

Script for Day of Reading

Jennifer Pettyjohn
Science-Conant High School

Tovani strategies in non-fiction

Isaac's Storm by Erik Larson

- Pre-reading strategies utilized
 - Visual strategies
 - Asking questions
 - Making predictions
 - Connecting to the text
 - Holding your thinking

Background on *Isaac's Storm* (Erik Larson)

September 8, 1900, is the day Galveston found itself in a tremendous hurricane that completely destroyed the town and killed over 6,000 people. The storm is considered one of the greatest natural disasters in American history. Isaac Cline was the meteorologist for the U.S. Weather Bureau and was stationed in Galveston. The book focuses on Isaac's miscalculation of the storm and the fatal consequences.

Picture of Isaac Cline

"There is a secret embedded in this photograph. For now, however, suffice it to say the portrait suggests vanity, that Isaac was aware of himself...and saw himself as something bigger than a mere recorder of rainfall and temperature...He believed deeply that he understood it all."(pgs. 4-5 *Isaac's Storm*)

Predictions Slides

Make two predictions about Isaac's contribution to the fatal destruction of the storm based on the quote. Specifically, make an effort at predicting the statements Isaac possibly made to the public and peers regarding the severity of the storm and path of the storm.

Observe the geographical location of Galveston and how this location could have contributed to the vulnerability Galveston had to potential hurricanes.

Observe the actual path the storm vs. the projected path of the storm and how this contributed to the preparedness of Galveston when the storm hit.

Connecting to the Text

- The following slides depict the destruction Galveston sustained from the storm.
- Make 5 observations about slides....
 - Think about the specific type of damage, severity of damage, general conclusions regarding the destruction, etc.

Asking Questions

- Create 5 questions regarding the slide show about information/images that may be unclear AND information you would like to know.

Tovani on asking questions

- “I emphasize that the questions have to be questions that I really care about. I can’t ask any old questions-it has to be one that I truly am curious about.” *Tovani p.3*
- Asking questions is a strategy that can help readers get through difficult material. *Tovani p. 3*
- Clarifies ambiguity and deepens understanding. *Tovani p.5*
- Writing questions that don’t have simple answers. *Tovani p. 69*

Purpose of visuals

- Sensory images can enhance comprehension and visualize reading. *Tovani p.5*
- Engages students to facilitate connections students can make to the material which can provoke more thought about their reading. *Tovani p. 9*
- Ultimately, meaning will arrive when the students are purposefully engaged in thinking while they read. *Tovani p. 9*

Tools for Holding Thinking throughout the Text *Tovani p. 74*

- Students can create sticky notes that answers the questions/predictions made during pre-reading activity.
- Highlight in text if students can for same purpose of answering questions/predictions
- Whole-group thinking and discussion which can focus on what students wrote on sticky notes and/or highlighted. *Tovani p. 75*

Would you pay \$55 for bottled water?

What's the most you would pay for a bottle of water? Two dollars? Maybe \$4 at a concert? How about \$55?



Photo courtesy Marsaili McGrath/Getty Images

Bling H2O -- the new (expensive) bottled water

Believe it or not, there is such a thing as a bottle of water that costs \$55. Kevin Boyd, a writer and producer from Hollywood, has developed a "luxury" bottled water called **Bling H2O** that costs an average of \$55. Depending on the size, prices can range anywhere from \$25 to as much as \$75. What's so special about Bling H2O that makes it so expensive? Is the water treated differently than the bottled water you buy at the gas station? Does it at least come with vitamins? Unfortunately, you won't find any vitamins in Bling H2O. The water inside, however, does receive more treatment than what's inside an average \$2 plastic bottle. According to Bling H2O's Web site, the water is bottled from natural springs in Dandridge, Tenn. The company claims to use a "nine step purification process that includes ozone, ultraviolet and microfiltration." This sounds nice, but still -- does that really make it worth \$55?

Take one look at the bottle itself -- it can answer any of your questions about cost. True to its trendy name, a bottle of Bling H2O is much more than a plastic container to hold mere water. The bottles are available in limited-edition frosted glasses and covered with Swarovski crystals. Even Bling H2O's Web site admits that the product is as much about image as it is taste. The company originally handed out the water only to actors and athletes -- celebrities such as Jamie Foxx and Ben Stiller have been spotted showing off shiny bottles, and Paris Hilton allegedly feeds the water to her dog. Now, the water is available to the public and showing up in fancy New York restaurants. The makers of Bling H2O also market the bottle as reusable and refillable -- you can flaunt it around town and show how trendy and environmentally friendly you are.

Bling Taste Test

Blind taste tests in New York City put Bling H2O up against regular bottled water and Manhattan tap water. The reactions proved to be inconsistent and unpredictable -- most people proclaimed Manhattan tap water as the best-tasting, while Bling H2O was believed to be simple tap water.

Even without the cost that comes from the decorative bottle and its associated brand, Bling H2O would still be expensive.

Can Birth Order Determine Your Career?



Ah, sibling rivalry. Relentless competition, name-calling, hair-pulling and blame-shifting **plague** (trouble) households with two or more children everywhere. Can't we all just get along?

Well, sure, sometimes. But the reality is that all siblings aren't created equal and they don't get treated equally. Firstborns, for example, often get cheated because parents are stricter with them, while later-born kids might have fewer rules. And everyone knows that the youngest seems to get away with murder because parents have seen it all before. And where's the middle child in all of this? Forgotten or overlooked.

Depending on birth position, there are special roles within families, leading to different patterns and different personalities, says Ben Dattner, a New York City-based organizational psychologist. As a result of a stricter upbringing, for example, firstborn children tend to be more extroverted (outgoing) and confident, while second-born kids are more rebellious and open to new experiences, he says. The youngest child is usually the most creative and can be manipulative to get his or her way.

Clearly, birth order affects personality, but what about career advancement and success? Several studies show that firstborns and only children usually reach higher educational goals, obtain greater prestige (recognition of success) and acquire more net worth, while the middle child is likely to struggle a bit more.

"A child's position in the family impacts his personality, his behavior, his learning and ultimately, his earning power," says Michael Grose, author of "Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It." "Most people have an intuitive knowledge (gut feeling) that birth order somehow has an impact on development, but they underestimate how far-reaching and just how significant that impact is. "

Firstborn: Personality: Firstborns are **ambitious, assertive, dominant** and **disciplined** compared with their younger siblings. They're determined to succeed yet fearful of losing position and rank, and are defensive about errors and mistakes, Dattner says.

Compensation: A recent survey by CareerBuilder.com found that workers who were the firstborn child in their families were more likely to earn \$100,000 or more annually compared with their siblings.

Professions: The oldest tend to pursue jobs that require higher education, like medicine, engineering or law. Firstborns reported working in jobs in government, engineering,

pharmacy and science. Ohio State University researchers found firstborn children were more likely to pursue "intellectual" jobs.

Job level: Workers who are firstborn are more likely to report holding a vice president or senior management position, according to the survey.

Middle: Personality: Middle children are good at **negotiation, peacemaking and compromise**. They are easygoing and diplomatic and are usually closer to friends than family.

Compensation: More middle children identified themselves as earning \$35,000 or less per year than firstborn or youngest children.

Professions: Middles tend to have excellent negotiating and people skills -- anything that employs these skills is a great fit. Middle children said they work in nursing, law enforcement, firefighting and machine operation.

Job level: Middle children were more likely to identify with professional and technical staff level positions. They also reported being the most satisfied with their current positions.

Youngest: Personality: Youngest children love the **limelight** and are used to it. They are **charming** and **creative**, have a good **sense of humor** and **manipulate** others when they want to get their way.

Compensation: Last borns were the least likely to report earning six figures.

Professions: Youngest children often gravitate (are attracted) toward artistic and outdoor jobs. They're also successful in journalism, advertising, sales and athletics. Those who responded to the survey reported working in art, design, sales and information technology.

Job level: The majority of last borns held administrative and clerical level positions. They also reported being the least satisfied in their current jobs.

Only children:

Personality: Only children are similar to firstborns in that they are motivated to conform to parental expectations. They are also achievement-oriented and successful in school and have problems delegating (assigning) work. Research shows they are more confident, articulate and imaginative than other children. They also hate criticism and tend to be perfectionists.

Twins

Personality: Because of their equal status in terms of their age -- and, if they're identical, their genes -- twins are usually treated the same and turn out similarly. They tend to have different personalities and interests, but are closer to each other than other siblings and tend to have less conflict with each other than other siblings.

Do Pretty People Earn More?

Looks Do Matter at Work

You know the girl -- the one who could wear a paper bag to school and still manages to look both beautiful and perfect. As if it weren't annoying enough that she maintains her thin looks by lifting doughnuts to her mouth, it turns out your gorgeous popular enemy may out-earn her less genetically-blessed future coworkers.

Good looks can have a real impact on workers' bank accounts, according to research by Daniel Hamermesh and Jeff Biddle published in the *Journal of Labor Economics*. Attractive people earn about 5 percent more in hourly pay than their average-looking colleagues, who in turn earn 9 percent more per hour than the plainest-looking workers. This means if an average-looking person earned \$40,000, their prettiest co-workers would make \$42,000 while their least attractive colleagues brought home just \$36,400. Plain-looking workers may also receive fewer promotions than those awarded to their more striking contemporaries.

Steven D. Spitz, D.M.D. and owner of cosmetic dentistry firm Smile Boston, said he once had a client who wanted his assistant to get veneers, and was even willing to pay for the dental work -- as long as the assistant asked for it. "He said this was a woman who was really good at her job and he was moving up (within the organization), but he couldn't take her with him because her teeth were so bad," Spitz said. The assistant never came in for the dental work, and Spitz said he didn't know what became of her career.

Are pretty people just more talented?

It remains uncertain whether the handsomest people translate their good looks into higher productivity, but students do consistently give better-looking professors higher evaluations. Still, many experts warn against assigning too much value to beauty in the workplace, arguing that even if your good looks do get you in the door, they may not get you much farther.

"A person can be breathtaking in person and destroy that within the first five minutes by acting in a way that seems superior or behaving in a way that is provocative," said Francie Dalton, President of Dalton Alliances Inc., a consulting practice providing executive coaching to C-level clients. "Although I very firmly believe that looks are the first thing one notices, I am not convinced that looks trump things like competencies, interpersonal skills and other factors," she said.

Richard St. John, author of "Stupid, Ugly, Unlucky, and RICH," says he's so unconvinced of the connection between good looks and competence, he often chooses to hire the "visual underdog." "I'm not saying looks won't help you be successful at getting a date," St. John said. "I'm saying looks won't help you be successful in other areas of life."

Unfair, but legal

Unlike religion, national origin or disability, discrimination based on looks is legal in most jurisdictions, said James McDonald, Jr., managing partner of the Irvine office of employment law firm Fisher & Phillips LLP. Washington, D.C. and Santa Cruz, Calif. are two of the only municipalities with laws explicitly protecting workers against discrimination based on physical characteristics or personal appearance, he said. Still, that hasn't stopped workers from launching unsuccessful lawsuits.

Fortunately, there's -- literally -- more to attractiveness than meets the eye. Researchers Markus Mobius and Tanya Rosenblat found that confidence makes up 20 percent of perceived attractiveness. To ensure the image you're portraying is a confident one, be sure your posture doesn't betray your nervousness. Keep your back straight, head high and make eye contact with your associates.



Fashion Fad So Gross, It Might Be Banned

Lawmakers in Illinois want to ban a cosmetic procedure that has never even been performed in the state. Legislation has been proposed in the Illinois House to make it a felony to implant jewelry in someone's eyeball, a procedure that is being promoted by a Dutch company called the Netherlands Institute for Innovative Ocular Surgery, reports The Associated Press.

Try this in Illinois and you'll spend up to three years in prison, that is if the bill passes. Rep. Kevin Joyce (D-Chicago), who introduced the legislation, admits the procedure hasn't yet spread to the United States, and he wants to make sure it stays that way. Why? He says it's "gross." It also carries too many health concerns.

Do you think state governments or the federal government have a right to ban a personal cosmetic procedure--even if it is gross?

The jewelry implant involves making a tiny slice in the membrane covering the eyeball. A small, flat metal charm, such as a shiny heart or a half-moon, that is thinner than a piece of aluminum foil is slipped into the slot on the white of the eye. The result? A permanent twinkle. The Chicago Sun-Times reports that U.S. doctors have only done the procedure a few times. Dr. Thomas Steinemann, spokesman for the American Academy of Ophthalmology, said the eye isn't suited to such slicing since it's more fragile than skin that can be tattooed or pierced. "Everything we do is a risk-benefit analysis, and what level of risk would you be willing to assume for the benefit of vanity?" Steinemann told the Sun-Times.



Other schools in our district have banned iTouch/iPods from the classroom. They believe the high-tech gadgets are a distraction. How would you feel if Conant banned iTouch/iPods or similar systems during the school day? When would using these items be appropriate?

Carefully read this article before answering the questions.

Tossing dog off balcony gets man 3 years in jail

S.C. man apologizes for injuring puppy during fight with girlfriend

CHARLESTON, S.C. - An **incredulous** judge sentenced a man to three years in prison for tossing a 10-week-old puppy off an apartment balcony during an argument with his girlfriend.

The Yorkiepoo, a cross between a Yorkshire terrier and a poodle, was in a soft-sided container but suffered head injuries and had to be put to death.

Javon Patrick Morris, 22, apologized for throwing the puppy off the third-floor balcony last March and pleaded guilty to animal cruelty.

"You mean he threw a helpless animal off three floors because he was mad at someone?" Circuit Judge Edward Cottingham asked a prosecutor before issuing the sentence Thursday.

The judge, who has owned nine dogs, said he was obligated to issue a tough sentence.

"There is nobody in this world that can understand that," Cottingham said.

He sentenced Morris to five years, suspended to three years in prison and two years of probation. Morris, who will be eligible for parole in 20 months, also was ordered to get anger management counseling.

"I've got to send a message to all dog lovers that we are going to protect that interest in our courtrooms," Cottingham said.

Use a separate sheet of paper to answer each of the following essay questions.

1. The term *incredulous* means disbelieving. Why was the judge described as incredulous?
2. Is a three year sentence fair for a death of a puppy?
3. The judge owns nine dogs. Will this fact influence the case?
4. Does Morris' explain his actions? Do you believe his apology? Why or why not?
5. Look at point of view:
 - puppy:
 - girlfriend:
 - boyfriend:
 - judge:

6. **What is missing from the article?** QUESTIONS, INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS

Myth Busters



Is a dog's mouth cleaner than a human's?

Um, no. This notion stems from the fact that for humans, a dog bite is less likely to get infected than a bite from another human. But this has less to do with cleanliness than with the types of bacteria we harbor in our mouths. Many harmful bacteria are species-specific, so most of the bacteria in a dog's mouth are harmless to humans, but may cause an infection in another dog. Similarly, if a human bit a dog, the bite would not do as much harm as if he or she bit another person. Still not convinced? Consider this: humans do not clean themselves with their tongues, drink out of the toilet or carry dead animals in their mouths.

Do enormous alligators inhabit New York City's sewer system? Adopted regularly as babies by New Yorkers visiting Florida, they are brought home and then flushed down the toilet once their owners tire of them.

No, but it is true that alligators have been found in many unlikely places, such as swimming pools as well as some sewers. However, while rats, insects and some stray fish do call New York's sewers home, over the long term an alligator would have difficulty surviving the cold, the close quarters, the lack of sufficient prey and the bacteria commonly found there.

Will you get sick if you go outside in the cold with wet hair?

This is just an old wives' tale. You may feel cold, but you can't catch a cold just from going outdoors with wet hair.

Walt Disney arranged to have his body cryogenically frozen so he could be brought back to life at some point in the future.

There was much speculation surrounding the "mysterious" demise of Walt Disney in December 1966. Because Disney kept his illness (lung cancer) a secret and did not want a funeral, many people believed that he had arranged to be frozen until medical technology had advanced enough to bring him back to life. **Rumor** had it that the body was stored under the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disneyland. **In fact**, Disney was cremated and his ashes were interred at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, Calif.

Dr. Seuss wrote Green Eggs and Ham in response to a dare by his editor to write a book with fewer than 50 different words.

The correct answer is **TRUE**. Seuss' editor, Bennett Cerf, challenged him to write a story using no more than 50 different words. The result is a classic children's book that most of us know by heart.

An enterprising student financed his college education by soliciting one-cent donations.

Incredibly, Yes! In 1987, Mike Hayes of Rochelle, Ill., came up with a novel way to pay for college. As a freshman at the University of Illinois, he wrote to Chicago Tribune columnist Bob Greene, asking for his help in raising \$28,000 by soliciting donations of a penny from each of his readers. He figured everyone would be willing to spare a penny, and if he could find a way to convince 28 million people to each send him one, he could pay for school.

Amused by Hayes' creativity, the columnist agreed to go along with the idea, and in his Sept. 6 column shared his story and where to send donations. Within a month, the "Many Pennies for Mike" fund had raised over \$23,000 with donations from every state in the United States, ranging from 1 cent to \$100. Mike eventually reached his goal and went on to earn a degree in food science, financed by the spare change of Chicago Tribune readers.

Arriving late to class, a student mistook examples of unsolvable math problems on the blackboard for a homework assignment and solved them.

There are several variations of this legend -- in some versions the student oversleeps and is late to an exam -- but at the heart of it is a true story. One day in 1939, a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley by the name of George Dantzig arrived late to his statistics class. Seeing two problems written on the board, he assumed they were a homework assignment and copied them down, solved them and handed them in a few days later.

In actuality, they were examples of (formerly) unprovable statistical theorems, which he had managed to prove. A few weeks later, the professor knocked on George's door and excitedly informed him that he had prepared one of his proofs for publication. Dantzig's story became the stuff of legend, and was the inspiration for the 1997 movie Good Will Hunting.

Public school and university cafeterias serve meat labeled "Grade D: fit for human consumption."

Unlike teachers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture does not assign letter grades, so there is **no such thing** as "grade D" meat. The USDA grades of meat are Prime, Choice, Select,

Standard, Commercial, Utility, Cutter and Canner. All are considered fit for human consumption.

Despite your personal feelings about school-cafeteria food, the meat is usually the same quality as that served in hotels and restaurants.

The vibrations caused by cranking up the bass on a car stereo can cause your lungs to collapse.

Unbelievably, yes. In August 2004 the medical journal Thorax described the cases of four young men who all suffered a collapsed lung -- three while attending a loud concert, and the fourth while listening to his car stereo, which was outfitted with a 1,000-watt bass box. Doctors concluded that loud music could cause the lungs to vibrate at the same frequency of the booming bass, causing a lung to rupture.

Cellular phones have caused explosions at gas stations.

While there are many warnings circulating on the Internet -- and even posted at gas stations - - about the hazards of using a cell phone while pumping gas, there are **no documented cases** of a cell phone ever causing a fire or explosion at a gas station. Nor has anyone scientifically demonstrated that such a thing is even possible.

While some fuel station fires were initially attributed to cell phone use in the press, further investigation has always turned up another cause.

A staunch opponent of seat-belt laws was killed in a car accident because he wasn't wearing a seat belt.

It happened. In September 2004, Derek Kieper, a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, wrote an editorial for the Daily Nebraskan entitled "Individual Rights Buckle Under Seat Belt Laws" in which he asserted that "as laws become increasingly strict for seat belts, fewer people will respond positively by buckling up in response to the laws. There seems to be a die-hard group of non-wearers out there who simply do not wish to buckle up no matter what the government does.

In early January 2005, Kieper and two of his fraternity brothers were driving back to school after winter break when their Ford Explorer slid off the icy road and rolled several times into a ditch. Kieper, who was riding in the back seat without a seat belt, was ejected from the vehicle and died. The driver and the other passenger, who were both wearing seat belts, were treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

The man who wrote the first traffic laws never learned how to drive a car.

William Phelps Eno (1858-1945) was known as the "father of traffic safety." He created the world's first city traffic code (for New York City), invented the stop sign and wrote the first manual of police traffic regulations. In 1921 he established the Eno Transportation Foundation in Washington, D.C., which was dedicated to improving all modes of transportation. However, Eno himself never learned to drive. **He thought the automobile was just a fad,** and used a chauffeur whenever he needed to travel by car.

It is illegal to kill a praying mantis in some parts of the United States.

While praying mantises (or mantids) are beneficial in that they eat many insects we consider pests, they are **not endangered**, and there are no known federal or state laws that prohibit killing them. So, there is no need to turn yourself in to the authorities should a praying mantis have an unfortunate encounter with your lawn mower, hedge clippers or shoe.

If you cut a worm in half, each half will grow back into a complete worm.

If you cut a worm in half, you will most **likely end up with two halves of a dead worm.** However, **some species** of worms can re-grow a new tail if it is cut off (or more likely, eaten by a bird). While it is possible that the head half of the worm may grow a new tail, the tail half will not grow a new head -- so you're unlikely to end up with more worms than you started with.

Spider silk is as strong as the Kevlar used in bulletproof vests.

YOU'RE CORRECT! Spider silk has long fascinated scientists with its remarkable strength and elasticity. It is stronger than steel and can stretch up to 50 percent of its original length. A strand of spider silk the width of a pencil could stop a Boeing 747 airplane in flight. Researchers have attempted to synthesize spider silk in the lab for a variety of military, medical, and aerospace applications, including bulletproof vests, parachutes, artificial tendons and ligaments, and tethers.

In a lifetime, the average person unknowingly eats eight spiders while asleep.

Aren't you glad this one isn't true? Despite what you may have heard, there is no evidence that spiders secretly crawl into our mouths while we are sleeping. Most spiders are more wary of us than we are of them. Even if you were lying perfectly still, your breathing would scare it off, so a spider is unlikely to hang out around your mouth.

We hate to break this to you, but you probably unwittingly consume more spiders when you are awake -- in your food. The Food and Drug Administration guidelines indicate a certain

level of whole insects or parts are acceptable in some food products, such as those containing fruits or vegetables.

Chocolate is toxic to dogs and can kill them.

CORRECT! Do not feed your dog chocolates! Chocolate contains a substance called theobromine (a compound related to caffeine), which can sicken and kill family pets. Three factors determine how toxic the sweet stuff will be to a particular animal: the type of chocolate, the size of the animal and the amount of chocolate ingested. The most dangerous confections are unsweetened baker's chocolate and powdered cocoa, the least, white chocolate.

Symptoms of theobromine poisoning include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, restlessness and increased urination. In severe cases, cardiac arrhythmia and seizures can result. The possibility that an animal will kill itself with chocolate is very low. More likely it will get a nasty tummy ache. In any case, it is still prudent to keep all chocolate far away from pets.

Many churches have banned rice throwing at weddings because the little white pellets will expand in the stomachs of birds that eat it off the ground, causing them to explode.

INCORRECT. This myth got its start in the usually legitimate advice column of Ann Landers in 1996. Unfortunately, Ann was duped by this turkey. According to agricultural and ornithological experts, there is no risk to birds from rice thrown at weddings. In fact, rice is an integral part of some bird species' diets. None have yet been witnessed exploding after a wedding rice feast, or ever for that matter.

There is some truth to this rumor, however. Some churches have banned the throwing of rice at wedding ceremonies, not for the sake of the birds, but because of the risk to newlyweds and their guests. Hard surfaces littered with tiny rice pellets can become a horror show when the in-laws start slipping and sliding and someone puts an eye out or breaks a hip. Churches would prefer to protect their guests, as well as their liability.

A farmer thought he was just putting dinner on the table when he picked up an axe and beheaded one of his chickens. Turned out he had a legend on his hands after the now headless rooster bobbed and weaved back to the henhouse and lived for 18 more months -- without a head.

TRUE! Lloyd Olsen of Fruita, Colo., did indeed own the world's only surviving headless chicken, according to the Guinness Book of World Records. He wielded the infamous axe in September 1945, unaware that he and his rooster would go down in history.

The animal, now dubbed Mike and celebrated with a festival, Web sites and various magazine articles, apparently survived because the blade missed his jugular vein and a clot prevented him from bleeding to death. The axe blow landed high enough that most of the chicken's brain stem and one ear remained intact. Olsen kept the animal fed and watered by inserting an eyedropper directly into his gullet. Eighteen months after the chicken lost his head he choked to death in a motel room. Residents of Fruita remember Mike as "a big fat chicken who didn't know he didn't have a head."

Eating turkey makes you sleepy.

No!!! This one surprised me too. Turkey does contain the amino acid tryptophan, which is a natural sedative, but so do plenty of other foods, such as chicken, beef, pork, cheese and beans. Not only do all of these foods also contain protein, which negates the effects of tryptophan, but also we generally don't ingest enough at one sitting to feel it.

However, what does tend to make people exceptionally drowsy is eating a big, heavy meal -- Thanksgiving dinner, for example. Blood is diverted to the digestive system to help tackle all the fats and carbohydrates you've consumed, which decreases blood flow to your brain and makes you feel lethargic. Drinking alcohol -- while watching football or during the meal -- only makes matters worse. So even if you didn't eat any turkey, you'd still feel like taking a nap afterward.

Hostess Twinkies never go bad. They have an indefinite shelf life.

INCORRECT. Because Twinkies do not contain any dairy products, they last much longer than most baked goods. However, contrary to popular belief, they do not remain fresh for several decades, or even years. Their shelf life is 25 days.

Swallowed chewing gum takes seven years to digest and pass through your system.

INCORRECT. Actually, chewing gum is largely indigestible, but it will make its way through your digestive system at the same rate as anything else you consume.

Coca-Cola originally contained cocaine.

Yes! In fact, that's how it got its name -- from a blend of coca leaf and kola nut extracts used in the original 1885 formula. At the time, cocaine was a common ingredient in medicines, and Coca-Cola was developed as a medicinal elixir.

When cocaine was later discovered to be harmful and addictive, the company phased it out, leaving only trace amounts to justify the name. By 1929, the beverage was completely cocaine-free.

Eating chocolate causes acne breakouts.

Contrary to popular belief, there is no link between eating chocolate and acne breakouts. Several scientific studies have disproved this common myth.

Sweet potatoes and yams are the same thing.

Not! While Americans often use these terms interchangeably, a true yam comes from a completely different plant family than the sweet potato. Yams, which originated in Africa, are grown in the Caribbean and are not widely available here, whereas sweet potatoes, which originated in tropical South America, are grown in the United States. Most "yams" sold in supermarkets are actually a variety of sweet potato.

Incidentally, neither the yam nor the sweet potato is closely related to the potato.

The children's nursery rhyme, "Ring around the rosie, a pocket full of posies" originated in Europe during the plague epidemic, when people carried flowers to protect against infection.

INCORRECT. The deadly outbreak of bubonic plague, also known as the "black death," that struck Western Europe in 1347 wiped out more than a third of the population. An event such as that was destined to be immortalized in the cultural consciousness, and many of the lines in the nursery rhyme do seem to correlate to the situation (people did think flowers could ward off disease). However, there is little evidence to support this theory. The rhyme did not appear in print until 1881, more than 500 years after the fact, rendering it highly unlikely to have originated during the time of the plague. There are also several recorded variants of the rhyme, most of which do not include the same apparent references to the disease.

It is illegal to pick bluebonnets -- the state flower -- in Texas.

The Texas bluebonnet, a species of lupine, grows wild across the state, erupting into dramatic fields of deep blue blossoms in early spring. While it is a popular pastime to pose for photographs amidst the flowers, no one dares pick one, as it is commonly known that it is illegal to do so. In fact, there is no such law on the books in Texas -- it is perfectly legal to pick them as long as they are not on state property or someone else's private property. However, it's still a good idea to leave them where they are so everyone can enjoy them.

Incidentally, **it is illegal to** pick the state flower in Minnesota. If you come across a pink-and-white lady's slipper, don't even think about bringing it home with you.

If you stare at the sun, even during an eclipse, you could go blind.

YOU'RE CORRECT! This is a real danger! Direct sunlight can damage the retina -- light-sensitive nerve endings in the back of the eye -- causing impaired vision or blindness. You should never look directly at the sun. Dark sunglasses or even a welder's helmet will not protect your eyes, not even during an eclipse.

Sunscreens with an SPF of 40 or 50 do not provide significantly more protection against UV rays than SPF-30 sunscreens.

Tests have shown that sunscreens with an SPF of 15 block 93 percent of UV rays, while SPF-30 sunscreens block about 97 percent. Anything higher than 30 still hovers around 97 percent. The Food and Drug Administration has recommended limiting SPF values on sunscreen labels to SPF 30 to prevent consumers from spending more time in the sun than they should.

If you are stung by a jellyfish while swimming in the ocean, you should have someone urinate on the sting.

Good News, **THAT'S INCORRECT.** If you are ever unfortunate enough to get stung by a jellyfish, you'll have some small consolation in knowing that there is no need to add insult to injury by asking someone to pee on you. Experts recommend carefully scraping off any tentacles that have adhered to the skin and treating the sting with vinegar, baking soda, ice packs, salt water, hot water or even meat tenderizer -- but definitely NOT urine.

Oblivious texters hurt as they walk, even skate

ER docs warn of serious injuries, deaths from text-message mishaps
Check for seven vocabulary terms.

Apparently, the warning applies to everyone, from college student Danielle Gonzales to Barack Obama's adviser, Valerie Jarrett: Don't walk and text at the same time.

Gonzales, a 19-year-old sophomore at San Diego State University, admits she's stumbled more than once while sending texts on the street.

"I've definitely tripped over things sometimes like the little cracks in the ground," she said. "I have to remember to look up."

And Jarrett confesses she fell off a Chicago curb several weeks ago while her thumbs were flying on her Blackberry.

"I didn't see the sidewalk and I twisted my ankle," Jarrett said. "It was a nice wake-up call for me to be a lot more careful in the future, because I clearly wasn't paying attention and I should have."

Both got off easy and didn't need medical attention.

But in an alert issued this week, the American College of Emergency Physicians warns of the danger of more serious accidents involving oblivious texters. The ER doctors cite rising reports from doctors around the country of injuries involving text-messaging pedestrians, bicyclists, even Rollerbladers and equestrians.

One ER doctor in Texas says she's treated people injured as they texted while riding Segways, the two-wheeled transporters popular in some tourist locations.

"They'll be holding onto the Segway with one hand and their cell phone with the other," said Dr. Angela Gardner, an assistant professor in the department of emergency medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

She said she usually has to hear about the cause of the injuries from snickering ambulance crews, not the patients themselves.

"People don't want to admit they were doing something so silly," Gardner said.

Most injuries involve scrapes, cuts and sprains from texters who walked into lampposts or walls or tripped over curbs.

Still, ER doctors who responded to a recent informal **query** from the organization reported two deaths, both in California. A San Francisco woman was killed by a pickup truck earlier this year when she stepped off a curb while texting, and a Bakersfield man was killed last year by a car while crossing the street and texting.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has no national estimate on how common texting-related injuries are. But since 2005, the agency has received at least seven reports of serious texting **mishaps**, including a 15-year-old girl who fell off her horse while texting, suffering head and back injuries, and a 13-year-old girl who suffered belly, leg and arm burns after texting her boyfriend while cooking noodles.

Other reports include a 39-year-old man who suffered a head injury after crashing his bicycle into a tree while texting and a 16-year-old boy who suffered a **concussion** because he was texting while walking and banged into a telephone pole.

Distractions as brief as 2 seconds can cause accidents or near misses while driving a car, according to a 2006 report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. Dr. Mary Pat McKay, an ER doctor at Prince George Hospital in Cheverly, **MD**, who has worked with the NHTSA, said similar **lapses** may be responsible for text-message mishaps during other activities as well.

That's worrisome in a country where 363 billion text messages were sent last year, according to CTIA, a wireless association, and when so many people are engaged in text-dependent **multitasking**. McKay says she's been shocked to observe several cyclists riding hands-free, texting as they go.

"I've seen it at least three times and I only drive four miles to work," she said. "The final bottom line is if you're distracted from the task at hand, your risk rises."

Dr. James Adams, chairman of emergency medicine at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, said he has treated minor injuries in several texters.

"Common sense isn't always common," Adams said.

Sometimes even among doctors.

"I have to admit that I started a text while I was driving and then I said, 'This is so stupid,' so I stopped," Adams said.

It's the **lure** of instant connection that's driving the need to text during every activity, said Janet Armentor-Cota, an assistant professor of sociology at California State University at Bakersfield, who studies the sociology of technology.

"There's a culture being fostered here about always being in contact, always being accessible," she said. "There's never a moment where you have to miss out."

Trouble is, some texters forget that physical world has consequences that the virtual world does not, she added.

"In the real world, there's the danger of falling off the horse," she said.