

## Assignment

Begin by reading the passage below.

### Hang It Up

by Jesse Scaccia

You are a teacher in a public school system, and you are lecturing the class on the structure of an essay. You turn your back to write the definition of “thesis” on the board. You turn around to the class and you see a group of students using electronic devices.

At the end of the term, a handful of students will fail the class. One reason students fail is because of distractions in the classroom, specifically the cellphone. Although electronic devices have been banned in public schools for years, the issue came to the forefront when the New York City schools chancellor announced the random placement of metal detectors in schools. The result: more than 800 cellphones were confiscated.

Students and their parents, who say they rely on cellphones for safety reasons, are outraged. There's even talk of a lawsuit arguing that the rule should be struck down. But as a former public school teacher, I can tell you that cellphones don't belong in the classroom. A student with a cellphone is an uninterested student, one with a short attention span who cares more about his or her social life than education.

Parents think of cellphones as a connection to their children in an emergency. Do you know why your children really want to take cellphones to school? Cellphones are status symbols. When their cellphones ring while the teacher is talking, everyone laughs. Playing video games on their cells makes them look cool. Text messaging their friends in the next room is more fun than learning about topic sentences.

There are legitimate causes that parents should be taking on. But they are wrong on this cellphone issue. In this case, they are part of the problem, not the solution.

### Writing Directions

Read the passage above and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Remember to review your essay and make any changes or corrections that will help your reader follow your thinking. You will have 90 minutes to complete your essay.