The One-Pound Cell Phone

Name _____

Word Count: 274

Cell phones seem to be our constant companions these days. Today there 12
are more cell phone subscribers than there are wire line phone subscribers. 24

In the world of wireless communication, how did we get from the 36
telegraph to the cell phone? In 1842, Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph, had 50
something to prove. He wanted to show that an underwater cable could transmit 63
signals just as well as copper wires on poles. But when a passing ship pulled up 79
the cable, Morse chose to carry out the experiment without the cable. He sent 93
telegraph signals through the water itself. He was able to achieve this because 106
water conducts electricity. 109

This gave inventors ideas, and they began alternating between experiments 119
with wire line and wireless telegraphs. In 1865, a dentist transmitted telegraphic 131
messages a distance of 18 miles. He used Earth's atmosphere, instead of water, as 145
a conductor of electricity by launching kites enclosed with copper screens. These 157
were linked to the ground with copper wires. 165

The basic foundation for wireless communication had been set. Now all 176
that was needed was someone with a vision. That someone was Martin Cooper, 189
who developed the first portable handheld police radios. In 1973, he placed the 202
first wireless telephone call from the streets of New York City. 213

It took another ten years to develop the first cell phone for the public, 227
which weighed a pound and cost $3,500! Seven years later, a million people in the 242
United States had cell phones. The system uses many stations with towers, and 255
the service areas are divided into cells. Calls are sent from station to station as the 271
phone user travels. 274

Number of Errors

1	2	3	4	5	6

Accuracy (%): _____

Reading Rate (Words Per Minute):

100 125 150 175 200 225 250 275 300