



A Lesson on Today's Telephone by Matt Velazquez

Grade Level: Grade 7

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour

Lesson Keywords: Technology, telephone, communication

Lesson Description: A brief history of human communication inventions and how we arrived at the telephone.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

Today's Telephone

by

Content: Today's telephone has a long history as a part of American technology. It is American because an American, Alexander Graham Bell, invented it. The story begins very long ago, when there were no telephones. The only way to get a message to someone else was to write it and send it. Long ago there were messengers who traveled on foot. They were people who would run from place to place, transporting messages to other people. They would run miles, and they had great endurance. Later, communications improved in that people would send letters that traveled by wagons. In time, the mail would travel by train.

After the invention of a new communications tool, people could send messages quickly. That tool was the telegraph, which used a line that went from one place to another. It took years to put all the telegraph lines across America. At one end of the line a person used a device to send a message by code. At the other end, the message would be received and translated by another person. With those telegraph lines people could send messages almost immediately, although it was not person to person.

The telegraph was a remarkable invention, but it did not let people talk to each other. The telegraph meant the end of the pony express, which had been an American invention of another sort. The pony express involved riders who would carry a bag of mail from one place to another riding quickly on horses. It was like a relay race. Those riders were replaced by telegraph operators. They had to know the code to get the messages across the wires. On one end of the telegraph, an operator clicked the message. On the other end, a machine would make the same clicks. At first, a person had to listen and note what the clicks said. But then they figured out how to make the machine record them.

Still, there was no telephone. Then Alexander Graham Bell invented it. He tried many ways to get a machine that would work, and he was persistent because he failed many times. After many attempts, he perfected the machine. Once he had done that, the world all wanted telephones.

The next changes for the telephone were the same as the telegraph. People had to put in all those lines. If you see a picture of Chicago in 1900 you will see lots of wires downtown. The first telephone lines went from one person's phone to another. Those were called landlines. Then they added what were called switching stations, so one line could reach more than one place. Still, it would take years to get the phone system to work more efficiently.

Today there are cell phones, which do not need wires. They use signals that travel through the air, carried by systems that depend on the science of physics. Many people now do not have a landline any more, and just depend on their cell phone. The cell phone is changing communication and even impacting how people live. It can connect people through texts as well as voice. It can download music from the Internet. Some people even use their computers to talk to other people with video screens. Those are the latest innovations in communication. So the telephone is still changing.

Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: Technology **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "Today's telephone has a long history as a part of American technology..." What does the word "technology" mean in this sentence?

A: The application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes.

B: A phone.

C: A teleporter.

D: A messenger.

Question: "Today's telephone has a long history as a part of American technology..." Which sentence below uses "technology" to mean the same as in this sentence?

A: The Android smartphone is a revolutionary technology.

B: Technology is fun.

C: Technology is expensive.

D: Technology doubles every year.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: Landline **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "Many people now do not have a landline any more, and just depend on their cell phone..." What does the word "landline" mean in this sentence?

A: a line in the sand.

B: a line on a field.

C: a phone line that is hardwired into your home.

D: a cell phone.

Question: "Many people now do not have a landline any more, and just depend on their cell phone..." Which sentence below uses "landline" to mean the same as in this sentence?

A: We'll have to throw a landline to pull the ship into port.

B: Today I cancelled my landline and upgraded my cell phone to unlimited.

C: Our football team crossed the landline first!

D: I cut the landline and pushed the ship off shore.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Messengers **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: "Long ago there were messengers who traveled on foot..." What does the word "messengers" mean in this sentence?

A: An email.

B: A type of chat program.

C: A person who was tasked with carrying messages on foot.

D: A person who called other people on the phone to tell them they had messages.

Question: "Long ago there were messengers who traveled on foot..." Which one of the sentences below uses the word "messengers" correctly?

A: Which messengers do you use on your computer?

B: Do you use messengers to deliver your documents to the downtown courthouse?

C: My great-grandfather employed five messengers, before they were shut down by the pony express.

D: Messengers delivered my new cell phone to my office.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Texts **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: "It can connect people through texts as well as voice..." What does the word "texts" mean in this sentence?

A: Ancient books.

B: A 160 character message sent from one cell phone to another.

C: A 160 character story about how you did in school today.

D: A book.

Question: "It can connect people through texts as well as voice..." Which one of the sentence below uses the word "texts" correctly?

A: Everytime I see the texts of another culture I want to know more.

B: When I wake up and look at my phone, the first thing I do is respond to texts.

C: Biblical texts are entertaining.

D: When text is too small I enlarge the font.

Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Do you remember...

You all had the luxury of growing up with at least the telephone if not a cellular or even smartphone. Do you remember the first time you used a phone? Who should we thank for inventing the telephone?

2 - Why so many wires?

In 1900, why would you have seen so many wires in a heavily populated area?

3 - Your favorite method of communication?

With all this discussion about inventing better ways to communicate with people near and far. Think about your favorite way to communicate and how often do you rely on it?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: For your writing assignment, pick one of the one of the pre-cell phone communication technologies?and in 2-3 paragraphs (minimum 250 words) explain both how it was used as well as what impact it had on future communication inventions. Submit your assignment using the box below.

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