

Grade 11 Argumentative Performance Task – Distracted Driving

Task:

In recent years, states have been establishing laws about distracted driving. Oregon passed a distracted driving law that went into effect January 1, 2010. There has been some discussion about whether the law should be revised.

This issue has been raised as an important topic at your local community paper where you are a student reporter. The editor of the paper has assigned you to write an argumentative essay on the below topic.

Should Oregon’s distracted driving law remain the same or be changed in any way?

You have done some research and found five sources (two videos, two documents, and one graph) that provide information about distracted driving and Oregon’s law.

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then go back, view and read the sources carefully so you will have the information you will need to answer the questions and finalize your research. You may use scratch paper to take notes.

- You will write an argumentative essay for your local newspaper related to the sources.

Directions for Beginning:

You will now examine several sources. You can re-examine any of the documents as often as you like.

Part 1

Source #1 – YouTube Video – [Conversations with Passengers – Distracted Driving FAQ](#)

(David Teater, Senior Director, Transportation Initiatives, National Safety Council), April 2011.
By National Safety Council

Source #2 – YouTube Video – [The Myth behind Multitasking – Distracted Driving FAQ](#)

(David Teater, Senior Director, Transportation Initiatives, National Safety Council), April 2011.
By National Safety Council

Source #3 This fact sheet was produced by the Oregon Department of Transportation



Oregon Department of Transportation Restrictions on Mobile Communications While Driving – HB 2377

FACT SHEET *December 2009*

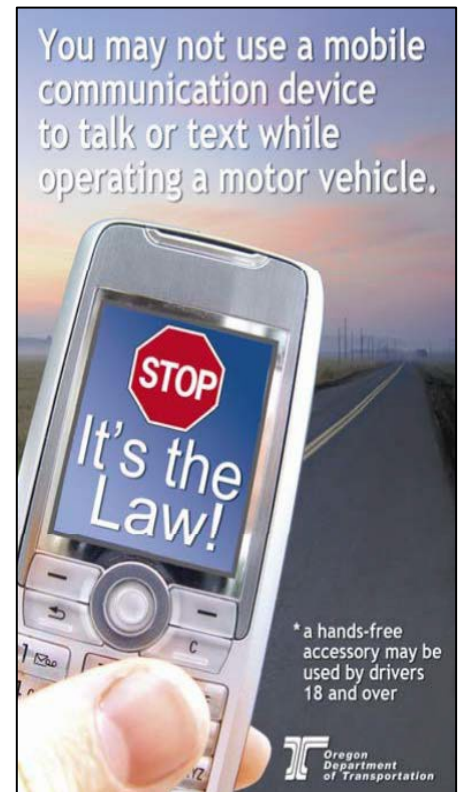
Background:

HB 2377 aims to reduce distractions for drivers so Oregon roads are safer for everyone. It specifically prohibits drivers from using a mobile communications device for talking or texting while driving unless the driver meets a specific exemption. Those in violation face a minimum fine of \$142 (Class D violation). The law goes into effect January 1, 2010.

Safety is our #1 goal

The Oregon Department of Transportation encourages drivers to focus on the task at hand: driving safely from one point to the next. Drivers should avoid *any* kind of distraction, not just mobile communication devices.

Reported cases of cell phone usage causing crashes are low, due in part to self-reporting. National studies are showing, however, that using a cell phone creates a distraction...**and distracted driving is unsafe driving.**



Key elements

- **Covers drivers of all ages.** Drivers age 18 and over can only use a mobile communications device while driving if they are using a hands-free accessory. Drivers under age 18 are prohibited from using all mobile communication devices, whether hands-free or not. Emergencies are an exception.
- **Offers some exemptions for devices used in scope of employment.** HB 2377 exempts some drivers who use a mobile communications device while driving if the vehicle is necessary for the person's job, and some drivers who use radios (CB-style) while in the scope of their employment. Learn more about the exemptions by reading the text of the law (see link below).
- **It's a primary offense.** This means law enforcement personnel can stop a driver solely for using a mobile communications device without using a hands-free accessory.
- **Most importantly, avoid distracted driving of all types!**

And for safety's sake, remember to pull over to a safe place, such as a rest area or a parking lot, if you need to make or take a call or address any other distraction.

For information on transportation programs, visit www.oregon.gov/ODOT. For current travel information throughout Oregon, visit www.TripCheck.com, or call the Oregon road report at 1-800-977-6368.

Source #4 This question and answer document was published on www.distraction.gov

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

From *Distraction.gov*

The best way to help fight distracted driving is to get educated, and this page is a great place to start. Below are answers to some frequently asked questions that will help you better understand the safety threat posed by texting and cell phone use on America's roadways.

1. Is distracted driving really a problem?

Distracted driving kills. The friends, family, and neighbors of the thousands of people killed each year in distracted driving crashes will tell you it is a very serious safety problem. The nearly half a million people injured each year will agree.

2. What is distracted driving?

Distraction occurs any time you take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel, and your mind off your primary task: driving safely. Any non-driving activity you engage in is a potential distraction and increases your risk of crashing.

3. If it's so dangerous, why do people do it?

Some people still don't know how dangerous distracted driving is. Others know about the risks of texting and talking while driving, but still choose to do so anyway. They make the mistake of thinking the statistics don't apply to them, that they can defy the odds. Still others simply lead busy, stressful lives and use cell phones and smartphones to stay connected with their families, friends, and workplaces. They forget or choose not to shut these devices off when they get behind the wheel.

4. **Who are the most serious offenders?**

Our youngest and most inexperienced drivers are most at risk, with 16% of all distracted driving crashes involving drivers under 20. But they are not alone. At any given moment during daylight hours, over 800,000 vehicles are being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone.

5. **Sending or reading one text is pretty quick, unlike a phone conversation - wouldn't that be okay?**

Texting is the most alarming distraction because it involves manual, visual, and cognitive distraction simultaneously. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 4.6 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field, blindfolded. It's extraordinarily dangerous.

6. **Is it safe to use a hands-free device to talk on a cell phone while driving?**

So far, the research indicates that the cognitive distraction of having a hands-free phone conversation causes drivers to miss the important visual and audio cues that would ordinarily help you avoid a crash.

7. **Why doesn't the U.S. Department of Transportation make distracted driving illegal?**

Passenger car driving behavior falls under the jurisdiction of the individual states, so the U.S. DOT can't ban it. Congress has considered a number of good laws to prevent distracted driving, but unfortunately nothing has passed yet. However, many states have stepped up to pass tough laws against texting, talking on a cell phone, and other distractions. You can visit our [State Laws](#) page to learn about the laws in your state.

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

- 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- 40% of all American teens say they have been in a car when the driver used a cell phone in a way that put people in danger. (Madden & Lenhart, 2009)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are 4 times more likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. (Hosking, Young, & Michael, 2006)
- Text messaging creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2009)
- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent-at 55 mph-of driving the length of an entire football field, blind. (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2009)
- Headset cell phone use is not substantially safer than hand-held use. (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, 2009)
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%. (Adam Just, Keller A., & Cynkar, 2007)

Sources:

Adam Just, M., Keller A., T., & Cynkar, J. (2007). *A Decrease in Brain Activation Associated with Driving When Listening to Someone Speak*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University.

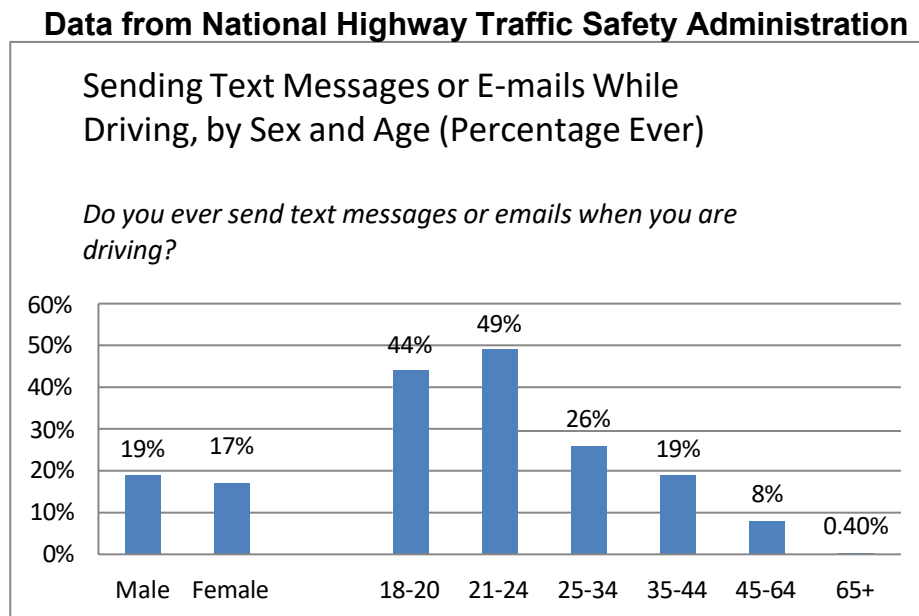
CTIA. (2012, June). *Wireless Quick Facts*. Retrieved May 29, 2013, from <http://www.ctia.org/advocacy/research/index.cfm/aid/10323>

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. (2009). *Driver Distraction in Commercial Vehicle Operations*. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Transportation.

Hosking, S., Young, K., & Michael, R. (2006). *The Effects of Text Messaging on Young Novice Driver Performance*. Victoria: Monash University: Accident Research Center.

Madden, M., & Lenhart, A. (2009). *Teens and Distracted Driving: Texting, talking and other uses of the cell phone behind the wheel*. Washington D.C.: Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Source #5 This chart shows data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration



Adapted from "National Phone Survey on Distracted Driving Attitudes and Behaviors", US Dept. of Transportation, NHTSA, page v.

Directions:

You will now review your notes and sources, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your writing. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your writing will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment:

You are a student reporter for your local community newspaper. The editor of the paper has assigned you to write an argumentative essay on the below topic.

Should Oregon's distracted driving law remain the same or be changed in any way?

Today you will write a multi-paragraph argumentative essay that you will submit to the editor of your local newspaper. Make sure you establish an argumentative claim, address potential counterarguments, and support your claim from the sources by title or number when using details or facts directly from the sources.

Argumentative Essay Scoring:

Your argumentative essay will be scored using the following:

1. **Ideas** – How well did you state your claim and address opposing claims? How well did you support your ideas with relevant evidence?
2. **Organization** – How well did your ideas thoughtfully flow from beginning to end using effective transitions? How effective was your introduction and conclusion?
3. **Voice** – How well did you maintain a formal style?
4. **Word Choice** – How well did you clearly state ideas in your own words using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose?
5. **Sentence Fluency** – How well did you craft your sentences in order to provide variety in sentence beginnings, length and structure?
6. **Conventions** – How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization and spelling?
7. **Use of Sources** – How well did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources? How well did you reference sources you used?

Use the scoring guide attached to this performance task to help you.

Now begin work on your argumentative essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can

- plan your multi-paragraph argumentative essay
- write your multi-paragraph argumentative essay
- revise and edit the final draft of your multi-paragraph argumentative essay

Word processing tools and spell check are available to you.

Remember to check your notes and your prewriting/planning as you write and then revise and edit your argumentative essay.