

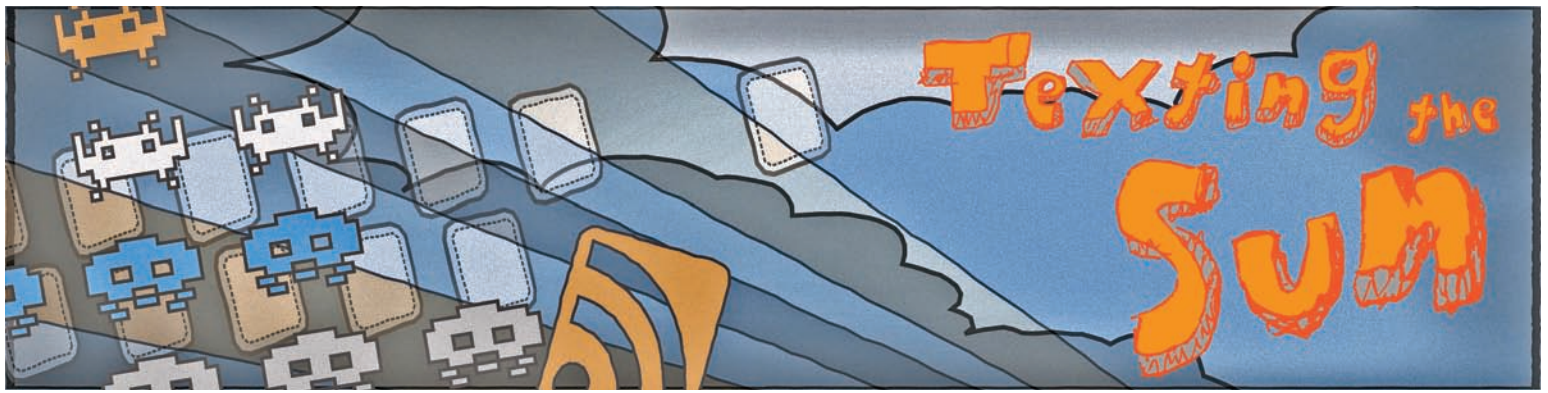
Texting the SUM



AS SEEN ON TV

KAISER PERMANENTE® thrive

Oregon Children's Theatre
explore the stage



Reflection Questions

Screen to Screen

How does modern media technology affect the way you talk to friends, parents, teachers, and peers? How is it different from speaking face to face or writing a letter to someone? Do you use different types of technology depending on the conversation you want to have?

Impact and React

Casper and Monica are both impacted by the media in different ways. What is different and similar about how they react to the media messages in their lives? What messages are each of them drawn to? Why do you think this is so?

Techspression

How do you express yourself (drawing, writing, building things, telling stories, keeping a journal, designing games, dancing, or something else)? Do you ever use media or media technology to help you do this (making music, writing, creating cartoons or films)? What types of media are you drawn to and why? In terms of unleashing your creativity, in what ways does media help you? In what ways does it limit you?

Digital Divide

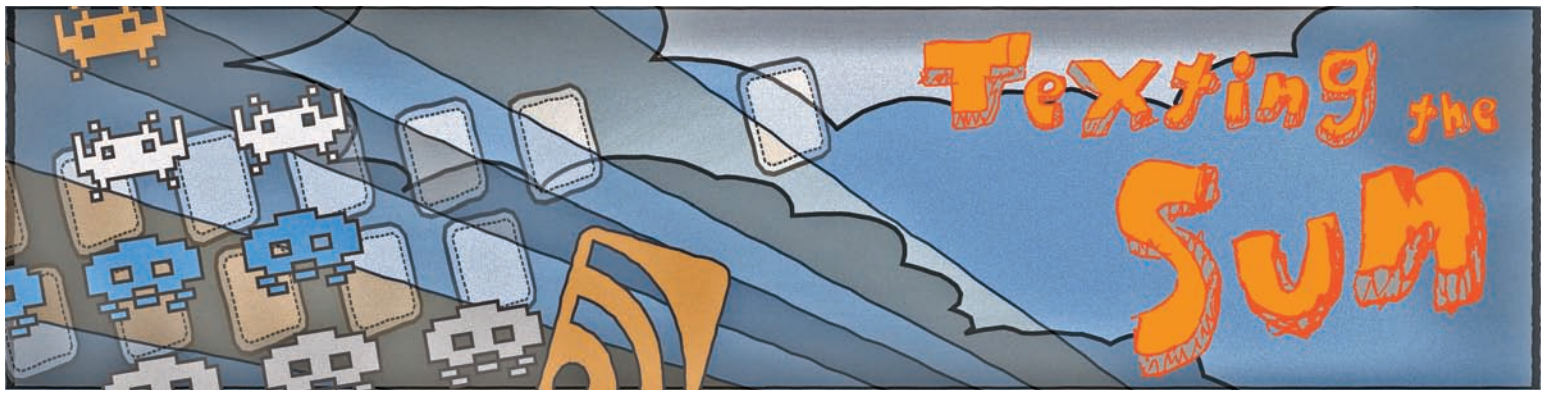
What obstacles to honest communication between kids and parents do you see in the play, and in life? What do you think is hardest for older generations to understand about the pressures teens face from the media? How did Casper and Monica's parents try to get them to open up? What techniques did they use? Were they successful—why or why not? If you could give their parents advice, what would you tell them?



Core Concepts of Media Literacy:

- All media messages are constructed.
- Media messages are constructed using creative language with its own rules.
- Different people experience the same media message differently.
- Media have embedded values and points of view.
- Most media messages are constructed to gain profit and/or power.

— Center for Media Literacy



Activities for Students (Grades 6-8)

Media Diary

For one week, keep a notebook with you in which you write down every message you receive from the media, especially those representing or targeting your generation. At the end of the week what do you notice about the messages? Do they have anything in common? Is there anything that surprised you? How does reading them make you feel about the world—about your life? What techniques do you notice being used to grab your attention?

Interview

Outside of class, interview 1 - 3 people from a different generation than yours (e.g. a grandparent, younger or older sibling, or teacher) about the ways that media impacts their life.

Some questions you could ask:

- How do you get your news about the world? Do you ever avoid the news?
- What do you do during the day that makes you feel connected to other people?
- What is your earliest memory of a news story or advertisement? Why do you think it affected you?
- What changes have you seen in the way people communicate or use media in your lifetime?
- What types of new media technology do you find exciting?
- What strategies do you use to assess the truthfulness of a media message (e.g. news headline, advertisement, or website photograph?)
- What new ways of sharing information do you imagine, or hope that people will have in the future?

Edit or write your own questions tailored to the person you're interviewing.

Expansion Opportunity

Share excerpts from the interviews in class. Interview each other for comparison. Gather excerpts from the interviews and collect them in a collage, sound recording, or short video presentation.

"Children, ages 8 – 18, spend more time (44 ½ hours per week – 6 ½ hours daily) in front of computer, television, and game screens than any other activity in their lives except sleeping."

— Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005



Re-Write

Using this face-to-face dialogue between Casper and Monica as inspiration, re-write this scene in three different ways:

1. One letter from each of the characters
2. Email exchange
3. Text messages

Monica: ...I'm sorry. Big fight at home.

Casper: Parents?

Monica: Said I can't see you again...until I get better.

Casper: Better from what?

Monica: Were you serious?

Casper: About what?

Monica: When you said I was your only friend.

Casper: I didn't say that.

Monica: Yes you did.

Casper: I almost said that.

Monica: Same thing, did you mean it?

No need to stick to the exact wording from the script—just use it as a basis to understand what the characters are going through in this moment.

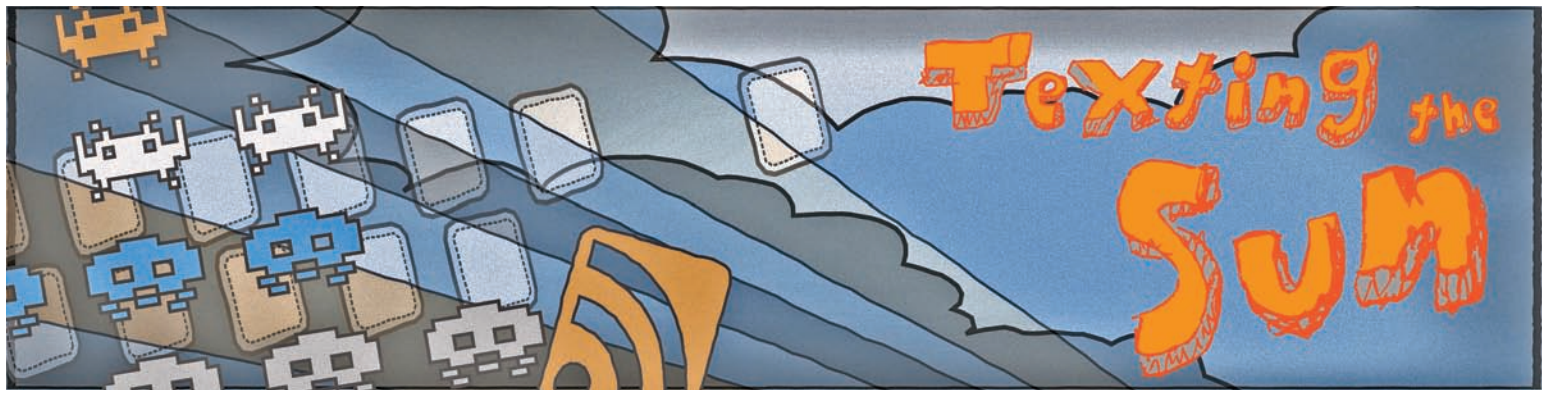
What do you notice about the different versions? Which was hardest, easiest to write? What version feels the most honest and riskiest for the characters emotionally? Which feels the safest? Why?

Expansion Opportunity

Share these scenes out loud in class. Writers do not necessarily need to read their own work. For further development, take on the roles of actors, writers, and even directors, and present a more polished version of the scenes to your classmates.

"Media literacy is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms."

— National Leadership Council on Media Literacy



3 Rooms

Pick three different rooms that you spend time in (e.g. bedroom, family room, and classroom). Record at least 5 different media messages that you find in each room. Messages can come from a variety of sources including clothing, objects...even people! Look carefully: are there any advertisements? How many different brand names can you count? What do you notice about the messages? Can you find any in your own school?

Expansion Opportunity

In “Texting the Sun,” the audience gets to hear the media messages that Monica and Casper come into contact with:

- Adult 2:** Next week on Top Model...
- Adult 1:** Top 20 Video Count Down...
- Adult 2:** Counting the “yes” votes, the Blue Team...
- Adult 1:** Blueberries can get you thin...
- Adult 2:** Get a loan with no credit check...
- Adult 1:** Check out our website at...
- Adult 2:** The best websites of the year coming up...
- Adult 1:** Coming up: how to avoid the Swine Flu...
- Adult 2:** Avoid all carbs...
- Adult 2:** Good news for investors...
- Adult 1:** Invest in a starving child today...
- Adult 2:** Children are still the future!

Break into small groups. Everyone in the group should read one message from their list at a time until each person has shared at least 10 messages (depending on time). Now that you’ve heard them, go around a second time and see if you can eliminate all pauses between people, creating a continuous soundscape. Feel free to alter the sound of your voice or delivery to fit the content of the messages—just keep the momentum going!

What did it sound like? Were there any common themes in the messages you all collected? How did your group’s soundscape compare to Casper and Monica’s? Share yours with the class. How do the groups compare to each other?

“Nearly half (47%) of online teens have posted photos where others can see them, and 89% of those teens who post photos say that people comment on the images at least “some of the time.”

— Pew and American Life Internet Project:
Teens and Social Media, 2007



Oregon Educational Standards

	Media Diary	Interview	Re-Write	3 Rooms
Arts: Aesthetics and Criticism				
Arts: Create Present and Perform				
Educational Technology: Digital Citizenship				
English: Literature				
English: Reading				
English: Speaking and Listening				
English: Writing				
Health Education: Health Skills				
Health Education: Promotion of Environmental Health				
Social Science: Analysis				

Media Literacy: Check Yourself

Know what you don't know! Students can rate their media awareness using this brief quiz by PBS. Link to quiz: http://www.pbs.org/teachers/media_lit/quiz.html

FROM THE PLAY:

Monica: *Why is everyone making me act this way?*

School Counselor: *What do you mean?*

Monica: *I don't like being mean, saying mean things. I'm a nice person... if you would all just...please just leave me alone.*