

STOP THE TEXTS. STOP THE WRECKS.

DEAR EDUCATOR,

Cell phones and smartphones allow teens to be constantly connected to others, but they also spell danger behind the wheel when teens text while driving.

To help raise students' awareness of this danger in advance of National Youth Traffic Safety Month in May, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and The Ad Council have teamed up with the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) to create this free educational program, *Stop the Texts. Stop the Wrecks*. The program includes hands-on learning activities that demonstrate the risks of texting behind the wheel, and encourages students to use social media to spread the word to friends and family.

Please share this program with your colleagues who teach health and driver's education. Although these materials are protected by copyright, you may make as many copies as you need for educational purposes.

Please use the reply card to let us know your thoughts on this program, or comment online at ymiclassroom.com/stophthetexts.html. We depend on your feedback to continue providing free educational programs that make a real difference in students' lives.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dominic Kinsley, Editor in Chief, Young Minds Inspired

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is designed for high school health and driver's education classes.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To raise students' awareness about the dangers of texting while driving.
- To help dispel the perception that texting while driving is just "normal" multi-tasking.
- To encourage students to help spread the word about the hazards of texting behind the wheel.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- This teacher's guide.
- Three reproducible student activity sheets.
- A classroom wall poster.
- An e-newsletter (see ymiclassroom.com/stophthetexts.html) that students can customize and send to their friends and family.
- A reply card for your comments, or comment online at ymiclassroom.com/stophthetexts.html.
- An online tool kit (see stophthetexts.adcouncil.org) with additional resources and information on how to share this consumer education campaign in your community.
- Website with additional video content for sharing.

HOW TO USE THIS PROGRAM

Photocopy the teacher's guide and student activity sheets before displaying the wall poster. Distribute copies of the activity sheets to all students, and share copies of the program materials with other teachers in your school. Please visit ymiclassroom.com/stophthetexts.html to review the program's alignment with national academic standards for language arts, math, and health.

ACTIVITY 1: CALCULATE THE RISKS

In Part A of this activity, students complete math problems related to distracted driving. In Part B, they engage in two simultaneous activities to assess the impact on their ability to concentrate. Students will need cell phones (their own or borrowed) for these experiments. Remind them not to send their texts to avoid incurring usage fees.

PART A

Math Answers [To calculate feet per second: (mph x 5,280 ft/mile)/3,600 sec per hr = ft per sec]:

1. $80.7 \text{ ft per sec} \times 5 \text{ sec} = 403.5 \text{ ft}$ (That's longer than a football field.)
2. $44 \text{ ft per sec} \times 5 \text{ sec} = 220 \text{ ft}$; $220 \text{ ft} \div 55 = 4$ driveways (If you count both sides of the street, there would be 8 driveways.)
3. 80.7 ft per sec ; $250 \text{ ft} \div 80.7 \text{ ft per sec} = 3.1 \text{ sec}$ (without applying brakes)
4. $44 \text{ ft per sec} \times 3 \text{ sec} = 132 \text{ ft}$; No, she won't react and apply the brakes in time.
5. Stopping involves factors such as reacting to the situation, applying brakes, deceleration speed, road conditions, car/tire conditions, etc.

PART B

Explain to students that, according to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), 5 seconds is the average time it takes to send a text while driving. Tell them that in the first experiment, you're going to read something aloud while they text for 5 seconds. In the second one, you will show them something on the board while they text for 5 seconds.

1. Have students text a message for 5 seconds while you read this aloud: *The baseball team won 5 to 3. Jones drove in 2 runs in the 7th inning.* Then ask students: What was the score? Who drove in 2 runs? How much of the sentence did you actually hear? Discuss how texting can impair a driver's attention to aural information on the road.
2. Write this sentence on the board and cover it until you're set to start: *From Spring Street, turn left onto Brooke Street, then right onto Hope Street. 273 is on the left.* Uncover the sentence as students begin texting, then cover it again after 5 seconds. Ask students: Which way are you supposed to turn on Brooke Street? What address are you looking for on Hope Street? How much of that sentence did you actually see? Then discuss how texting can impair a driver's attention to visual information on the road. Have students share their results, and discuss the information on the sheet about multi-tasking.

As an extension, have students visit StopTextsStopWrecks.org and Facebook.com/stophthetexts for videos and statistics. As a class, discuss students' reactions to the information.

ACTIVITY 2: STUDY THE STATS, STATE THE FACTS

This activity takes the form of a debate where students work in teams to present arguments against texting behind the wheel and you, as moderator, challenge their arguments in the spirit of a devil's advocate. Prompt the teams to provide the strongest anti-texting arguments by countering their ideas with "excuses," such as:

- My friends expect me to respond to text messages right away.
- My friends would think something is wrong if I don't respond to a text message right away.
- I need to let my parents know where I am.
- I can text and drive safely.
- Nothing bad will happen to me.
- I only read messages, I don't type and send texts while driving.
- It doesn't take me 5 seconds to text.

Stress the point to students that any form of texting is distracting, and taking your eyes off the road for any length of time is dangerous. Encourage students to customize and send family and friends the e-newsletter (see ymiclassroom.com/stophthetexts.html), which includes facts about texting while driving. To get them started, have your students watch the video infographic on the campaign's YouTube channel.

ACTIVITY 3: SPREAD THE WORD

In this activity, students write open digital letters to friends and loved ones to help convince them not to text while driving. These letters can be posted on the campaign's Tumblr link. The activity also includes ideas for creating a school-wide campaign against texting while driving. Work with your students to make this a community effort. Visit the online toolkit available at stophthetexts.adcouncil.org for campaign resources.

RESOURCES

- StopTextsStopWrecks.org
- Stophthetexts.adcouncil.org
- StophTheTexts.Tumblr.com
- Facebook.com/stophthetexts
- YouTube.com/stophthetexts
- Twitter.com/stophthetexts

STOP THE TEXTS. STOP THE WRECKS.

ACTIVITY 1: CALCULATE THE RISKS



What can happen in 5 seconds? A lot when you're driving. Five seconds is the average time a driver takes his or her eyes off the road when texting. This may not seem like much time, but when you factor in speed, reaction time, distance, car size, and the key factor of the unexpected, taking your eyes off the road for 5 seconds could have disastrous consequences.

PART A: KILLER NUMBERS

Solve the math problems below to better understand what could happen when your eyes are on your phone instead of the road. Round your answers to the nearest tenth. Remember, there are 5,280 feet in a mile.

1. If you are driving 55 mph, how far will you travel in 5 seconds? _____
(This is a long distance to travel while oblivious to what's in front of you!)
2. You're on a street in a neighborhood that has a driveway every 55 feet. Traveling at 30 mph, how many driveways will you pass in 5 seconds?

- (A driveway represents the possibility of a car or child darting out in front of you.)
3. If you're driving 55 mph and a car 250 feet in front of you stops short, how long will it take you to hit them if you're distracted and don't apply your brakes? (Hint: Less than 5 seconds!) _____
4. A study at Texas A&M University's Texas Transportation Institute found that a texting driver took 3 to 4 seconds to respond or react to a flashing yellow light—twice the time of non-texting drivers. If it takes a texting driver traveling 30 mph 3 seconds to respond to a red light that is 120 feet ahead of her, will she be able to stop her car at the light? _____
5. Reaction time is only one factor in stopping a car. What else factors into bringing a car to a safe stop? _____

PART B: CONCENTRATE!

How well are you able to concentrate and absorb information when doing two things at once? According to the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), 5 seconds is the average time it takes to send a text while driving. Try these two 5-second experiments, then discuss your experience as a class. How did it differ from what you might have expected?

1. Text a message to a friend (you don't have to send it) while you listen to your teacher read a sentence aloud. Example: "How was your weekend?"
2. Text a message to a friend (you don't have to send it) while your teacher shows a sentence on the board.

WHAT'S YOUR "DANGER IQ"?
Check out
[Facebook.com/stopthetexts](https://www.facebook.com/stopthetexts)
to find out.

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING \neq MULTI-TASKING

You might think you're multi-tasking when you're texting behind the wheel, but that's a mistake. Our minds can't really focus on two things at the same time that both require concentration. Instead, the mind switches from task to task. So a texting driver is really engaging in two separate activities, when the driver's mind should be strictly on the road. It's not multi-tasking; it's driving blind.



STOP THE TEXTS. STOP THE WRECKS.

ACTIVITY 2: STUDY THE STATS, STATE THE FACTS



Most teens realize that texting behind the wheel can be dangerous, so why do so many teens text anyway? Here are some popular excuses:

- They think they can handle texting while driving safely.
- They feel compelled to respond to messages soon after they receive them.
- They think texting while driving is just another form of multi-tasking.
- They think nothing really bad will happen to them.

Whether they're reading a text or sending one, texting drivers are distracted drivers. With your team, research facts, stats, and recent events in the media that highlight the dangers of texting while driving. Prepare five points or arguments that will help support the position that texting behind the wheel is unsafe. In addition, for each of your points, provide a tip for texting drivers to help them curb this habit. To get started, check out **StopTextsStopWrecks.org** and the video infographic on the campaign's YouTube page (YouTube.com/stophetexts).

OUR TEAM'S ANTI-TEXTING ARGUMENTS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Now present your points in a class debate. Your teacher will try to make excuses for texting behind the wheel, but now you know the facts!

THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES

What are the potential consequences of texting behind the wheel? They could be costly or even deadly. Think about it—injuries or death to the driver, friends in the car, or passengers in other cars. These consequences could impact a texting driver for the rest of his or her life—all because the person couldn't wait to text.



GET THE NEWS OUT

We've created an e-newsletter that you can send to your friends and family to share facts and stats about texting while driving. You can even customize it with a personal note.

Check out ymiclassroom.com/stophetexts.html for a link to the e-newsletter and instructions on how to send it.

STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG

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ACTIVITY 3: SPREAD THE WORD



You value your friends and family and want them to stay safe. What would you tell them to encourage them not to text while driving? Based on what you've learned about the hazards of texting behind the wheel, write a letter to your friends, family, or someone in particular that you care about to make them aware of the danger. You can check out the videos at StopTextsStopWrecks.org and the video infographic on the campaign's YouTube page (YouTube.com/stopthetexts) for information and inspiration. First, draft your letter below:

Dear _____,

Now share your letter on the campaign's Tumblr page as part of the Ad Council's "Open Letter to Young Adults" campaign at StoptheTexts.Tumblr.com.

TAKE IT SCHOOL-WIDE

Because some teens may consider texting while driving to be a harmless activity, you can help spread the word to encourage your classmates to stop this dangerous practice. With your peers and your teacher's guidance, consider generating a school-wide campaign. Here are some ideas:

- Check out the "Become an Advocate" section of the StopTextsStopWrecks.org website or go directly to stopthetexts.adcouncil.org for videos, facts, and customizable posters/flyers you can download and share.
- "Like" the **Stop the Texts. Stop the Wrecks.** Facebook and Twitter pages at Facebook.com/stopthetexts and Twitter.com/stopthetexts, and share/retweet posts to spread the word.
- Share your open letter from Tumblr on your school's website or on social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter, and encourage your friends, family, and school leaders to do the same.



MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- **National Stop the Texts Day** is May 1, 2012. Join together with advocates across the country to raise awareness about the dangers of texting while driving. Change your Twitter or Facebook profile photo to the **Stop the Texts. Stop the Wrecks.** logo for the day. Find out how else you can participate at stopthetexts.adcouncil.org.
- Create your own video by interviewing your friends and asking them what they think about texting while driving. Upload your video onto CNN iReport and then share it with us on our **Stop the Texts** Facebook page.

STOP THE TEXTS. STOP THE WRECKS. CHECK OUT THE FACTS!

#1 KILLER OF TEENS IN AMERICA = distracted driving (including texting while driving).¹

5 SECONDS = the average time a driver's eyes are off the road when texting. At 55 mph, that's enough time to drive the length of a football field (360 feet).²

8 PER DAY = 16- to 19-year-olds who died in 2009 from motor vehicle injuries.³

18% = distraction-related highway fatalities in America in which cell phone use while driving was reported.⁴

23 TIMES = a texting driver is more likely to get into a crash than a non-texting driver.⁵

34% = teens who drive while distracted who say they're used to multi-tasking.⁶

77% = young adult drivers who are somewhat to very confident that they can safely text while driving.⁷

85% = texting teen drivers who agree that texting while driving is a problem.⁸

500,000 = young adults injured each year because of distracted driving.⁹

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING \neq MULTI-TASKING
TEXTING WHILE DRIVING $=$ DRIVING BLIND

1. (2007, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Study and NHTSA Study)
2. (2009, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)
3. (2010, CDC)
4. (2009, NHTSA)

5. (2009, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)
6. (2010, AAA and Seventeen Magazine)
7. (2011, Ad Council)
8. (2011, Ad Council)
9. (2009, NHTSA)