



CUNY ASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING (CATW) Practice 4

Read the passage below and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Texting While Driving

Suddenly, those drivers talking on their cell phones seem relatively harmless, at least when compared to drivers who are staring at their cell phones, texting. An estimated 20 percent of drivers are sending or receiving text messages while behind the wheel, according to a Nationwide Insurance study. And, according to another poll, that number skyrockets to 66 percent among drivers 18 to 24 years old. The practice, especially popular among young people, is exacting a deadly toll.

No one knows how many vehicular crashes are related to drivers distracted by text messaging, but anecdotal evidence is mounting. A fiery crash made headlines in June when five female friends died in a collision with a tractor trailer just a week after graduating from their suburban Rochester, N.Y., high school. Police discovered the teenage driver had been texting moments before the crash. Similar accidents are happening with increasing regularity nationwide.

Now, at least sixteen states are considering legislation that would outlaw or restrict the practice. "Certainly, texting while driving is an important issue this year in the legislatures," says Matt Sundeen of the National Conference of State Legislatures. That means another fight over the role of the government in regulating cell phone use, but it's one that proponents of new laws expect to win because there is popular support for such legislation. A Harris Interactive Poll shows that nine out of ten American adults believe that sending text messages or e-mails while driving is "distracting, dangerous, and should be outlawed."

Experts say that anti-texting laws are following on the heels of a wave of more general bans on the use of cell phones while driving. Five states already prohibit drivers from using hand-held phones, and twenty four others have considered similar legislation. With texting becoming such a part of our daily lives, it is likely that regulation will be needed to reduce tragedies resulting from distracted drivers.

Adapted from "Outlawing Text Messaging While Driving: Legislators in Several States Respond to Safety Concerns" by Bret Schulte, *U.S. News & World Report*, February 11, 2008.