




*Hello*


A watercolor-style illustration of a landscape. The top part shows a white, misty or snowy mountain peak. Below it, there are layers of blue and green, representing a valley or a body of water. The bottom part shows a dark, rocky foreground with some green moss or grass. The overall style is soft and artistic.

1 **VOCABULARY** What types of things do you read and how do you read them? Do you prefer paper or digital formats? Use the words below to help you.

**Reading matter** biographies blog posts comics  
magazines newspapers novels poems textbooks

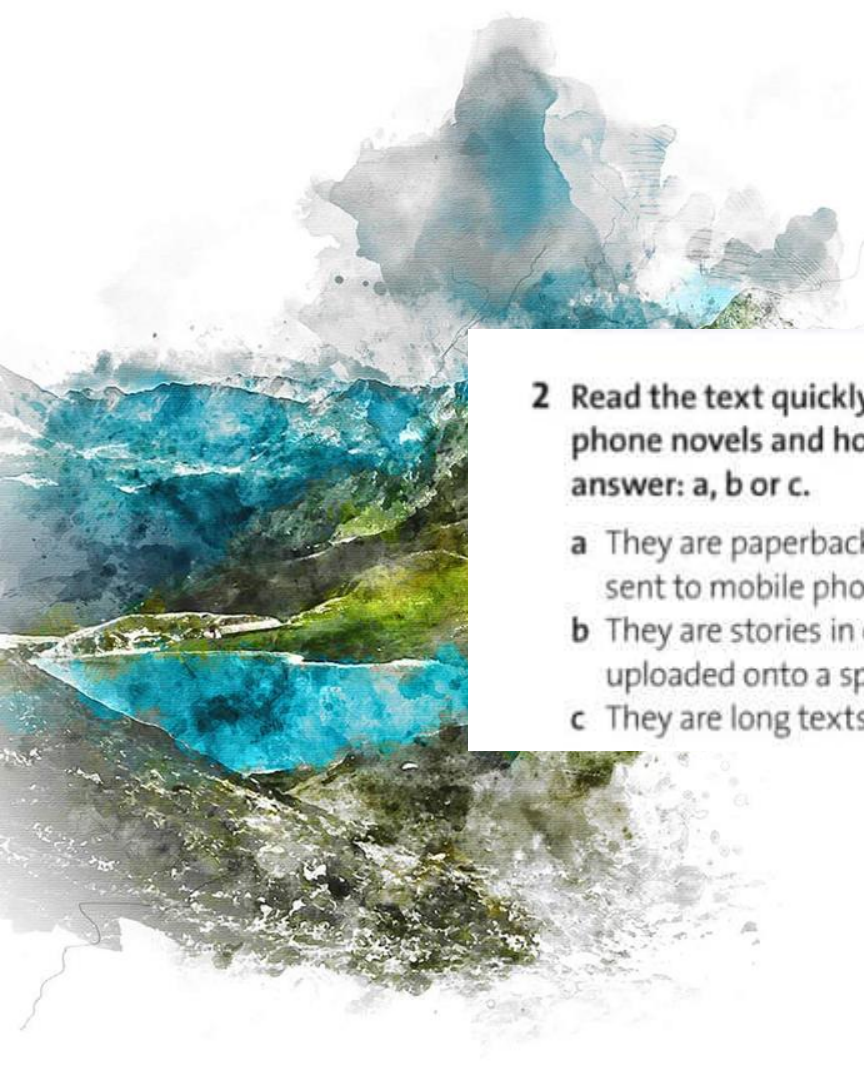
**Digital formats** blogs e-books social networking sites  
tweets websites zines

➔ **Vocabulary Builder** Publications: page 125

A watercolor-style illustration of a mountain range with a lake in the foreground. The mountains are rendered in shades of blue, green, and grey, with some white highlights suggesting snow or mist. The lake is a vibrant blue, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The overall style is soft and artistic.

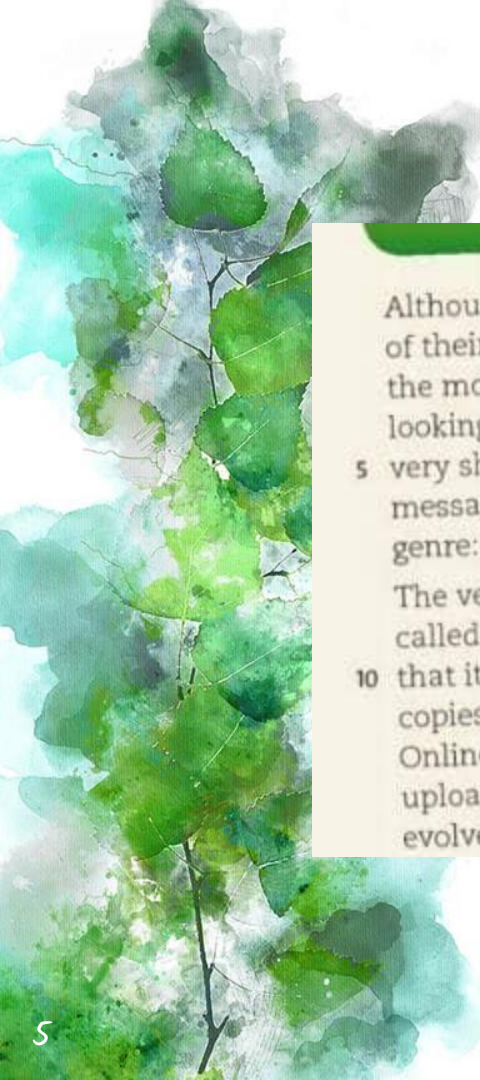
3.18

# A different type of phone book

A watercolor-style illustration of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding green hills and blue sky. To the right, a waterfall cascades down a rocky slope. The background features more distant, misty mountains under a light sky. The overall style is soft and artistic, using a palette of blues, greens, and greys.

**2** Read the text quickly, ignoring the gaps. What are cell phone novels and how do they work? Circle the correct answer: a, b or c.

- a They are paperback novels divided into instalments and sent to mobile phones.
- b They are stories in episodes written on mobile phones and uploaded onto a special website.
- c They are long texts sent by friends to other friends.



Although books are still popular with teenagers, most of them spend more of their leisure time staring at their phone than reading a paperback. And the more versatile phones become, the more reasons young people have for looking at them. <sup>1</sup>\_\_ Instead of publishing a whole book at once, they produce  
5 very short chapters, which they send once a week to their readers by text message. Some even claim that this style of writing represents a new literary genre: the 'cell phone novel'.

The very first cell phone novel was written in 2003 by a man in Tokyo who called himself Yoshi. <sup>2</sup>\_\_ It became so popular, mainly through word of mouth,  
10 that it was later published as a paperback. The book version sold 2.6 million copies and a television series, a comic book and a film were made of the story. Online companies became interested and set up websites where authors could upload their stories and readers could discuss them in forums as the stories evolved.

that... have also sprung up

evolved.

15 Although the idea originated in Japan, cell phone novels have also sprung up in the rest of East Asia, Europe and Africa. Many are written by high school or university students who are very familiar with the topics that teenagers are interested in. <sup>3</sup> \_\_ Twenty-one-year-old Rin said that she started her novel *If You* during her final year at high school and explained that it was the tragic  
20 love story of two childhood friends.

Rin wrote her novel over a six-month period in spare moments, often while commuting on the train. <sup>4</sup> \_\_ Readers then voted her novel the best that year and she was offered a book contract. Her book sold 400,000 copies and was number five in the Japanese bestseller list. Rin said that her mother had had  
25 no idea that she had been writing a novel and was therefore very surprised when she saw a book with her daughter's name on it.

The style of cell phone novels has evolved to suit the medium. Chapters have no more than 200 words, and often just 50–100 words. <sup>5</sup> \_\_ The text mostly consists of dialogue and the language is direct, conveying a lot in a few words.

30 Many cell phone novelists had never written fiction before and many of their readers have never read a normal novel. Other rules have evolved; for example, authors only have



In 2009, a young Japanese writer called Takatsu, who  
35 lives in Canada, began writing the first English language  
cell phone novel, *Secondhand Memories*. Each instalment  
appeared on textnovel.com, a website dedicated to cell  
phone stories. Takatsu had read an English translation of  
Rin's story *If You* and had been impressed by its simple and  
40 emotional language. It was a feature he deliberately copied  
when he started writing *Secondhand Memories*.

6 \_\_\_ He now believes that, in English, cell phone novels  
have a powerful and poetic identity of their own.

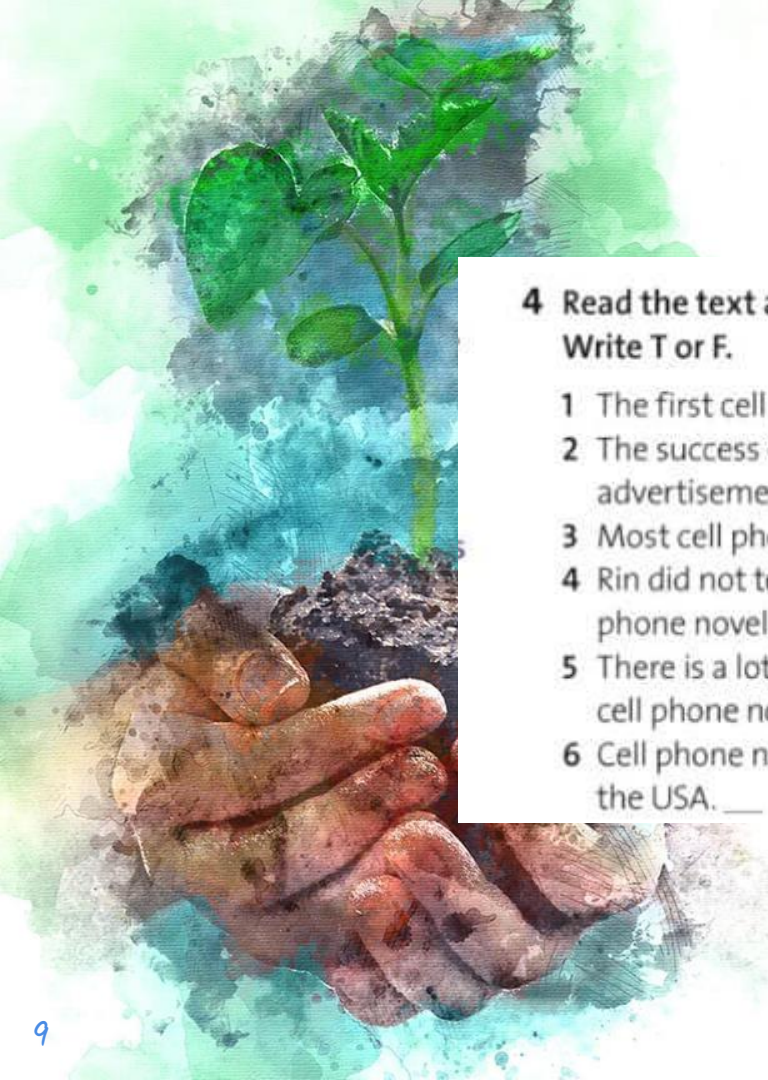
Takatsu sees himself, and the other writers who  
45 contribute to textnovel.com, as part of a literary  
movement which blends drama, technology, pop  
culture and social media. Cell phone novels  
encourage young people to engage in fiction,  
even those who would not normally pick up  
50 a book. They could be described as teen  
novels for the 21st century.



**3** Read the **Reading Strategy**. Match sentences A–H with gaps 1–6 in the text. There are two extra sentences.

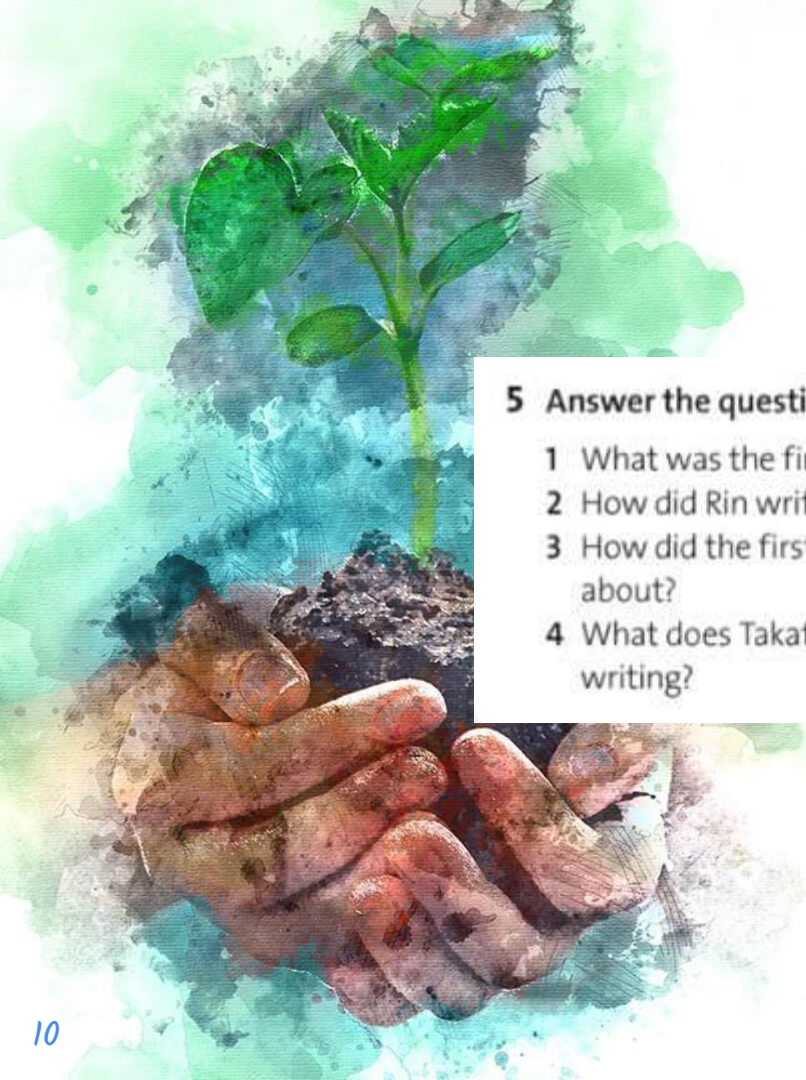
- A Common themes are love, tragedy and betrayal, and the stories often deal with difficult or controversial issues.
- B Books are sometimes regarded as old-fashioned and difficult to read.
- C In response to this trend, some smart young authors have changed the way they write.
- D However, as the story progressed, the style gradually evolved into something different.
- E She typed out instalments on her phone and uploaded them onto a popular website for cell phone authors.
- F No money is made from cell phone novels unless they are published as books.
- G It was called *Deep Love* and told the story of a teenager who contracted AIDS.
- H Sentences are short and there are no descriptions of anything or anybody because there isn't space.





**4 Read the text again. Are the sentences true or false?  
Write T or F.**

- 1 The first cell phone novel appeared in Japan. \_\_\_
- 2 The success of Yoshi's first book was due mainly to advertisements on the TV and in comic books. \_\_\_
- 3 Most cell phone novels deal with difficult issues. \_\_\_
- 4 Rin did not tell her parents that she was writing a cell phone novel. \_\_\_
- 5 There is a lot of conversation between the characters in cell phone novels. \_\_\_
- 6 Cell phone novels in English have recently appeared in the USA. \_\_\_



**5 Answer the questions.**

- 1 What was the first cell phone novel about?
- 2 How did Rin write her cell phone novel?
- 3 How did the first English language cell phone novel come about?
- 4 What does Takatsu particularly like about this form of writing?



writing

**6 VOCABULARY** Match a–k with 1–11 to make compound nouns. They are all in the text.

**Compound nouns**

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1 leisure    | a series   |
| 2 cell       | b book     |
| 3 television | c school   |
| 4 comic      | d story    |
| 5 high       | e time     |
| 6 love       | f name     |
| 7 book       | g phone    |
| 8 bestseller | h culture  |
| 9 pen        | i contract |
| 10 pop       | j media    |
| 11 social    | k list     |



**7 SPEAKING** Work in pairs or small groups. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you think cell phone novels are a good idea? Why? / Why not?
- 2 Would you be interested in reading one? Why? / Why not?
- 3 Do you think you could write one yourself? Why? / Why not?