



# Write to Educate

## Scholarship Contest Winner

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**Essay Topic: Examine the role of technology in your own life: Does technology have a positive or negative effect on personal safety? How would you handle texting and driving, whether yourself or others?**

A large point of focus in our nation's culture is the rapid speed of everything in our lives. News and information is a constant race to be the first to publish, the education system pushes to get students to graduate as soon as possible, and businesses race to outdo the competition to rise to the top. Technology has also helped contribute to the ease of access in a rapidly shifting and fast paced society.

While technology can be beneficial in providing quick access and improvements in all fields, there are some major downsides to one's personal safety when it comes to this overabundant use of technology.

While technology, specifically in cell phones, has made it easier to contact others such as when faced with a situation affecting a person's safety, the negatives that have come with the prolonged use of cell phones have outweighed the positives. The major negative is the distractions technology can cause. It can be easy to chuckle at the occasional passerby who is too focused on their phone that they run into something, but there are some instances where this can be deadly too. While that isn't the majority of cell phone related fatalities, texting and driving is. With America's push for rapid speed in everything, driving has become a place to try to tackle multiple activities at once. Texting while driving not only puts yourself in danger, but others around you. Whether you're a passenger, in another nearby car, or just crossing a street, your safety is at risk when a person texts and drives. Texting is also just one of the ways a driver can be distracted behind the wheel. Most vehicles in Europe don't contain cup holders, since driving is considered an activity on its own that needs no distractions. But because of America's fast paced culture, our vehicles are full of distractions to prevent us from driving safely, especially cell phones.

I have also fallen into the trap at glancing down at my phone while driving when I have it placed in one of my car's cup holders. To prevent this, I have learned to keep my phone in a secure pocket in either my pants or my coat because it becomes much more difficult to glance down at my phone when it is not directly accessible. It can be difficult, especially when I'm expecting an important message or call on my phone, but it's more important to arrive at my destination safely rather than risk looking down and either injuring myself or others. Most of my close friends are very responsible drivers whenever there is more than in the vehicle. While I haven't had any issues with my friends texting and driving while we are in the same car, my parents can sometimes be another situation. My dad especially would text and drive constantly because his job required him to almost always be available to contact. Most times now, I have offered to help send a message while sitting in the car to allow my parents to continue driving without distractions.

It's difficult to push for a much less rapid lifestyle because this would require an entire culture shift. But, personal self improvement and awareness can help benefit everyone. Not only can it benefit your physical safety, but mental safety too. Using technology frequently can be mentally draining, which is why it's important to separate yourself from technology from time to time and take part in other activities such as exercising and being with friends and family. Take time to slow down, put away your technology, and see what else the world has to offer. You might just miss what else life has to offer.

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