

Vail School District
4th Grade - Writing
PRACTICE Benchmark #2
Argumentative

DIRECTIONS:

Read the writing prompt and information below. Then use scratch paper for your prewriting/planning and your draft.

Do kids need their own cell phones?

SEP 21, 2012 | **By TIME For Kids Staff; with reporting by Bonnie Rochman for TIME**

Most cell phone companies design models especially for kids. But parents are usually the ones buying the phones, and paying the bill. According to a July 2012 study, 56% of parents of children ages 8 to 12 have given their children a cell phone. The percentage goes up with age. The study, by ORC International for the National Consumers League (NCL), basically proves what many people already assumed: many kids, if not most, have their own cell phones.

According to a recent YouthBeat survey, 12 is the magic number. It is the most common age for kids to get their first cellphone. But 13% of children ages 6 to 10 already have one. That's more than one out of every 10 kids.

Pro-cell phone people, including many parents, note that cell phones help kids keep in touch with their friends and families. They believe that cell phones are an important tool in an emergency. Kids can stay connected with their parents at all times, whether it's to ask for a ride home from soccer practice or to receive a good-luck text message moments before a big game. Plus, some people say having a cellphone helps teach kids to be responsible. Some cell phones designed for kids can be controlled with settings that allow the phone to only be used in parent-approved ways. What's the harm in that?

But other people are worried about the health and safety effects of kids' cell phones. They believe that plugged-in kids could be missing out on other activities, such as playing outside or hanging out with friends, and that sending text messages or fielding phone calls while doing homework is bad for concentration. They say that kids are spending too much time texting instead of talking to each other. "Our brains evolved to communicate face to face," says Gary Small, a professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine, in California. "A lot of this is lost with texting."

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Another concern is cyberbullying, which is on the rise as more kids use e-mail and text messages to communicate. And some experts are concerned about possible health risks. They worry that radiation—or energy waves—released by cellphones could be harmful to young people. To be safe, many pediatricians advise limiting talk time.

News Debate: Tough Cell Should cell phones be allowed in schools? (ReadWorks.org)

As students head back to school, many are focused more on ringtones than on blackboards. Nearly 44 percent of 10- to 18-year-olds in the United States own cell phones, according to a recent technology survey. Now some schools are telling students to leave their mobile phones at home.

New York City recently banned cell phones from its school system. Within a month, school officials confiscated, or took away, 3,000 phones from students. Schools across the country are asking this question: Should cell phones be allowed in school?

Cell phones are often misused, say some education officials. Students have been caught making calls in class and text messaging test answers to their friends. Plus, cell phones are among the most frequently stolen objects in schools. Many teachers think getting rid of cell phones would prevent students from being distracted during class.

Cell phones may not even be very useful in a school emergency, according to Kenneth Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services. He told WR News that too many cell phone calls in an emergency would "overload phone systems and 911 operators."

Cell phones provide a convenient way for families to stay in touch. Parents like knowing they can get in touch with their kids, especially at dismissal time. That's why some schools allow cell phones, but only if students keep them turned off and out of sight during class.

"I don't see a reason to ban cell phones," Leland Dishman, a school official from Boaz, Alabama, told WR News. "Our kids are very responsible, and I do not expect much of a problem."

"Cell phones are OK as long as the school doesn't object," William Scharffe of the Michigan Association of School Boards told WR News. He says that if phones are allowed, however, students need to use them responsibly and at the proper time.

PROMPT: Not everyone agrees that students should be able to have cell phones at school. Should schools allow cell phones? Why or why not? Use specific reasons to support your position.

Your writing should include:

- a prewriting plan/web
- a clearly stated position
- details that support your position
- a beginning that grabs the reader's attention
- a concluding statement
- words that are precise and paint a picture

Remember to edit for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.



