

SCREEN smart

LOG OFF
FOR
REAL-LIFE
ADVENTURES



Replace
Screen Time
With Green Time



Game On ...
or Game
Overload?



A
SPECIAL ISSUE
OF
vibrant life
FOR STUDENTS



How Does Social Media
Really Make You Feel?

A LOOK AT SCREEN LIFE

It's hard to imagine life without screens. They help us learn, stay connected to friends, shop, and play games. But when we spend too much time on screens, they can leave us feeling sad, worried, or hopeless. Take a break from screens and see what these pages have to say about digital life.



Kids spend
6-9 hours a day
on screens.

**That's almost
4 MONTHS
A YEAR!**

The only thing kids do more is **sleep**.



3 in **10** teens
are trying to cut down
on their screen time.



Teens spend **nearly**

5 HOURS
every day

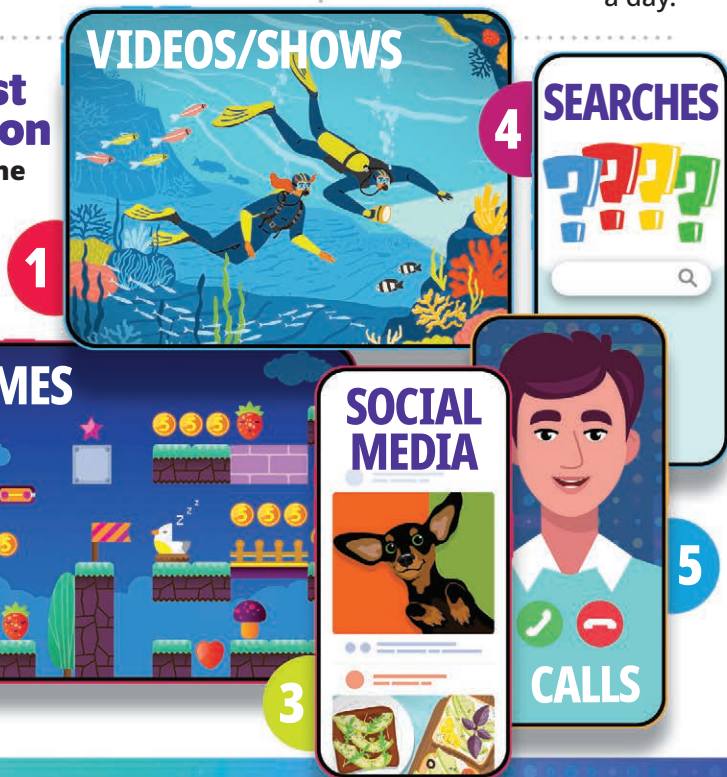
on **YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.**



The **recommended**
screen time for teens is

LESS **THAN**
2 hours
a day.

The **most common**
screen time
activities
for teens:



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THEN AND NOW

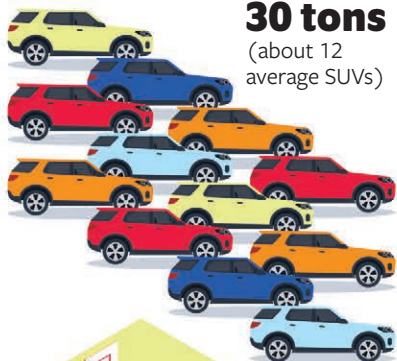
Computers and phones have changed a lot over the years.

Check out how they started and how far they've come.

THE FIRST COMPUTER:

WEIGHT:
30 tons

(about 12 average SUVs)



SIZE:
1,800 ft²

(like a high school basketball court)



MODERN SMART- PHONES:

are about

**1 MILLION
TIMES
MORE
POWERFUL**

than the **first computer.**

**Some computers
today are so fast
they can process**

**every YouTube
video in the world**

in **less** than

ONE SECOND.



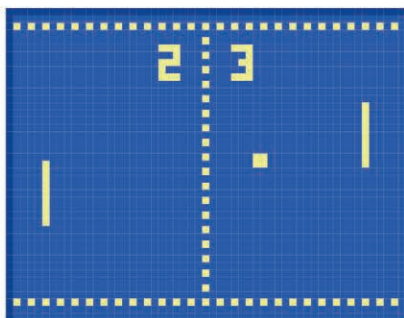
THE FIRST TEXT MESSAGE:

MERRY CHRISTMAS

(December 1992)

ONE OF THE FIRST POPULAR VIDEO GAMES:

PONG



- ▶ Released in 1972
- ▶ It was just a bouncing dot!

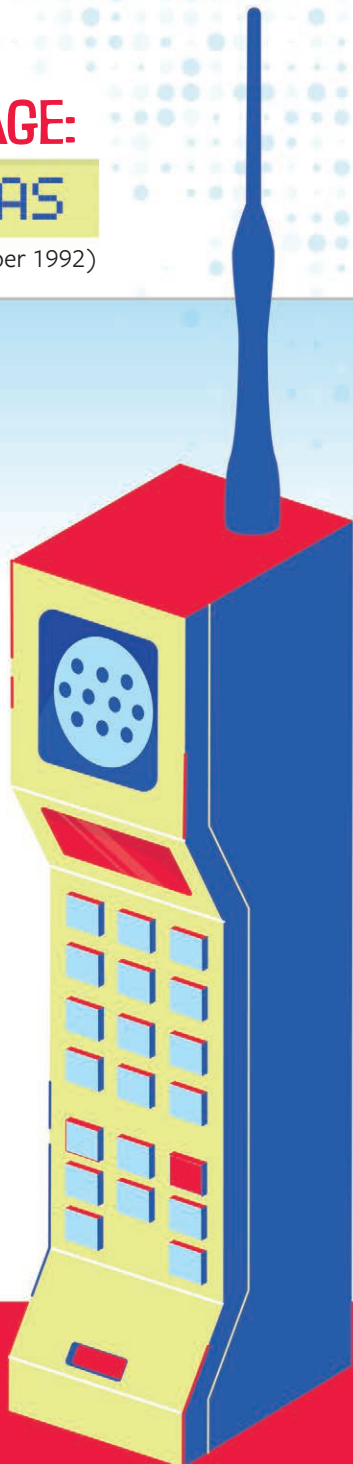
THE FIRST CELL PHONE:

WEIGHT:
2½ pounds

HEIGHT:
10 inches
(approximate, not
including antenna)

NICKNAME:

"THE BRICK"



THE SCREEN SCENE

Explore who is spending time on screens and how it affects them.

TEEN SLEEP & SCREENS

68% sleep with their phone in their bed.

36% wake up and check their phone at least once a night.

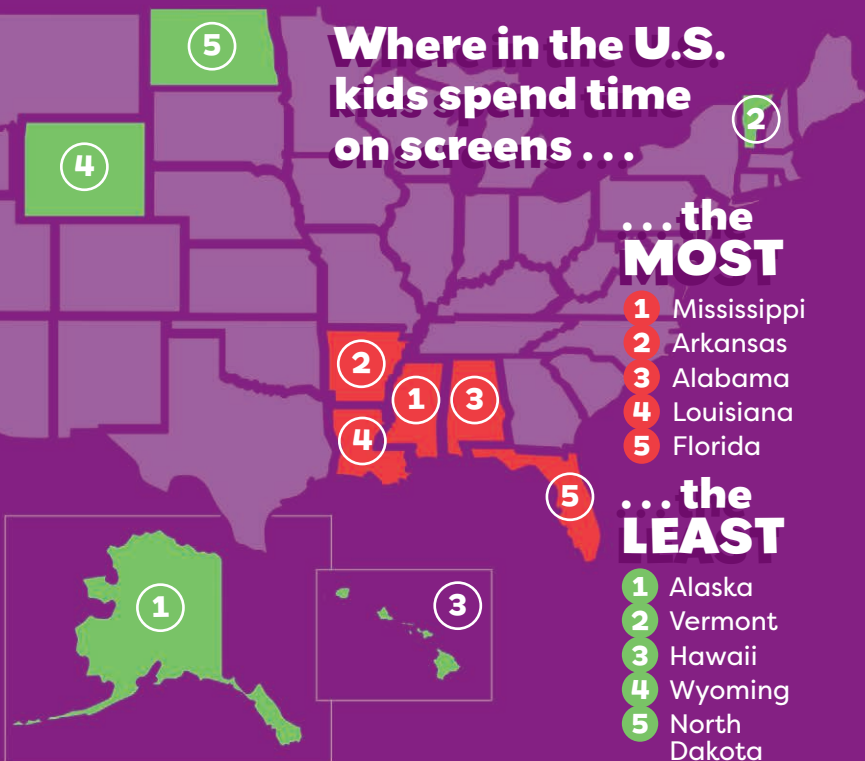
Where in the U.S. kids spend time on screens ...

... the MOST

- 1 Mississippi
- 2 Arkansas
- 3 Alabama
- 4 Louisiana
- 5 Florida

... the LEAST

- 1 Alaska
- 2 Vermont
- 3 Hawaii
- 4 Wyoming
- 5 North Dakota



Too much screen time can cause problems:

difficulty sleeping

poor posture

weight gain

trouble making friends in real life

MORE THAN **1** in **3** kids have been **bullied online.**



Teens who have the **highest use of screen time** are

2X as likely to feel:

- » down
- » anxious
- » hopeless
- » depressed
- » worried
- » nervous

Just having a phone nearby makes it harder for students to pay attention

in class and to remember things on a test—even if they aren't using the phone.

GAME ON

Facts About Video Games

85%
of teens play
video games.

4/10
TEENS

say gaming
has hurt their
sleep.

8/10
TEENS

say bullying is a
problem in online
gaming.

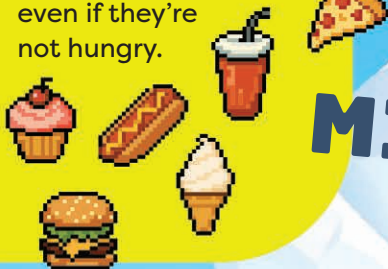
4/10
TEENS

have been called
an offensive name
while playing
online.

TOO MUCH GAMING

can lead to **depression, anxiety, weight gain, and withdrawal from real-life friends.**

When boys play video games, they eat more, even if they're not hungry.



“GAMER’S THUMB”

is a sore, swollen, or stiff thumb caused by playing too much.

Best-selling video game of all time:

MINECRAFT

NOT ALL GAMES ARE THE SAME.


Games that focus on **creativity, learning, and problem-solving** are better choices than dark, violent games.





GAME OVER

**At first, playing video games feels fun,
but too many hours can take the fun away.**




Many years ago, my friend's sister became obsessed with a video game. She had multiple

accounts and played so much that her friendships, job, and health suffered. Her family had to step in and help pull her out of the fantasy game world and back into the real world.

Now, despite what you might be thinking, this isn't a lecture about how bad video games are. Playing in a digital space can be rewarding when we choose the activity well and control the amount of time. The problem occurs when our screens disconnect us from other areas of life, like our relationships, schoolwork, health, or responsibilities. This can even happen to adults who use screens to do their work.

There is an old proverb that states, "If you find honey, eat just enough—too much of it, and you will vomit" (Proverbs 25:16, NIV). Basically, that's saying don't overdo it with anything "sweet" and good, like

spending too much time on screens. Too much, and you'll just end up feeling bad.



The problem occurs when our screens disconnect us from our relationships, schoolwork, health, or responsibilities.

Living for “Likes” vs. Living Your Life

95% of teens use social media.

2 in 3
say they
use it

every
day

almost
constantly

1 in 3
say they
use it

Almost
**half of
teens**
think they

**spend too
much time on
social media.**



Approximately
**half of
teens** think

**social media
has a mostly
negative effect**

on people their age.



Girls ages 11 and 13

**are especially likely to feel bad about
their body after using social media.**

Remember, the “perfect” photos on social media
can be deceiving—most have been edited and
filtered and **aren’t even real!**



What Teens Say About Social Media

The GOOD

I feel more connected to my friends.

74%



It gives me a place to show off my creative side.

63%



People on social media help me in hard times.

52%



The BAD



I feel overwhelmed by all the drama.

39%

I feel pressure to post content that will get lots of likes and comments.

31%



I feel left out when friends do things without me.

31%



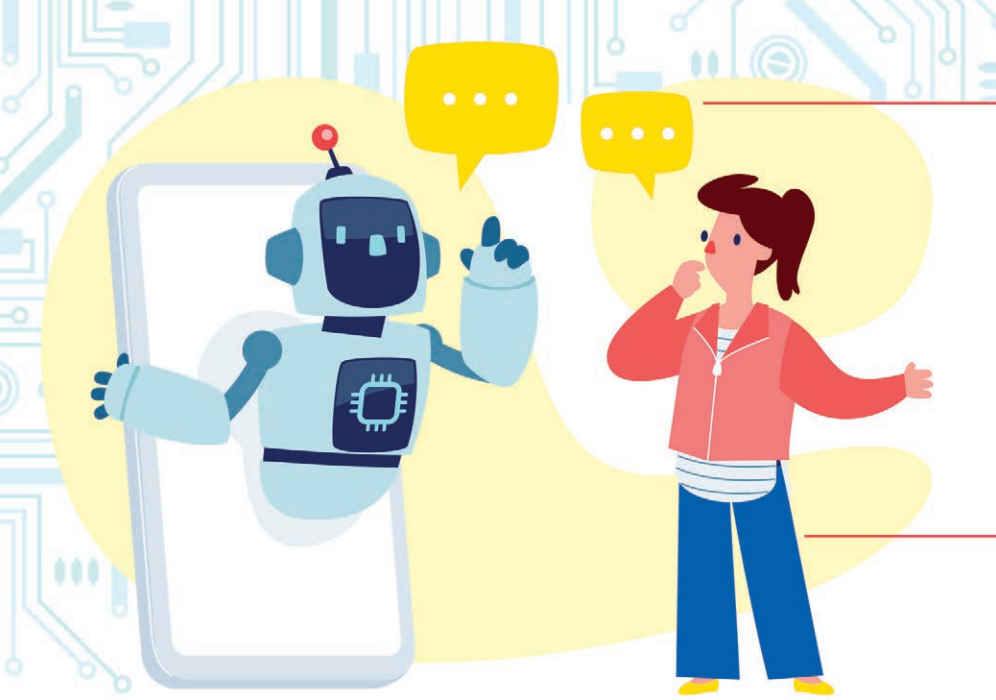
I feel worse about my life.

27%



Don't let social media get you down.

Too much time on social media can cause some teens to feel insecure and unhappy about their life. It can even make some kids feel like it's not worth being alive. That's why **it's important to take breaks from screens, focus on in-person friendships, and talk to a trusted adult if social media feels overwhelming.**



Staying Real *in the Age of AI*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool that can be used to help you learn, but when you depend on it too much, AI weakens your ability to think, remember, and solve problems.

Instead of relying on AI to come up with ideas or write essays for you, put your brain to work. It's the "use it or lose it" principle—the less you think for yourself, the harder it becomes.

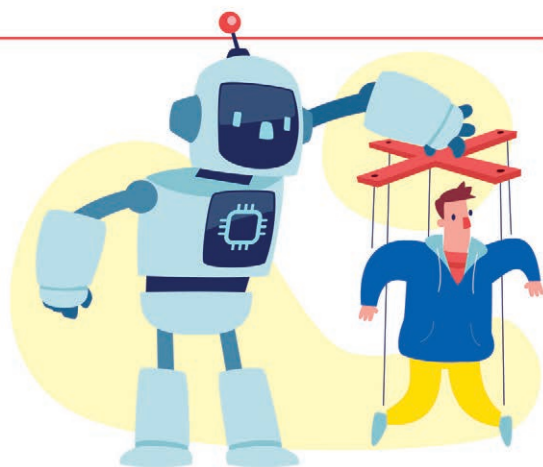
But the more you exercise your brain, the stronger it gets.



AN AI COMPANION: **What It Is and What It Isn't**

An AI companion is a computer program, like a chatbot or virtual avatar, that's made to act like a human friend.

It might seem like a safe place to talk about life or ask questions, but a computer can never replace a human. For emotional support, help, or advice, it's always best to go to a person you trust instead of a digital character that doesn't have a real heart, soul, and mind.



72% of teens
have used an
AI companion
at least once.

1 in 2 teens
don't trust
information given by
AI companions.

1 in 3 teens
report feeling
uncomfortable

with something an AI
companion has said or done.

80% of teens
think
real friendships
are more important than
AI "friendships."

Feeling down, confused, or overwhelmed?

Instead of turning to AI for big life questions, talk to someone you trust, such as a parent, teacher, youth leader, relative, or school counselor.

Are You Hooked on Screens?

Addiction is when you want something so much that it's hard to quit, even if it's not good for you. Screens can be addictive. That's why it can feel almost impossible to stop looking at them, even when you're sleepy, hungry, or not enjoying it.



Studies show that **girls** are more likely to get **addicted to social media**, and **boys** are more likely to become **addicted to video games**.

HERE ARE SOME SIGNS OF SCREEN ADDICTION:

- ☐ You get frustrated when you can't use your screen.
- ☐ Other things don't seem as interesting anymore.
- ☐ Your screen use gets in the way of your schoolwork, real-life friendships, or activities.
- ☐ You can't stop thinking about social media, websites, or video games.
- ☐ You sometimes sneak around or lie to have more screen time.
- ☐ The amount of screen time that used to feel like plenty isn't enough anymore.
- ☐ It's hard to stop using a screen, even when you know you need to.



**TURN TO PAGES 20, 22, AND 24 FOR SOME
FUN SCREEN-FREE IDEAS.**





Do You Speak EMOJI?

Can you tell what each emoji message is saying? Match them up with the sentences. Each one is a tip about how to be kind and wise online.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

- A** Don't pretend to be someone you aren't.
- B** Don't make jokes online that can hurt someone.
- C** Read a book instead of scrolling.
- D** Fact-check before sharing.
- E** Don't share private photos.
- F** Limit screen time.
- G** Check in with someone who seems down.
- H** Unplug and go outside.
- I** Report cyber-bullying to a trusted adult.
- J** Think before you post.
- K** Put away screens at bedtime.

Answers on page 3.

FROM

ATK

(At the Keyboard)

TO



IRL

(In Real Life)

ULTIMATE SWAPS from the Keyboard to Real Life

Ever feel like you are watching other people live their lives through a screen, rather than living yours? Here are ways to switch your active status from online to adventures in real life.

Why EVERYONE Needs IRL Adventures

First, kids are happier when they explore, play, and connect

in real life instead of on screens. **Second**, real-life experiences help kids become teens who are independent and responsible.

Instead of **ATK**

Scrolling photos.

Staying alone
in your room.

Watching reels.

Walking with your
face in your phone.

Scrolling on
phones together.

Playing online.

Going straight
home after school.

Do This **IRL**

Do a perspective
photo shoot with
a friend using
a Polaroid or
digital camera.



Go camping with friends!
Stay outdoors and
explore new places.



Call a friend
on FaceTime.



Walk and talk
as a group.



Bake/make/create
something with a friend
or family member.



Babysit/play
with little kids.



Go to a friend's house,
or invite a friend over.





UnPLUGGED FOR a Day

TAKE a DIGITAL DETOX

What would happen if you took a break from screens one day a week? You might be surprised by the exciting things you could do instead.

Years ago, I had to take a 24-hour spiritual retreat for school—and it came with some strange rules.

No phone, no tablet, no computer. I couldn't even talk. When I got to the retreat at a lovely wooded location, I felt anxious almost instantly. I was so used to noise that having none of it felt strange. For the first six hours it was like being detoxed from drugs. What was happening back home? What

was the news? What movies or music were being released? I had access to none of that, and it was agitating.

After hours passed, I began to quiet down, and it felt like a poison had left my system. Not quite as dramatic as when you eat expired food and vomit up everything you've eaten, but it definitely felt like something negative had exited my life. The remainder of my time at the retreat was spent taking



WHAT IS a DIGITAL SABBATH?

peaceful walks, reading spiritual books, praying, and just enjoying sitting outside. By the time it ended, I almost didn't want to go back to the world of noise.

If we don't take time for silence, our noisy world will make it hard to hear ourselves think—and even harder to hear the voice of God.

Want to feel more joy? Try going one day a week without screens. Take a digital sabbath. The Hebrew word *shabbat*, or sabbath, means “to stop” and “to delight.” Taking a day off from screens gives you the chance to look up and enjoy the people, places, and things all around you. You might also find it easier to think, pray, and dream up new ideas. Like Jesus said, it's good for us to “come away . . . and rest a while” (Mark 6:31, ESV). At first, you might feel like you're missing out, but you may be surprised at how it helps you feel closer to your friends, family, and God. Plus, you'll have more time for real-life hobbies and adventures.

Trade Screen Time for Green Time

We all need breaks from screens to recharge. Going outside is one of the best ways to take a break, especially if you can find a “green space” near trees, grass, or flowers.

Here are some fun ways to replace screen time with green time:

Instead of this: Playing video games or watching a movie with friends.

Try this: Skateboard, play mini golf, swim, or hike with friends.

Instead of this: Watching funny animal videos.

Try this: Go outside and look for real animals. (BONUS: You might find a friendly dog to pet!)

An illustration of a person with red hair in a bun, wearing a pink shirt and green pants, crouching on a path in a park. They are holding a camera up to take a selfie. In the background, there are green trees and a blue building with yellow windows.

Instead of this: Taking selfies or videos of yourself.

Try this: Draw, paint, or take photos—of friends, birds, flowers, bugs, or anything in nature.

An illustration of a person with red hair, wearing a striped shirt and orange pants, walking a purple dog on a leash. They are on a path in a park with green trees and a blue building in the background.

Why Nature Is Good for You

Spending time outside helps you relax, focus, and feel happy. It can even help you do better in school, because it improves your memory, ability to pay attention, and self-control.

Ask Yourself This One Question to Get More Green Time

Whenever you're doing an activity, ask yourself, "Can I do this outside?" If so, go outdoors! Reading, talking on the phone, eating, or studying can all be better for your brain and body if you do it outside. Plus, it can be more fun!

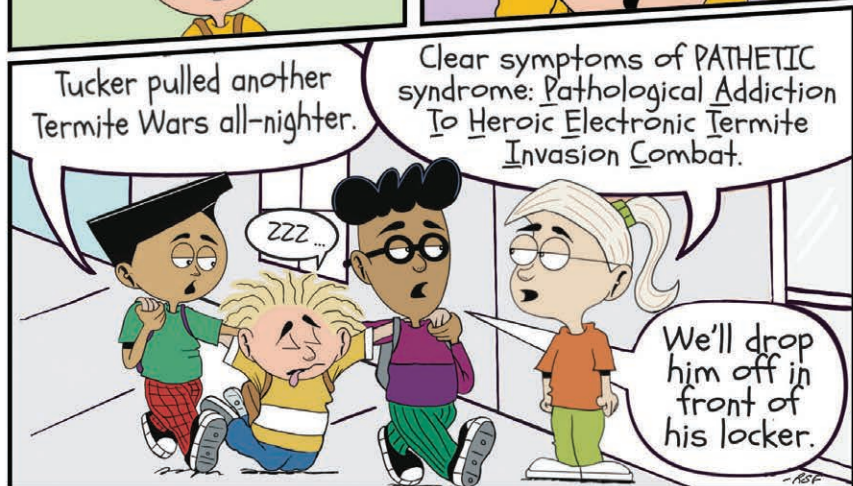
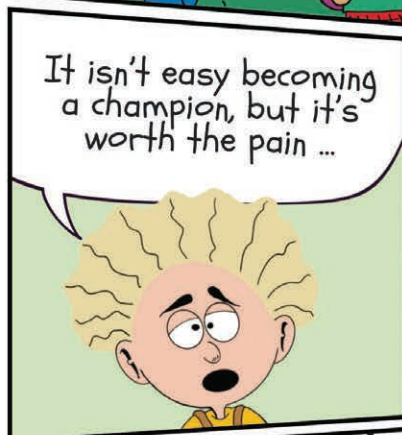
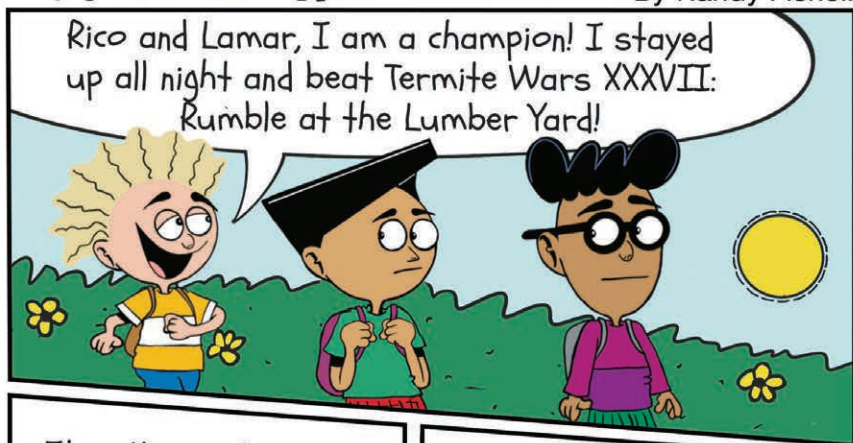
An illustration of two people sitting at a round blue table outdoors. One person is wearing a pink and white striped shirt and blue pants, and the other is wearing a blue jacket and orange pants. They are both holding food and talking. There are plates and cutlery on the table.

Instead of this: Eating in front of the television.

Try this: Eat outside.

TUCKER BARNES

By Randy Fishell



More funny stuff at TuckerBarnes.fun!

LOOK for the GOOD

Search up, down, forward, backward, and diagonal to find these positive words about enjoying life away from screens.

N I F I A X S T C W L H X E W
F O C U S V S D I O A P E J S
R B I P U R E W O P N U G Z R
E X D T O D N W P V F N L G G
S H S O A D D I G T M F E R P
H N T E S N N C K P S P E C Y
A V U T R E I K W N Q E Y B T
I S J L S U K G Q O N A A I I
R D D S E U T L A T K C X Y V
O N R N I C I N I M Z E A J I
F K T S E N Z M E H I F Y K T
J H H N X I E E W V P U I U A
M N R I O N R W P G D L K B E
E R O L P X E F I L L A E R R
D I G I T A L S A B B A T H C

Real life

Green time

Friends

Adventures

Kindness

Imagination

Digital sabbath

Connect

Fresh air

Creativity

Focus

Happiness

Explore

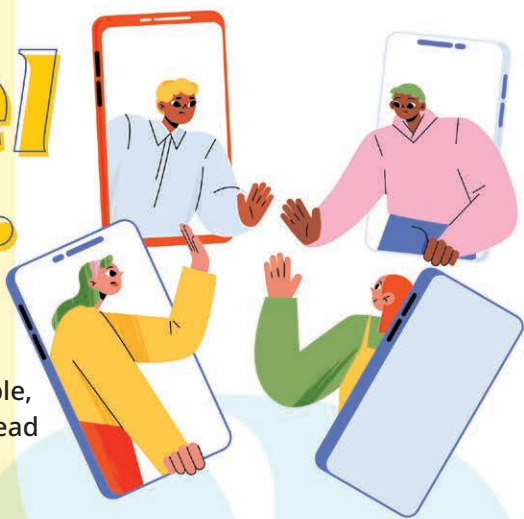
Power up

Peaceful

5 WAYS TO **POWER UP** YOUR LIFE

Level up.

What's better than online friends? Offline friends. When you're around other people, look them in the eye instead of looking at your phone.



Power down.

Sleep is the ultimate reset. Don't let a screen disrupt your sleep. Keep your phone in another room at night so you're not tempted to check it.



Unfollow.



Unfollow people and accounts that are negative, fake, or cruel.

Press pause.

Set time every day for screen-free activities, such as reading a book, riding a bike, or building with LEGO bricks.

Log out.

Just because other kids are always staring at a screen doesn't mean you have to. You might feel like you're missing out at first, but the less time you spend on a screen, the happier you'll be.



WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Taking care of your mind is just as important as taking care of your body. If you broke your leg, you'd ask for help. The same goes for when you're feeling sad, worried, or down. It's good to ask for help.



AM I DEPRESSED?

Life can feel difficult or sad sometimes, but it shouldn't feel hopeless. Can you relate to any of the following signs of depression?

- ☐ I feel sad, angry, or worthless.
- ☐ I have lost interest in things I used to enjoy.
- ☐ I don't want to spend time with friends or family.
- ☐ My grades are dropping.
- ☐ I don't sleep or eat the way I used to.
- ☐ I feel tired and can't concentrate.
- ☐ I sometimes think of hurting myself.

If you have had any of these problems, talk to an adult you trust, such as a parent, teacher, family member, pastor, or school counselor. They can help you find ways to feel hopeful and alive again.

SCREEN SMARTS

When to Talk to an Adult

Some things that happen online can leave you feeling embarrassed, scared, or ashamed. Don't feel like you have to figure it out alone. Ask an adult you trust for help if any of the following things happen to you:

- ☐ Someone is bullying you online.
- ☐ Someone you've only met online asks you to meet up in person.
- ☐ Someone asks you to send private photos.
- ☐ A stranger tries to chat, friend, or follow you.
- ☐ You feel pressure to lose weight, change your appearance, or limit your food.
- ☐ You can't stop looking at images or websites that make you feel bad or ashamed.
- ☐ You're worried about a friend based on something they posted.
- ☐ You feel overwhelmed, unsafe, sad, or stressed.

THE TOP 5 THINGS THAT MAKE TEENS FEEL SAD OR STRESSED

- 1 Social media**
- 2 Bullying**
- 3 Pressures & expectations**
- 4 Technology**
- 5 School**

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Screen-Free Challenge

Take the screen-free challenge and mark off each space as you do these activities. Try to get five across, down, or diagonal. For the ultimate challenge, mark off the entire board!

Go for a walk.	Sit quietly in nature.	Talk to someone on the phone—without video!	Learn a fun fact and tell someone.	Send a card or letter.
Read a book.	Spend time with a friend.	Bike, skate, run, or jump on a trampoline.	Go cloud watching or stargazing.	Write a song or poem.
Try a new food.	Tell someone thank you.		Pet a dog or cat.	Make a paper airplane.
Introduce yourself to a new person.	Play a board game or do a puzzle.	Paint or draw.	Make a list of 5 things you're thankful for.	Ask a family member about their life.
Help someone.	Cook or bake something.	Do 15 push-ups or jumping jacks.	Organize a drawer or closet.	Tell someone a joke.

Take a break from screens and **read a book.**

Check out AdventistBookCenter.com to find stories and books so good, you'll forget all about your phone!



Adventist
BookCenter.com

