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English Composition I

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Cellphones

Imagine for a moment, that one day all of the cell phone carriers just shut down. AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, all of them just shut down one day. There is no cell phone service, there is no Wifi and your phone no longer works. Did your heart just drop into your stomach? Many people agree that if this were to happen, they would be absolutely lost. In an article entitled [What if cell phones stopped working?](#) this is addressed and states that it would be a major blow to us as a society. Chances are, if your stomach dropped, then you are so attached to your cell phone that you could not live without it. Cell phones have become a defining item in society. Everywhere we go we see people using their phones in any and every situation. Specifically entry level college students exhibit this the most according to Aaron Smith, the director of data labs at Pew Research Company, in his 2015 article [US Smartphone Use](#). It seems the people who are most consumed and affected by their phones are these college students. The future of America are so consumed by their electronic devices that they would implode without them. Cell phones encompass a negative American zeitgeist today and in the future because they embody the younger generation of today and consume their time and attention.

The generation coming into college right now is known for their phone usage. When you think of a freshman or sophomore in college around the age of 17-20 what do you picture? Someone hunched over in their chair playing on their phone is one of the most common answers. Everything I have stated up until this points proves that cells phones are one of the biggest and

most important things in young adults lives. It seems everything is done on cell phones. The University of Wisconsin-Madison conducted a poll entitled “[What is the one thing you can't live without](#)” among their students in 2018. Want to know what the number one result was leading by roughly 20%? Cell phones. It stated that of the students at the university in 2018, 43.9% said that the most important thing that they couldn't live without was their phone. Other answers ranged from coffee, to pets, and then significant other. Think about that, the majority of people agreed that the most important thing the absolutely could not live without was their phone. They put that over their significant other, and over their pets. I couldn't think of a better example to describe how much cell phones mean to young adults. It completely and utterly embodies the generation. That's exactly what cell phones are, they are the zeitgeist in America today. That is exactly what a zeitgeist does, it embodies the spirit of the time, and that is shown time and time again with cell phones. Other generations are known for World Wars, Women's suffrage and Civil Rights as their zeitgeist's, and this generation is known for cell phones.

It is a natural occurrence when walking down the street you see college students on their phones. We live in a day and age where almost everyone we see has a cell phone on them. Think about it, when you are on the train, how many people do you see sitting on their phones? How about when you are in a restaurant and people are on a date together and one of them has their phone out, or maybe even both of them. Everywhere we go, and everything we do we always see people using their cellphones to either look at social media, text, or play games. Yoram Wurmser conducted a small scale study that shows [how much time the average person spends on their phone](#). The results are appalling. Yoram found that the average adult spends roughly 2 hours and 55 minutes a day on their phone. However, he also states the average U.S. citizen spends 3 hours

and 10 minutes a day on their smartphones. How about college students? Well, Ohio University set out to answer that question with their study about [how time spent on phones is affecting college students](#). Of the students who participated they found the average time college students spend on their cell phones is 4 hours and 25 minutes daily. This study goes to show how much more college students use their phones than anyone else. The national average is 3 hours and 10 minutes, college students surpass that by over an hour. Now you may think that that isn't a huge number, but look at it this way: 4 hours and 25 minutes a day roughly equates to 64 and a half days a year spent on their phone. 64 days. A YEAR. On their phone. Of that time spent staring at their screen, 90% of it is spent in social media apps such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter according to Yoram. College students spend less time eating a year than they do on their phone. If that doesn't describe perfectly how these cell phones are a true American zeitgeist, then I don't know what would.

We see statistics on distracted driving all of the time. Most distracted driving stems from cell phone use, and people the age 16-19 are three times as likely to exhibit this type of behavior (National Safety Council). A study conducted by National Safety Council on [distracted driving](#) concluded that cell phone use while driving causes 1.6 million accidents a year. This is just one example of how all of your attention is consumed while using your phone. Let me ask you this. Have you ever been talking to someone and you just absolutely have to check your phone? The next thing you know that person is asking you a question and you have literally no idea what they are talking about? How about sitting in class. You pull your phone out and start looking at a text or at social media. Can you recall what the teacher said five seconds prior? The majority of

your attention is going into these phones, and that is what the younger generation is known for. Constantly being consumed in their phone, and not paying attention to a damn thing else.

Now, with all of that being said, many people argue that cell phones are one of the greatest inventions out there. It is also said that cell phones are mainly used for keeping in contact with one another and that there are various benefits to them. There are various benefits to them. You have the entire internet at your finger tips, it can help you with research and it can answer almost any question you have. It is absolutely a great tool to have. However, that isn't what cell phones are used for the majority of the time. Like Yoram stated in his study, 90 percent of the time that phones are in use it is for social media and apps. Not for research, not for furthering your knowledge or bettering yourself, but for sitting on social media and mindlessly scrolling or watching youtube. Think of it in this way, your cell phone is an invaluable tool, like a screwdriver. A screwdriver is essential and extremely helpful when it comes to screwing in screws, but try to use it as a hammer, and it completely negates the point of it. Like a screwdriver, a cell phone, when used for things such as research and looking something up or calling someone, can be very useful and beneficial. That's not the way they are being used though, and completely shuts down that as an argument because that's not how they are used anymore.

We look at the younger generation of people sitting in their classes, driving down the road, and walking down the street while being glued to their phones. We spend so much time on our phones as is that it distracts us from the rest of life. Yoram predicts that by next year we will almost hit four hours a day on average on our phones. College students have already surpassed that mark though, so my prediction is that they will spend upwards of five to six hours daily on

their phones. Yoram also projects that this will just continue to rise. Waseem Akram, a professor at Government Degree College in Mendhar, takes on the [effects of social media and phone use](#). He states that while there are various benefits to cell phones, overall the negatives outweigh the positives. He urges everyone to adopt the positive aspects of cell phones, and to combat against the negative, otherwise they will take over our lives completely. I firmly believe that this is exactly where we are heading. Don't let yourself and all your time and attention be taken up by staring at your phone. Start paying attention to how much you use your phone, and start paying attention to other people again. Most phone providers now start showing you how much time you spend on your phones. I know that my Apple iPhone sends me an update weekly that gives my average screen time per week. These stats that are sent to your phone also tell you how much it went up or down by. Pay attention to this and start seeing how much of your time is wasted staring at a screen. Start talking with people and paying attention in class. Be a generation that will be known for great things. Use the tools that have been given to you, you have the entire internet in your pocket. Use it to stay informed on current events, use it to broaden your knowledge on topics that interest you. There are plenty of websites and articles, like [How I Cut My Smartphone Usage in Half](#), that can help you cut back on your smartphone usage. I urge each and every one of you to take a look at them. Don't be a generation known for being smartphone addicts, because if you keep on doing what you have been, that will be the most defining zeitgeist of your generation.