Experts worry that teen texting is out of control. Could you give up your phone for 48 hours? Our brave volunteers did.
1. What effect might too much texting have on student’s relationships

Response

Too much texting might hurt relationships with friends and family.

Text Evidence

According to the article “Two Days Without a Phone” from the September issue of Scholastic Action Magazine, teens may spend so much time on social media and not enough time face to face which can hurt relationships. In fact, after spending two days without his cell phone, student Kenny Alarcon said that his mother helped him with his homework for the first time in two years.
2. What is Sleep Texting?

Response

Sleep texting is when you wake up in the middle of the night and send messages that do not make sense.

Text Evidence

According to Dr. Elizabeth Dowdell from the article “Two Days Without a Phone” from the September issue of Scholastic Action Magazine,

 teens sleep is being interrupted by text messages and they send text messages filled with nonsense when they do not wake up all the way.
3. What does the word adolescent mean in Dr. Dowdell’s quotes about sleep needs?

Response

Adolescents are teens.

Text Evidence

Dr. Elizabeth Dowdell from the article “Two Days Without a Phone” from the September issue of Scholastic Action Magazine, uses the words “adolescent” and “teen” interchangeably.
4. Make a prediction about Kenny and Franchesca. Which student is more likely to text less in the future than they did before the experiment?

Response

Franchesca is more likely to text less in the future.

Text Evidence

In the article “Two Days Without a Phone” from the September issue of Scholastic Action Magazine,

Franchesca decided to continue the experiment after the two days were over. Kenny said that he doesn’t plan to give up his phone again.
5. A teen checks his phone every five minutes, and his mood changes when he doesn’t have access to his phone. Might he have an addiction?

Response

If a teen checks his phone every five minutes he or she probably has an addiction to the phone.

Text Evidence

In the article “Two Days Without a Phone” from the September issue of Scholastic Action Magazine, possible addiction is defined as someone who has strong cravings to pick up his or her phone to check messages.
Many teens report troubling problems when they try going without phones and technology. One recent study asked students to give up phones and electronic media for 24 hours. The result? One in five people experienced changes in their bodies or emotions that are signs of possible addiction. Look below for some of these warning signs.

Feeling anxious, lonely, or worried

Thinking you hear your phone ring or vibrate, even though it is not there

Strong cravings to pick up your phone and check messages

Nausea, feeling sick

Fidgeting, being unable to sit or stand still

Kenny’s wrist began to hurt. “It feels like somebody is squeezing it.” He began to give in. But he knew he could live without his phone. “It’s not that bad,” he told his friend.

“Kenny’s having trouble in school. They may become grumpy, angry, or depressed. A lack of sleep can lead to weight gain and even obesity. That’s because many people turn to junk food for quick energy when they are tired.”

The 48-Hour Challenge

According to Dr. Dowdell, teens need to learn that they can—and should—turn off their phones sometimes. So we decided to have Kenny and Franchesca do an experiment. These were the rules: No phone for 48 hours. No computer or Internet either, unless it was for schoolwork. No Twitter, no Instagram. Would these two teenagers be able to do it?

“I think I’m going to feel really isolated,” Kenny worried. Franchesca was nervous but brave. “I’m excited for the challenge,” she said. “I don’t know what’s going to happen.”

Kenny and Franchesca handed their phones to their mothers for safekeeping. The challenge was on.

The Results

We caught up with Kenny and Franchesca after 48 phone-free hours. “Wow, it was pure torture,” Kenny joked. But though life with no phone wasn’t easy, he admitted “it had benefits.” Sure, Kenny missed his friends, and he was sad at times. But he also felt relief from the constant texting. “Sometimes it’s teenager drama, people gossiping,” he explained. “I felt less stressed because I didn’t have to be involved.”

Instead of texting, Kenny went to the gym and caught up on schoolwork. The first night, he told us, “I slept for 18 hours!” He also spent time sitting with his family and talking. Kenny’s mom helped him with homework for the first time in two years. Said Kenny, “I felt closer to my parents.”

Franchesca had an even happier result when she put away her phone. “I loved it!” she said. “I was going to the gym and hanging out with friends and playing basketball. I had a wonderful experience.” She slept better too.

Franchesca decided to continue the experiment for a while. “I think I’ll be so much smarter and healthier,” she explained. “Everybody in the world should try it.” Kenny doesn’t plan to give up his phone again. But he now knows that he can live without it. Said the teen, “It was a reality check.”

—Sarah Jane Brian

Signs of Addiction

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