

Grade 11 Informational

Cup Holder *Technology* – Really?

While looking for a car, today's consumer expects there to be a cup holder in every conceivable place to put a cup. On the floor, in the console, and even attached to toddler's car seats, cup holders have become an important part of marketing when it comes to selling cars.

The first cup-holder was a contraption that was held to the dash by two cords and stuck to the metal dashboard with suction cups. The intent was to devise something that could hold an open drink without spilling it out on the occupants of the car. Seems simple, doesn't it? It was a welcome invention to the car or truck owner.

The progression of this invention has closely followed the consumer's need to have everything at their disposal no matter where they may be, even in a moving vehicle. As automobiles have become more sophisticated, the cup holder has become an important addition to the technological development of vehicle interiors. While there seems to be nothing technical about it, the planning and devising of such a convenience can be quite involved.

Early cup holders were made separately to be slid into the window space and to hold a standard-sized cup. Styrofoam coffee cups, paper drink cups, and soda cans could ride aside the driver and be easily accessed without too much trouble. This was a great invention for the commuter and traveler who relied on the travel time to also ingest their morning coffee. Compared to a basic, cumbersome holder, this single cup holder was wonderful. But, it wasn't perfect. Bumpy roads and short stops frequently had drivers trying to catch a catapulted cup before it spilled all over them – usually without success. Not to despair, however, the technological wizards in the automobile industry were already on the job.

Soon, as new models were released with the dawn of a new fiscal year, cup holders were devised to be part of the make up of the vehicle. A breakthrough was made when the engineers of interiors created a thin, circular drop-in convenience. Now, as part of the automobile's design, cup holders no longer bounced drinks out of their hold and onto driver's laps. This worked well, as long as the consumer used a cup the size of the standard cup holder.

Not to be left behind in the modern age of technology, new and better cup holders were invented. Now, instead of circular pull-outs, cup holders were formed to the floor, console, and door of updated cars and trucks. These were a little bit larger to keep up with the growing size of drinks consumers took with them on their trips. Eventually, they were made not only larger, but with cut-out areas for cup handles. Then was added the rubber insert to accommodate more than one size in one cup holder, closely followed by the cup holder-cell phone holder combination.

The term that was seen as a joke by car enthusiasts everywhere has now become an expectation in modern automobiles. The use of technology will keep growing not only in the automobile industry, but in every other industry as well. From cords and suction cups to molded cup-phone combination holders, consumers can expect even more conveniences as they travel into the future.

Grade 11 Narrative

Kaleidoscope

Jessica slumped unhappily in her chair and regarded her ankle reproachfully; just minutes ago, she had been preparing to participate in a track meet when, with an inadvertent misstep, she had twisted her ankle. Now she was positioned in a folding chair with her foot iced, wrapped, and elevated. She was immobile in the midst of a sea of purposeful activity. Members of the track teams were warming up: stretching, bending, running in place; and Jessica wanted nothing more than the ability to leap from the chair and join her team. Usually track meets were invigorating and satisfying for Jessica, but the hours of today's meet stretched before her like an endless desert landscape.

To alleviate her disappointment, Jessica squinted her eyes and began to play a game from her childhood—kaleidoscope. She closed her eyes to mere slits, viewed the distant scene as bits of shifting colors and movements, then blinked and turned her head to look in another direction in order to change the scene. On the far side of the field, Jessica noticed the blurred, blue brilliance of the Clarion High School Eagles' warm-up suits as a group of runners jogged lightly along the track. Beyond the joggers, were silver tiers of empty bleachers gleaming in the sunlight. Where the bleachers ended, Jessica could see a large splash of green, brightened by small, red dots. Opening her eyes wider and focusing, she could see a giant oak spreading its leafy branches protectively over a patch of grass where two or three spectators in red T-shirts had established themselves in comfortable chairs and propped their feet on foot stools—clearly planning to watch the entire meet.

Jessica wished that she were with the spectators, so she would at least have someone to talk to. The other members of the team had paused to commiserate with her, but everyone had returned to the practice areas—except for Janet, who suddenly appeared beside her.

"I'm sorry you've been sidelined, Jessica," she said. "We'll try our best to do well in the meet. Coach is having Stephanie take your place, but it won't be the same without you." Janet gave Jessica an amicable pat on the back and jogged off to resume her workout.

Jessica felt confident the team would compete well—despite her accident—but she wished she could take part in the competition. Sighing, Jessica returned to playing kaleidoscope. In the distance, she could see a large orange blob—undoubtedly a belated school bus—releasing what appeared to be a flock of canaries. She opened her eyes wide and realized that the track team from Adams High—in bright, yellow uniforms—was departing from the bus.

As the hours passed, Jessica cheered at all the appropriate moments: yelling

encouragement to teammates, shouting the names of the runners as they handed off the baton in the relays, applauding when the results of the pole vault were announced. When she occasionally lapsed back into playing kaleidoscope, she told herself that she was entitled to a diversion. Though her body was growing stiff, she could at least exercise her imagination to relieve the tedium of inactivity. Her team was accruing points at a steady pace, so she felt fairly confident of the meet's outcome.

Varying blots of color now adorned the silver bleachers on the opposite side. Four small groups of spectators had taken their places with others supporting their teams; together they presented an abstract design against a silver canvas—yellow melting into gold and black, circles of blue and red separated by silver, and a twist of purple spiraling below them.

When Jessica opened her eyes and returned her attention to the meet, she was startled to see that she had almost missed the event she enjoyed most—the 1600-meter relay. This was the event that Jessica usually anchored in the competition, but today Stephanie was running in her place. Jessica had wanted to lead her relay team to a stunning victory—but now she would have to watch.

The runners were already into the third segment of the relay, and Stephanie was poised to receive the baton and begin the final segment of the race. The runners from Adams High were moving more quickly than Jessica's team; but at the handoff, the anchor from Adams High dropped the baton—an action that would disqualify the team from the competition. Jessica watched attentively to see if Stephanie would become agitated since the runner from Adams had been running next to her. Stephanie stayed confident, took the baton smoothly, and managed to move out a little ahead of the others.

By the time Stephanie made the final turn on the track, Jessica was on her feet, hopping and cheering wildly. The runners were a blur of moving arms and legs, but Stephanie broke away from them and won decisively. Jessica collapsed into her chair, still clapping, and propped her foot up once again—her eyes wide open. Very soon Stephanie and the other members of the team encircled her, laughing and performing an impromptu victory dance. Jessica grinned and enjoyed this final—and gratifying—shifting of the kaleidoscope.