

NEWS BREAK

Article: **Teens feel stressed as cellphone bans tighten**

Section: **NW, C1**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, October 13, 2024** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

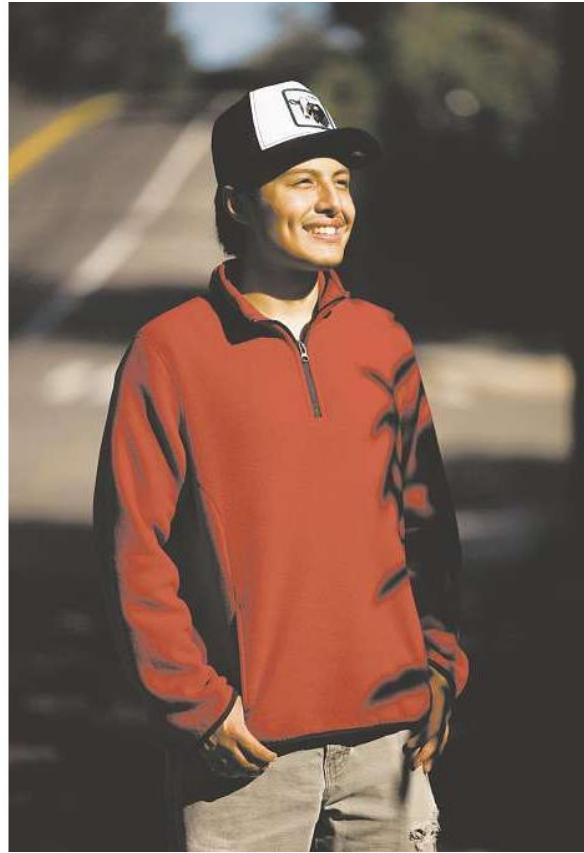
Objectives:

Students will learn about the current debates over cellphone use in schools. Some students (and their parents) believe that phones are essential for safety and communication, while others believe that they are a distraction and should be banned. The article also explores the emotional connection that many teens have with their phones and will brainstorm ways they can control or limit usage and have more self-control among the pull of social media.

Pre-Reading Discussion:

Do you ever purposefully leave your phone behind?

Absolutely. I'm trying to learn now to not depend on it. Technology is growing by the day and if it gets more dependable where does that leave us as humans. I just try to talk to people and get through the day by myself without my phone. Sometimes it's hard if there is an emergency and someone wants to call you and you don't have it, stuff like that, family matters. It does feel nice when you've told people ahead of time that you aren't going to have your phone so don't communicate. Then there's nothing to worry about and you can just go on walks, go to the beach or something, or go to a movie.



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture and text?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

While the **status quo** unfairly burdens teachers who have to spend more time policing than teaching, the outright ban is ostensibly a paradigm shift for teens who have grown up with devices that have helped regulate their emotions since they were babies.

Status quo Guess:

Status quo Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. In two Seattle schools, Robert Eagle Staff and Hamilton International middle schools, students don't have their phones during the school day this fall. Where will their phones go?
2. While the status quo unfairly burdens teachers who have to spend more time _____ than teaching, the outright ban is ostensibly a paradigm shift for teens who have grown up with devices that have helped regulate their emotions since they were babies.
3. "Social media is embedded into [students'] social lives so taking that away or drastically limiting it is going to feel _____ to teens," said Katie Davis, an associate professor at University of Washington's Information School.
4. In August, Washington state Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal asked districts to talk to their communities and determine the best plan to _____ cellphone use in class by the start of the 2025-26 school year.
5. In states like Florida and Indiana, the statewide change is more drastic — legislation has been passed that severely restricts what?
6. Last year, lawmakers in the U.S. Senate introduced the Kids Online Safety Act. What would that require?
7. Attorneys general across the country, including Washington, filed a federal lawsuit accusing Meta of intentionally prioritizing what?
8. The UW study will ask students, school staff and families to complete _____ about their perceptions of the new policies. The researchers also want to gather _____ and possibly analyze district records on discipline data.
9. Magis-Weinberg said teachers like the ban because they spend less time telling students to put their phones away, but parents who are concerned about _____ are very resistant.
10. The Seattle Times sat down with teens to see how they feel about their phones-what was the highest amount of daily cell phone usage that was shared?

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- What is your personal connection to your phone? Your family members usage?

- Do you feel like you can't live without it? Have you tried? What's the longest you've been without your phone and how did you feel?
- Does your school or teachers ban cell phone usage? Should they, if they don't? Are cell phones distracting in class? Why or why not?
- How can teens learn self-discipline and self-control in regards to their cell phone usage?

For Nahila Abdoukarim, 18, having her cellphone in the hallways of Franklin High School makes it a little easier. During passing periods between classes, she listens to music. At lunch, she texts with old friends. "If I'm able to converse with people, obviously, it's great, but it's easier for me to go through day by day without feeling uncomfortable or awkward," Abdoukarim said. "[My phone] definitely allows me to be in my zone ... to not think of my surroundings and be affected by my environment as much." "I feel a lot safer knowing where it is, knowing I have it with me. I feel my connection is very deep. If something were to happen to it, I would feel a big strain in my heart ... I would feel like something would be gone. I feel like I'm just so connected to it, it is a very big safe place for me."

- What are your thoughts on Nahila's quote? Do you agree or disagree?

Diving Deeper into the Topic: Journaling, Essay Prompts, Small Group or Larger Class Discussion Questions:

- How do you think your phone use affects your relationships with your friends and family? Do you spend more time on your phone than you do with them?
- Do you think schools should ban cellphones altogether? Why or why not?
- What are the potential risks and benefits of allowing cellphones in schools?
- How can both families and schools help students develop healthy relationships with their phones?
- What role do social media companies play in teens' lives? Are they a positive or negative influence?
- How can parents help their teens use their phones in a healthy way?
- What are the long-term effects of excessive cellphone use?
- Do you think teens are more addicted to their phones than previous generations? Why or why not?
- How can we create a society that is less reliant on cellphones?
- What are the potential benefits of using cellphones in education?
- How can we help teens develop critical thinking skills in the age of social media?
- What is the future of cellphone use? How will technology change our lives in the coming years?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.
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