

- Article
- Discussion Questions

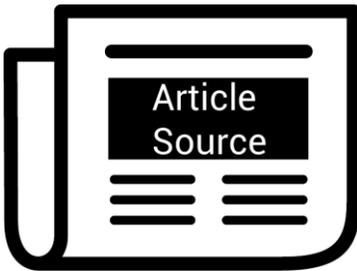
Article :

Thursday, August 24, 2017

Texting Suicide Case: Michele Carter sentenced to serve at least 15 months

Readability Score: 8.2

Article (For this current event, you must print out the article in class or click on the link and view the article online! (Due to copyright restrictions, Izzit.org cannot archive the article text on izzit.org, but only our accompanying discussion questions. Below is a link to the original article source. If the link no longer works, we recommend doing a web search for the article title.)



Link: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/texting-suicide-case-michelle-carter-sentencing-hearing/>

Title of article: "Texting Suicide Case: Michele Carter Sentenced To Serve At Least 15 Months"

Discussion Questions

Note: While this case is undeniably sensitive, it raises some important issues that young people need to consider.

Additional Information: A 'bench trial' is when a defendant is tried or sentenced by a judge rather than a full jury.

Note: Answer all questions! Remember to include the question in the answer. Some questions have two or more parts to the question!

Vocabulary Define: manslaughter, compilation, pawn

1. This case has caused a lot of talk about social media and freedom of speech. Many people were surprised that Miss Carter was found guilty of helping to cause her boyfriend's death merely by texting him, even if the texts were mean-spirited. Others felt that her texts were so cruel that they deserved to result in punishment, even if they were 'just words.' What do you think? Should she be punished for her cruelty? What does 'freedom of speech' mean?

2. Many people see this case as an example of 'cyber-bullying.' Have you known anyone who was the victim of such treatment? How can we reduce such occurrences?

NOTE: See [Directions](#) before completing the current event!

Discussion Questions from Izzit.Org

- 3. What sort of limits should be placed on speech? One Supreme Court case famously ruled that free speech doesn't mean you can shout "Fire!" in a crowded theater, thereby putting others at immediate risk of harm. Are Miss Carter's words such a case? Explain.**
- 4. The prosecution said that Miss Carter "wanted to play the role of a grieving girlfriend." How often do you think teenagers are willing to let someone else be harmed in order to get something they want? How do you figure out if someone is like that? What can you do about such people?**
- 5. The judge gave a sentence that was somewhere in between what the prosecution and the defense asked for. Go back and look at what each side wanted. Do you think the judge's ruling was appropriate? Too lenient? Too harsh? Explain your reasoning.**
- 6. Do you agree that the judge should have taken her age (she was 17 when the suicide happened) into account? Why do we treat juveniles differently from adults? When (if ever) is it appropriate to treat juveniles the same as adults?**
- 7. Miss Carter probably thought her texts were private, as most youths seem to believe about their social media exchanges. Does this case make you reconsider some of the messages you send? What can you trust to be truly private?**