

**Extended Reading Social Psychology
Cellphones & Driving**

Name:

Part 1: Topic Sentence/Supporting Detail

Put the Introduction designed to give background to the essay in Italics

Underline and put in bold print the Thesis Statement for the essay

Put the Topic Sentence in blue type for Support Paragraphs 4 and 5.

Put one Example of Supporting Detail in red type for Support Paragraphs 4 and 5 that provides evidence for the Topic Sentence of that paragraph.

Put the Conclusion that takes the reader a step further in Underlined Green type.

Part 2: Define the following words:

Paragraph 2: potent

Paragraph 3: simulator

Paragraph 5: gauge

Paragraph 6: degrade

Paragraph 6: debunk

Part 3: Explain the following terms:

Paragraph 1: "the problem is not your hands but your brain."

Paragraph 4: "phone conversations appear to take a significant toll on visual processing skills"

Paragraph 5: "enough alcohol to make them legally drunk"

Paragraph 6: "The paradox is that if the friend is sitting next to you, you drive safer,"

Part 4: Use the Internet to look up and explain the following terms:

Paragraph 2: Applied Cognition Laboratory at the University of Utah

Paragraph 5: Carnegie Mellon

Paragraph 6: The Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied

Part 5: Critical Thinking

Having read the essay, do you believe cell phones should be banned from being used while driving. Why or why not?

A Problem of the Brain, Not the Hands: Group Urges Phone Ban for Drivers

New York Times

By [TARA PARKER-POPE](#)

Published: January 12, 2009

1 In half a dozen states and many cities and counties, it is illegal to use a hand-held cellphone while driving — but perfectly all right to talk on a hands-free device. The theory is that it's distracting to hold a phone and drive with just one hand. But a large body of research now shows that a hands-free phone poses no less danger than a hand-held one — that the problem is not your hands but your brain.

2 "It's not that your hands aren't on the wheel," said David Strayer, director of the Applied Cognition Laboratory at the University of Utah and a leading researcher on cellphone safety. "It's that your mind is not on the road." Now Dr. Strayer's research has gained a potent ally. On Monday, the National Safety Council, the nonprofit advocacy group that has pushed for seat belt laws and drunken driving awareness, called for an all-out ban on using cellphones while driving. "There is a huge misperception with the public that it's O.K. if they are using a hands-free phone," said Janet Froetscher, the council's president and chief executive. "It's the same challenge we had with

seat belts and drunk driving — we've got to get people thinking the same way about cellphones."

3 Laboratory experiments using simulators, real-world road studies and accident statistics all tell the same story: drivers talking on a cellphone are four times as likely to have an accident as drivers who are not. That's the same level of risk posed by a driver who is legally drunk.

4 Why cellphone use behind the wheel is so risky isn't entirely clear, but studies suggest several factors. No matter what the device, phone conversations appear to take a significant toll on attention and visual processing skills. It may be that talking on the phone generates mental images that conflict with the spatial processing needed for safe driving. Eye-tracking studies show that while drivers continually look side to side, cellphone users tend to stare straight ahead. They may also be distracted to the point that their engaged brains no longer process much of the information that falls on their retinas, which leads to slower reaction times and other driving problems.

5 At the University of Utah, Dr. Strayer and his colleagues use driving simulators to study the effects of cellphone conversations. A simulator's interior looks like that of a Ford Crown Victoria, and a computer allows researchers to control driving conditions. Study participants are asked to drive under a variety of conditions: while talking on a hand-held phone or a hands-free one, while chatting with a friend in the next seat, and even after consuming enough alcohol to make them legally drunk. While in the simulator, drivers are asked to complete simple tasks, like driving for several miles along a highway and finding a particular exit, or navigating local streets where they must brake for traffic lights, change lanes and watch for pedestrians. How fast they drive, how well they stay in their lane, driving speed and eye movement are closely monitored. The Utah researchers have also placed electrodes on participants' scalps to gauge how they process information. Similar studies, using brain imaging, have been done at Carnegie Mellon. The studies show that cellphone

conversations are highly distracting compared with other speaking and listening activities in the car.

6 One might think that listening to talk radio or an audio book would degrade driving skill; it does not. (A quiz after the driving test confirmed that the drivers were really paying attention to the programs.) Likewise, it is easy to equate talking to a friend on a cellphone with talking to a friend in the passenger seat. But a December report in *The Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* debunked that notion. Utah researchers put 96 drivers in a simulator, instructing them to drive several miles down the road and pull off at a rest stop. Sometimes the drivers were talking on a hands-free cell phone, and sometimes they were chatting with a friend in the next seat. Nearly every driver with a passenger found the rest stop, in part because the passenger often acted as an extra set of eyes, alerting the driver to the approaching exit. But among those talking on the cellphone, half missed the exit. "The paradox is that if the friend is sitting next to you, you drive safer," Dr. Strayer said. "When you talk to that person on a cellphone, you're much more likely to be involved in an accident."

7 There is an overwhelming body of evidence that cellphone use while driving is more risky than other distracting behaviors, like drinking coffee or listening to the radio, because of the way the brain processes information. Still, the idea of a total ban is sure to be controversial. "People understand the dangers, but they just don't want to give it up themselves," said Ms. Froetscher, of the National Safety Council. "But years ago we didn't put on seat belts, or people who might have had a drink before driving wouldn't think of it now. "We have to educate people that it's a risky behavior."