more 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English.

**Both:** Bye.

## Vocabulary and definitions

gadgets	small electronic items
repairing	fixing
disposable society	lifestyle where we throw away things when they are broken and buy a new one
the forgotten art	the skills that people once had
restart	start something again/make it work again
manuals	book of instructions on how to make something work
spare parts	small bits or parts contained inside a gadget or machine
upgrade	change to an improved or newer gadget
geeks	people believed to be boring and only interested in technology

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