

Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

August 27, 2015

Article: "Steering Teens to Safety"

Sunday, August 23, 2015 in the e-Edition of The Seattle Times, Special Section, pages J4 and J5

Pre-Reading:

Before reading the supplement, read the title and look at the photographs on the cover. What do you think are the most important teen driver safety tips to remember? What about learning to drive are you excited or nervous about?

Vocabulary:

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today's article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the "context," or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

peer

hazards

factors

scanning

fatalities

collision

defensive

roadway

tempting

handheld

ban

fatigue

crucial

intoxicated

Comprehension:

1. How is crash risk affected by the numbers of peer passengers in the car?
2. Why can peer passengers be dangerous?
3. What are the common critical errors inexperienced teen drivers make that can lead to serious crashes?
4. Teens often view their driver license as a sign of what?
5. What is the 3-second rule?
6. How does a small increase in speed translate to an increase in collision energy?
7. What age group uses their seatbelts the least?
8. What fraction of teens killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts?
9. What is defensive driving?
10. Which is more dangerous, hand held or hands-free cell phone use while driving?
11. How many hours of sleep are recommended for teen drivers?
12. What are the effects of sleep deprivation in teens?

Post-Reading:

Read the following passage from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:

“Defensive Driving is an important skill for all drivers. So it’s especially important for teens to start building this habit as they develop their driving skills. What is defensive driving? Defensive driving is a set of skills that help you to protect yourself from common dangers caused by bad drivers, drunk drivers and even poor weather conditions. You may not be able to control the actions of others or the weather conditions, but you can prepare and protect yourself by building these defensive driving habits.”

Review the list of defensive driving habits listed on page 5. What other defensive driving habits should you and your peers adopt? Why is it important to be a defensive rather than, say, an “offensive” driver? What other qualities do good drivers have?

Building Language Skills:

Read the following passage and complete the activity below:

“Although teens and other may not realize it, any cell phone use while driving, whether hands held or hands-free, is dangerous. Many states also ban the use of cell phones, including hands-free devices, for novice teen drivers.”

What are the Washington state laws regarding the use of cell phones while driving? What are the neighboring state laws for cell phone use while driving? Research and summarize the varying state laws. How would you explain to your peers the dangers of cellphone use while driving?

Comprehension Question Answers:

1. Your crash risk doubles if you have one peer passenger and more than triples if you have two or more passengers.
2. Peer passengers can be dangerous because they take your focus off the road and lower your reaction time for dealing with potential hazards.
3. Lack of scanning to detect and respond to hazards, driving too fast for road conditions, and being distracted by something inside or outside of the vehicle are common critical errors inexperienced teen drivers make.
4. Teens often view their driver license as a sign that they are grown up.
5. The 3-second rule is the time needed to avoid a collision.
6. For example, teens driving 40 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. zone may think they're "only" going 10 m.p.h. over the posted speed limit. But that "small" increase in speed translates to a 78 percent increase in collision energy.
7. Teens use their seatbelts the least.
8. Two-thirds of teens killed in crashes were not wearing seat belts.
9. Defensive driving is a set of skills that help protect you from common dangers caused by bad drivers.
10. Both hand held and hands-free cell phone use while driving is dangerous.
11. Eight hours of sleep are recommended for teen drivers.
12. Teens who get less sleep than average experience increased daytime sleepiness, depressive mood, high levels of risk-taking behaviors and lower grades.