

Unit 2: Screen Time
Honors 7th Grade Language Arts
17 Class Meetings

Updated January 2026

Essential Questions

- How has technology impacted the way we interact in the world?
- How does the development of a strong argument help one to become a critical thinker?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Different areas of the teenage brain mature at different rates which leads to profound functional and behavioral implications for teens.

- Examine the development/growth that occurs in the teenage brain.
- Research the positive and negative effects of cell phones, gaming, social media and television on the developing teenage brain.

EU 2: Readers develop a deeper understanding through reflection of text.

- Summarize numerous articles about screen time to determine the central idea, author's purpose, and point of view.

EU 3: An argument should have sound and relevant support because a position is only as strong as the evidence given to support it.

- Engage in the writing process to compose an argumentative essay.

EU 4: Routinely practiced independent reading builds habitual readers with conscious reading identities, increases reading comprehension skills, and develops vocabulary.

- Engage in consistent independent reading of student-chosen books.
- Actively participate in a supportive reading community that introduces students to a wide range of characters and experiences.

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

- **RI.7.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RI.7.2** Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **RI.7.3** Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text
- **RI.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- **RI.7.5** Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
- **RI.7.6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
- **RI.7.8** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

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- **RI.7.9** Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.
- **W.7.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- **W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- **W.7.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- **W.7.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.
- **W.7.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- **W.7.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. b Apply *grade 7 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g. "Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims").
- **SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.7.3** Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- **SL.7.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- **SL.7.5** Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
- **L.7.1** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **L.7.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **L.7.3** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- **L.7.4** I can determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words using many strategies.

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ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

Unit Content Overview

1. Non-fiction text structures

- Read non-fiction text and identify its structure.
- Cause/Effect, Compare/Contrast, Problem/Solution, Description, Time Order/Sequence

2. Teen brain development

- Read scientific articles to understand how the teen brain develops.
- **Vocabulary:** neurological development, prefrontal cortex, limbic system, dopamine, neurologist, synaptic pruning, brain plasticity, abstract thinking, AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics), pediatrician, screen time

3. Effects of cell phone, social media, gaming, and television on the developing brain

- Read articles about screen time and discover how screens affect the teen brain.

4. Writing an effective argument

- Write an argumentative essay defending a position on screen time
- **Key Terms:** evaluate, evidence, reasoning, credibility, relevant, plagiarism, argument writing, claim statement, topic sentence, transition, call to action.

5. Grammar

- Phrases (Appositive, Prepositional, Infinitives, Participle Phrase, Gerunds)

Interdisciplinary Connection:

- Science-human body systems
- Advisory- Growth Mindset

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Daily Learning Objectives with TWPS

Students will be able to...

- Diagram the different parts of the brain and examine their roles.
 - *What does this parody say about people and social media? Explain.*
- Analyze a text to determine its central idea. **
 - *How does your emotional state impact your learning? Explain, with evidence from the text, to support your answer.*
- Cite evidence to support my analysis.
 - *Why do you think teens are more apt to engage in risky behaviors? Do you take risks in your life? Why or why not?*
- Differentiate and identify the types of text structures used by authors.
 - *Should children be allowed to use social media platforms? Why or why not? Should there be an age restriction? How could that be enforced? Should it be left to parents to decide?*
- Analyze and explain how text features help readers to understand text.
 - *Do you multitask between schoolwork and your phone, and how does that work for you? Explain.*
- Generate and organize student data to formulate conclusions about their own screen time usage.
 - *Now that you have tracked all of your activities for a week, what surprised you about your results? What did you learn about yourself?*
- Integrate and organize information from multiple media sources to support a claim.
 - *Is it difficult to disconnect from your gadgets and screens at night? Would you agree or disagree with experts who say that an inability to unplug at bedtime can affect screen time?*
- Analyze the benefits and risks associated with TikTok.
 - *Who is responsible for keeping you safe on a platform like TikTok—you, your parents, or the app company? Explain.*
- Compare and contrast different speaker's points of view about video games.
 - *Can playing violent video games make more people violent in the real world? Why or why not?*
- Read and respond to grade-level informational text.
 - *Is knowing how your brain functions important? Explain.*
- Assess a variety of sentences to determine the type of phrase used.
 - *How do you think social media impacts your friendships? Does it strengthen your relationships or can it sometimes cause misunderstandings?*
- Develop and argue a claim using credible and relevant evidence from multiple sources.
 - *How do you think excessive screen time can impact your mood, focus, and sleep?*
- Compose a five-paragraph essay defending their claim. **
 - *What do you think is your strongest argument for increasing or decreasing screen time?*
- Edit and revise essay to strengthen writing.
 - *What is your strongest paragraph? Why? How can you strengthen your weakest paragraph?*
- Critique and provide feedback on a peer essay.
 - *How do you feel about your essay? Are you happy with your argument?*

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Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Small group instruction
- Guided notes
- Modeling
- Student-led instruction
- Anchor charts
- Think-Pair-Share
- Journaling
- Graphic Organizer
- Accountable Talk
- Homework
- Word walls with visuals
- Audiobooks

EL Differentiation Instruction:

- Verbal: Prompting, questioning, elaborating, facilitate higher level thinking skills
- Explicit modeling
- Guided and independent practice
- Small group instruction
- Strategic grouping
- Key Vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- KWL charts
- Venn diagrams
- Sequence writing
- Reinforcing contextual definition
- Providing correct pronunciation by repeating student's response
- Predicting and inferring
- Directed reading-thinking activities (DR-TA)
- Glossaries
- Chunk and Chew
- Sentence starters
- Word banks
- Google Translate

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Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Text dependent question response
- Text annotations
- Article analysis
- Brain vocabulary
- Journal responses
- Exit Slips
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Do Now
- Grammar practice
- Graphic organizers
- Homework
- Independent Reading Projects
- Performance Task- Screen Time Essay
 - Screen Time Essay Scoring Guide

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Habit Tracker Project
- Outside Reading Project (EU4)
- Pear Assessment: Screen Time Unit Test (EU1, EU2)
- Performance Task: Screen Time Essay (EU1, EU2, EU3)
- Phrases Test
- Informational Text IAB

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: Screen Time Essay

Description: Students will write their best first draft of their position paper in which they craft a claim based on their research (EU2) and using reasons, multiple pieces of evidence per body paragraph, and sound reasoning to form an argument. (EU3) Students will write in response to this prompt: “You are part of the Children and Media Expert Advisory Committee. Your job is to help the American Academy of Pediatrics revisit the recommendation that children older than two should spend no more than two hours a day on entertainment screen time. After examining both the potential benefits and risks of entertainment screen time, particularly to adolescent development, make a recommendation. Should the AAP raise its recommended daily entertainment screen time from two hours to four hours?” (EU1)

Evaluation: Screen Time Essay Scoring Guide

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Unit Resources

- “Teens and Decision Making” (*NYT Upfront*)
- “The Teen Brain: It’s Just Not Grown Up Yet” (Richard Knox)
- “What’s Going on in Your Brain?” (Linda Bernstein)
- “What You Should Know About Your Brain” (Judy Willis)
- “You Trouble” (Justin O’Neil)
- “Your Phone Could Ruin Your Life” (Kristin Lewis)
- “AAP Policy Statement: Children, Adolescents, and the Media” (Victor Strasburger and Marjorie Hogan)
- “Tweens and Screens: The Truth About Too Much Screen Time (Adrienne Zembower)
- “Do Video Games Cause Violence?” (Erin Cobb)
- “How Video Games Can Affect the Brain”
- Pro/Con: “Should TikTok be Banned?” (Tracee Orman)
- “The Benefits and Dangers of Social Media” (Monica Parsons)
- “Can Too Much Screen Time Harm You?” (Scholastic/National Institute on Drug Abuse)
- “Are Smartphones Making Us Dumber?” (Jonathan Alpert)
- “The Truth About Binge-Watching” (Mackenzie Carro)
- “This is Your Brain on Instagram” (Kelly McSweeney)
- *The Drug Like Effect of Screen Time on the Teenage Brain* (PBS)
- Internet Databases
- Worksheets
- Laptops
- SBAC Prep Online
- Pear Assessment