

Fact Checking
09/26/2017
JCOM 2010
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Grading Scale:

False (Red Light)



Somewhat True (Yellow Light)



True (Green Light)



Article:

“Not drinking or driving, teens increasingly put off traditional markers of adulthood” by The Washington Post

Link:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/neither-drinking-nor-driving-more-teens-are-putting-off-traditional-markers-of-adulthood/2017/09/18/b46027a0-93f1-11e7-8754-d478688d23b4_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-more-top-stories_adultlag-7a%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.d4df38db8ead

E.S.C.A.P.E. TEST:

Evidence: The study that the Washington Post used was from a credible source however the individual facts have multiple variables that can easily be questioned and were questioned by the Child Development Journal. In one instance, the Washington Post also cited their own story as an example even though their story was an isolated incident and had no evidence supporting their claim and the study’s claim. The facts are logical but not strongly supported. The author only gleaned information from one primary source and two personal accounts from teens.

Source: The Washington Post is a credible and well-established newspaper as well as the Child Development Journal. The journal is made up of experts with a close proximity to the information they are reporting. Tara Bahrapour, the reporter, has reported for the Washington Post since 2004 and has written multiple controversial pieces that have been discredited in the past. (Norouzi. 2012.) On September 1st Bahrapour did further research on her own asking her Facebook followers for teenagers she could talk to.

Context: The overall big picture of the article states that kids are drinking less, driving less, and having less sex, however this isn’t something that can be confirmed beyond specific trends that the study even admits may be flawed and doesn’t relate to everyone.

Audience: The Washington Post's primary audience is older people who may be parents. Bahrapour exclusively writes about aging and child development for the Washington post, as it says in her staff bio.

Purpose: To inform the reader of a possible trend determined by a child behavioral study.

Execution: The Washington post just gives the facts and doesn't stylize it in any way beyond what it is. They chose two teenagers of similar age to speak to about the study, however they leave out any representation from those who disagree. The people they interviewed were both white from large northwest cities. Someone from the central U.S. in a rural area would probably say something completely different.

Four statements:

1) "The study, published Tuesday in the journal *Child Development*, found that the percentage of adolescents in the United States who have a driver's license, who have tried alcohol, who date and who work for pay has plummeted since 1976, with the most precipitous decreases in the past decade."



Yellow Light/ Somewhat True. Although the research done by the SRCD is done thoroughly and in-depth for many years, the study admits that there are many variables that can flaw their numbers. The study was conducted over seven-time lags of different Americans each year from the 70's to 2010's. (Coll, 2017) They surveyed 8th grade students, 10th grade and 12th grade students and college students and young adults. They also looked at survey's done by the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System test administered by the CDC and the American Freshman survey of entering college Freshman. The survey includes a section called "Alternative Explanations for the Trends" because the researchers understood that there were multiple variables in the study. The Washington post uses this as a solid fact, rather than presenting that the statistic varies greatly. Differences in backgrounds, inconsistencies with the study and how subjects understood the question or averaged their time, untruthfulness of subjects, all present problems to the study.

2) The declines appeared across racial, geographic and socioeconomic lines and in rural, urban and suburban areas."



Green Light/ True. Studies from the journal *Child Development* by Twenge & Park show data studies that spread out the data from each group of 12th graders from 1993-2015 in Table 2. The years are broken up into block times to better display the data. The comparison shows the

difference between whites, blacks, and Hispanics. There is some missing information here, however, because there is not statistics of the percentage of Hispanic 12th graders that drink from 1993-2005. This does not present false information, but rather just leaves a gap in the information. Although there is a decline after that it only gives 10 years of a decline, rather than the 22 years of data shown for whites and blacks. Other groups include Lower SES and Higher SES, as well as rural, suburban, and urban. Providing both suburban and urban provides more information since typically these two are grouped together. The decline in different groups was not necessarily the same, but still within a close percentage. Most groups started with different percentages in 1993. The journal mentions, “the decline in adult activities appears across all groups regardless of gender, race, SES, region, or urban/rural location, suggesting a broad-based shift over time.” (Twerk & Park, 2017, paragraph 39) The majority of these studies show that there was a decline in all racial, geographic, and socioeconomic lines and back up the information presented in the Washington Post. (Twerk, 2017).

3) “Teens have also reported a steady decline in sexual activity in recent decades. The portion of high school students who’d had sex fell from 54 percent in 1991 to 41 percent in 2015, according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”



Green Light/ True. This study was conducted by the CDC which is a major operation under the Department of Health and Human Services of the government. The study is conducted by giving questionnaires in high school classes. I found the study results on the CDC’s official website and the results did in fact show that in 1991 54.1 percent of high school students have ever had sex and in 2015 and 41 percent had. (Center of Disease Control and Prevention, August 4, 2017, Paragraph 2)

4) “In recent decades parents have become more restrictive about independent activities, and laws in some states have codified this, banning children from going out in public or staying home without adult accompaniment.”



Yellow Light/ Somewhat true. Statement 4 is a state of opinion based on the link provided in the paragraph. Following that link leads to an article titled “Parents investigated for neglect after letting kids walk home alone.” (George, 2015) This article is a news article that reviews a story of a young family with 2 kids, Rafi and Dvora, whom would walk home each day after school. The walk was a one mile distance. One day while they were walking, the police came and picked them up and brought them home. Over the next few weeks CPS (Child protective services) came multiple times to investigate for child neglect and abuse. Our line we are fact checking is not a quote of this article but it is an opinion created by the reader of this other

article that was restated to try to support our article on teens. As seen in the article, Leaving Your Child Home Alone, there is some restrictions on children being home alone or going into public alone. It says, "Illinois law requires children to be 14 years old before being left alone; in Maryland, the minimum age is 8, while in Oregon, children must be 10 before being left home alone." (Child Welfare, 2013, page 2) However statement 4 was based off an article for which showed that parents today aren't becoming more restrictive with their kids, it showed quite the opposite. The reader simply took her opinion of the cited source and used it to try to support herself.

Citations:

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