

Cell Phone Policy

The use of electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, etc.) in this classroom is NOT allowed. Cell phones afford the opportunity to cheat, become distracted, and distract others that are trying to learn. In the classroom, **cell phones will be placed in their designated parking spaces at the front of the classroom.** Any students who retain a cell phone at their desk will have the phone confiscated for the remainder of the class or day, at the discretion of the teacher.

Some important statistics on teenage cell phone use:

- ☞ 50% of teens feel they are addicted to their mobile devices
- ☞ 78% of teens check their devices at least hourly
- ☞ 72% of teens feel the need to immediately respond to texts, social-networking messages and other notifications
- ☞ 52% of teens believe they spend too much time on their mobile devices
- ☞ 37% of teens said they very often or occasionally try to cut down the amount of time they spend on their devices

<https://www.cnn.com/2016/05/03/health/teens-cell-phone-addiction-parents/index.html>

In addition to these eye-opening statistics, there are also several evidence-based reasons for this cell phone policy.

1

Cell phones are disruptive to learning and distracting for all students. "Studies show that open screens degrade the performance of everyone who can see them – their owners and everyone sitting around them."

(Turkle, 2015, p. 39)

2

Multitasking makes us less productive.

"Multitasking degrades our performance at everything we do, all the while giving us the feeling that we are doing better at everything. Frequent multitasking is [also] associated with depression, social anxiety, and trouble reading human emotions."

(Turkle, 2015, p. 42)

3

Cell phone use while learning allows the information to be classified incorrectly in the brain, making retention and recall more difficult.

“Learning information while multitasking causes the new information to go to the wrong part of the brain.” Therefore, when students are working in class and checking their phones, “the information from their school work goes into the striatum, a region specialized for storing new procedures and skills, not facts and ideas.” When students learn without the distractions of cell phones, “the information goes into the hippocampus, where it is organized and categorized in a variety of ways, making it *easier to retrieve*.” Where information is stored in the brain is very important to learning and remembering, and cell phones degrade these important neural connections.

(Levitin, 2014, p. 98)

4

Cell phones offer the opportunity to use online translators and to look up information online.

The use of online translation software is not permitted in Spanish class, and the temptation to use translators is high when completing in-class assignments and essays. The same is true for looking up information (aka, someone else’s ideas) on a novel or short story. Not having access to a cell phone removes the temptation.

5

Cell phone presence can affect a person’s ability to connect with people and feel empathy.

“The mere presence of a phone on the table (even a phone turned off) changes what people talk about [...] and block empathic connection. If two people are speaking, and there is a phone on a nearby desk, each feels connected to the other than when there is no phone present. Even a silent phone disconnects us.”

(Turkle, 2015, p. 21)

For these reasons, cell phones will not be permitted at student desks in Mrs. Condonopoulos’ classroom unless required for a specific activity. If you require an electronic device for an activity, you will be informed in advance. In most cases, an electronic device will be provided for you. Come to class prepared to take a break from your cell phone.