

Digital Citizenship: Arts Integrated Lessons

Lesson Title: TTYL: Dying 2 Text

Grade Level: High School



Essential Question:

Why do people text even when it is not healthy or inappropriate to do so? (TTYL is a text message acronym often used for talk to you later.)

Discussion Guidelines

1. Ask students if they would rather text or talk (in person, on Facetime, or on the phone) with a friend and explain their answers. No doubt they will say something about how it depends on the situation.
2. Propose the following situations and ask if they would text:
 - You are out with two or three friends, having a really great conversation, and you receive a text from someone else. What do you do? Why?
 - You are out to dinner with your grandparents and you receive a text. Your parents have already told you, "No phones/texts/screens at dinner." What do you do? Why?
 - You are at the movies/on a date and you receive a text. What do you do? Why?
 - You are driving (or pretend you are old enough and/or have access to a car) and you receive a text. What do you do? Why?
3. Discuss with students: What do your responses say about you? What do they say about your relationships? What do they say about your distractibility?
4. Distribute lyrics and listen to the recording of "Highway Don't Care." Review the concept of **social commentary**: a form of communication that seeks to express an opinion or deliver a message regarding a social issue, usually with the intent of creating change by appealing to the audience's sense of justice. Social commentary pieces do not always tell us what to think, but they do provide information about problems. Humorous social commentary pokes fun at the topic, but not all social commentary is humorous. How is this song social commentary on driving and texting? What lyrics support your answer?
5. Ask students if there is any situation in which they would not pick up or answer a text and make a list on the board.
6. Tell students you are going to read them a list of situations involving texting and they need to tell you whether or not it is true. Use the scenario sheet provided.

7. Think of each scenario as the basis for a social commentary song. Create a title of a social commentary song about one or more of the scenarios. What style of music would you use? Why? Would your song be serious or humorous? Why?

Conclusion

Read the following quotation from comedienne Paula Poundstone, whose comedy is often based on social commentary. Ask them why this is funny and not funny at the same time.

“When I talk to people about (constantly being on their phones) they get defensive. They say ‘It’s not an addiction, it’s just something I enjoy.’ Really? I love to play ping pong, I love to practice the drums, I love to tap dance, but I have never even once tried to figure out how to do any one of those things while driving in such a way so as the cops couldn’t see. Because I’m not addicted to them, I just enjoy them. And there’s a big difference.”

Are we, in America, indeed addicted to our screens and texting and the Internet, despite the risks? It’s something to think about.

“Highway Don’t Care”

(feat. Keith Urban & Taylor Swift)

Bet your window’s rolled down and your hair’s pulled back
And I bet you got no idea you’re going way too fast
You’re trying not to think about what went wrong
Trying not to stop ‘til you get where you goin’
You’re trying to stay awake so I bet you turn on the radio
And the song goes

I can’t live without you, I can’t live without you, baby
I can’t live without you, I can’t live without you, baby, baby

The highway won’t hold you tonight
The highway don’t know you’re alive
The highway don’t care if you’re all alone
But I do, I do.

The highway won’t dry your tears
The highway don’t need you here
The highway don’t care if you’re coming home
But I do, I do.

I bet you got a dead cell phone in your shotgun seat
Yeah, I bet you’re bending God’s ear talking ‘bout me.
You’re trying not to let the first tear fall out
Trying not to think about turning around
You’re trying not to get lost in the sound but that song is always on
So you sing along

I can’t live without you, I can’t live without you, baby
I can’t live without you, I can’t live without you, baby, baby

The highway won’t hold you tonight
The highway don’t know you’re alive
The highway don’t care if you’re all alone
But I do, I do.

The highway won’t dry your tears
The highway don’t need you here
The highway don’t care if you’re coming home
But I do, I do.

I can’t live without you, I can’t live without you, baby
I can’t live without you, I can’t live without you, baby, baby

The highway don’t care
The highway don’t care
The highway don’t care
But I do, I do.

I can’t live without you, I can’t live
without you, baby
I can’t live without you, I can’t live
without you, baby, baby
The highway don’t care
The highway don’t care
The highway don’t care
But I do, I do)

[3x]

I can’t live without you, I can’t live
without you, baby

True or False?

International Texting Scenarios

A city in Germany that installed crossing lights embedded in the sidewalk so that people could continue to look at their mobile phones and be safe without looking up.

Answer: True.

“Officials in the city of Augsburg became concerned when they noticed a new phenomenon: Pedestrians were so busy looking at their smartphones that they were ignoring traffic lights. The city has attempted to solve that problem by installing new traffic lights embedded in the pavement — so that pedestrians constantly looking down at their phones won’t miss them.”

—*Washington Post*, April 2016

A city in China has set up walking lanes and pedestrians choose from walking in a normal lane and one reserved for “smombies,” people who walk and stare at their devices at the same time.

Answer: True.

“There are lots of elderly people and children in our street, and walking with your cell phone may cause unnecessary collisions here,” Nong Cheng, a marketing official for the group in charge of Chongqing’s entertainment zone, told the Associated Press.

—‘Smombies=Screens + Zombies’ —*Washington Post*, September 2014

A study conducted in Seattle, Washington found that pedestrians who text and walk were 3.9 times more likely than undistracted pedestrians to display at least one unsafe crossing behavior (disobeying lights, crossing mid-intersection, or failing to look both ways.)

Answer: True

The study is cited on the National Center for Biotechnology Information website.

—*Injury Prevention*, November 2012

The National Center for Biotechnology Information, National Institutes of Health, November 2012
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3717764/>

New Zealand’s Transport Agency was so worried about the number of deaths caused by texting while driving that it created a commercial called, “Put Me First.” In the commercial, a driver who is actively driving reaches for his/her phone and the person in the passenger seat reaches down and holds his/her hand while Lionel Richie’s romantic song “Hello” plays in the background.

Answer: True:

The commercial shows a number of different drivers receiving a text while they are driving with passengers in their vehicle. Rather than shocking audiences with violence or boring them with statistics, New Zealand’s transport authority has gone for awkward humor in its anti-texting TV public service campaign, also called “Hello.” It has the slogan, “Put your passengers first. Drive Phone Free.”

— *AdWeek*, March 2016

<http://www.adweek.com/adfreak/new-zealand-just-had-creepiest-idea-reminding-drivers-not-check-their-phones-17047>