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# EXPLICIT PHOTOS & CELL PHONES: INNOCENT FUN OR ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR?

Word Generation - Unit 1.23

## Focus Words

accountable | disseminate | constant | appropriate | legal

## Weekly Passage

Jessica Logan made a mistake. She sent her boyfriend a nude photo of herself using her cell phone. Without her consent, her boyfriend sent the message to other students in their school. These other students began calling Jessica terrible names. They harassed her day after day. The humiliation was constant. Jessica became depressed and began to skip school. Jessica's mother begged the school to take action. The school agreed to speak to one of the students, ask her to delete the photo, and tell her not to speak to Jessica again. Incidents like this can be very hurtful to students. They can make it hard for them to concentrate on school work, and can sometimes even lead students to harm themselves.

Sending sexually explicit pictures using cell phones is sometimes called "sexting." A survey last year showed that almost half the teens in the US had sent or received this kind of inappropriate picture.

Sexting can have legal consequences. Depending on a student's age, the senders and

receivers can both be charged with disseminating pornography. Recently, two teens on Cape Cod in Massachusetts were charged for disseminating a photo showing a semi-nude female schoolmate. Their parents think these charges are extreme. They worry that what began as a teenage mistake will end up as a criminal charge on their sons' permanent records.

Who is responsible for addressing sexting? Should the school have been tougher with the students who were harassing Jessica? Should the parents of these students be held accountable? Should the students involved be charged as criminals, or do you think that their acts should be regarded as teenage mistakes?

### TEACHER

Discussion questions:

- ▶ What inappropriate thing did Jessica do?
- ▶ Who disseminated the picture of Jessica?
- ▶ What became a constant problem for Jessica at school?
- ▶ What are arguments against bringing legal charges against the two teens from Cape Cod?
- ▶ Whom do you infer Jessica's mother holds accountable for the harassment of her daughter?

# Unit 1.23 - Explicit Photos & Cell Phones: Innocent fun or illegal behavior?

## Focus Word Chart (teacher version)

Word	Meaning	Forms			Related Words
		Inflectional	Basic Word Classes	Prefixes/ Suffixes	
accountable	(adj.) – responsible for; obliged to explain (or account for) one's actions		account (v.)	accountably unaccountable accountant accountability	count no-account
appropriate	(adj.) – suitable or fitting		proper	appropriately appropriate (v.) inappropriate	expropriate
constant	(adj.) – not changing; continuing without a letup			inconstant constantly	Constance Constantinople
disseminate	(v.) – to scatter, to spread, or to broadcast	disseminates disseminated disseminating		dissemination disseminator	seminal
legal	(adj.) – having to do with the law			legally legalism legality illegal legalize	paralegal loyalty extralegal

# Unit 1.23 -

## Explicit Photos & Cell Phones: Innocent fun or illegal behavior?



### Problem of the Week

According to a recent poll, three in 10 young people have been involved in some type of sexting that involves photos of them being nude or partially nude. In several high-profile cases around the country, prosecutors have acted to hold students **legally accountable** for forwarding **inappropriate** photos. A 14-year-old in Washington suffered **constant** harassment when her explicit photo went viral. She had sent the photo to her boyfriend, and when they broke up, he sent it to one female friend. This friend forwarded it to her entire contacts list, along with a message calling the student in the picture a terrible name. After police got involved, three students were charged with **disseminating** child pornography.

**Option 1:** Fourteen percent of male students and 9% of female students report having seen a *sext* that has been passed around. Which of the following is true?

- A) about one in 10 students has seen a sext that has been passed around
- B) about one in five students has seen a sext that has been passed around
- C) about one in 20 students has seen a sext that has been passed around
- D) about one in 25 students has seen a sext that has been passed around

**Option 2:** Twenty percent of young people say that a friend has forwarded a text or e-mail without permission. In one case, a student named Trevor made a mistake, and sent an inappropriate photo to his girlfriend, Lea, at noon. By 1 p.m. she had shared it with two friends (two more people, for a total of three). By 2 p.m. each of those friends had shared it with two other friends (four more people, for a total of seven). If things continue at this rate, how long before their entire class of 100 students has seen the picture? (Hint: try making a table!)

(Answer: By 6 p.m., all 100 students will have seen the picture.)

**Math Discussion Question:** Many students have **constant** access to cell phones and the internet, and some **inappropriate** use is inevitable. But when a photo is **disseminated** that ruins a student's life, what is the appropriate response? In the case of the 14-year-old in Washington, prosecutors decided that three students were most responsible for spreading the picture, and held them **legally accountable**. But when hundreds of students have seen a photo, and many of those have forwarded it, is it fair to single out only a few? Some parents complained that the original sender should be held accountable, because she sent the photo to her boyfriend in the first place. What do you think?

# Explicit Photos & Cell Phones:

## Innocent fun or illegal behavior? Debating the Issue



### I. Get ready... **GO!**

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

**A** The students who disseminated Jessica's photo should be held legally accountable on pornography charges. What was intended to be private became public and led to the cruel harassment that she experienced.

**B** The adults should be held accountable. They could have stopped the bullying.

**C** We all should learn a lesson from Jessica's situation. No one should be held accountable, but there should be school rules about bullying that are enforced.

**D** Jessica is the only person accountable. She sent the photo first.

**E** \_\_\_\_\_  
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### 2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

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Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

#### TEACHER

» Some students may need help defining their position on the weekly topic. Here are some examples:

*I think it's more accurate to say...*

*That's interesting - can you tell why you think that?*

*I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because. . .*

*Let me share something from the reading that will help us...*

# Unit 1.23 - Explicit Photos & Cell Phones: Innocent fun or illegal behavior?

## Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

Professor Kahn began noticing lots of news stories about “sexting.” Some stories said that parents were not holding their children **accountable** for actions that are **inappropriate** for their age. Some talked about **legal** consequences. In all of the stories, this fact was a **constant**: 20% of teens are sexting. “Says who?” Professor Kahn thought. “This fact is widely **disseminated**. But where did it come from?”

Professor Kahn did some research, and discovered that the fact is based on a single study. Now, some researchers are saying that this study was wrong. Professor Kahn decided to find out for herself how many students in a particular class were sexting.

### Question:

What percentage of Professor Kahn’s students have sent a sext? (A sext is text message of a sexual nature.)

### Hypothesis:

Fewer than twenty percent of students have sent a sext.

### Materials:

- ▶ All students in one classroom
- ▶ Survey

#### TEACHER

##### Sources:

Bialik, C. (2009, April 8). Which is epidemic – sexting or worrying about it? The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved on October 19, 2009, from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123913888769898347.html?mod=djemnumbers#printMode>

Magrid, L. (2009). Survey adjusts picture of teen sexting, cyberbullying: A new study gets a little more granular about teen sexting and cyberbullying practices. ConnectSafely.org. Retrieved on October 19, 2009, from <http://www.connectsafely.org/Commentaries-Staff/survey-adjusts-picture-of-teen-sexting-cyberbullying.html>

**Procedure:**

1. Ask all 31 students if they have ever sent a sext.
2. Count the number of "yes" and "no" answers.

**Data:**

Sexting Status	Responses
I have sent a sext.	2
I have never sent a sext.	29

**Conclusion:**

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

Supported

What evidence supports your conclusion?

Answer: Only 2 of 31 students (about 6%) had ever sent a sext.

How would you make this a better experiment? Do you think the students in Professor Kahn's class all answered the question honestly? If not, how might the results be biased?

Encourage students to consider sample size, number of trials, control of variables, whether the procedure is a true measure of the question, whether the experiment can be repeated by other scientists, data collection and recording systems, and other potential explanations for the outcome. Students should understand that these simple experiments represent the beginning of an exploration, not the end. If time permits, have students suggest how the experiment could be strengthened, emphasizing the use of the target words in the discussion.



# Writing Prompt

Explicit Photos and Cell  
Phones: Innocent fun or illegal  
behavior?

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

## Focus Words

accountable | disseminate | constant | appropriate | legal

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### TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on the overhead projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation notebooks as needed.

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### A tool to help you think about your own writing!

Remember you can use focus words from any of the WG Units.

Check off what you accomplished:

#### Good Start

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

#### Pretty Good

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

#### Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.