Join the National Conversation!

WordGen WEEKLY

SERIES 1 Part B

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Should people who commit serious crimes be sentenced to death? The death penalty is also known as capital punishment. It is allowed in some states but prohibited in others. In 2014, a total of 35 people were put to death in the United States. Since 1977, over 1,400 people have been executed.

Advocates of the death penalty say that the threat of being punished by death stops people from committing violent crimes. They also contend that the death penalty helps murder victims’ families find peace. Additionally, they argue that it is only right that people who commit violent crimes like torture or murder should not be allowed to live.

Those who take the contrary position argue that it is wrong to kill anyone, including a convicted criminal. They say the evidence shows that the death penalty does not lower rates of violent crime. Death penalty opponents also point out that in some cases innocent people have been convicted. After further investigation, their sentences were reversed. For example, DNA testing has shown that some people did not commit the crimes they were accused of, and they were released from prison.

One inmate, Anthony Ray Hinton, spent 30 years on death row before his murder conviction was overturned. He was released from prison in April 2015. Because many death sentences like Hinton’s have been overturned, opponents of capital punishment are concerned that innocent people are being sentenced to death.

Supporters of capital punishment agree that these cases are tragic, especially when someone is proven innocent after they have already been put to death. They argue that the best way to address the problem is to improve the system that decides if someone is innocent or guilty in the first place. They say this will help make sure that only people who are truly guilty of serious crimes receive the death penalty.

What is your opinion? Should the death penalty be prohibited, or are there good reasons to keep it? When, if ever, do you think capital punishment is justified?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
- How many people were executed in the United States in 2014?
- Why do advocates of the death penalty say that capital punishment is good for our society?
- Why do others think the death penalty should be prohibited?
- What has caused some people’s death sentences to be reversed?
- Do you advocate the use of the death penalty? Why or why not?
IS THE DEATH PENALTY JUSTIFIED?

USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

advocate (noun) supporter

Sample Sentence: Advocates of the death penalty say that the threat of being punished by death stops people from committing violent crimes.

Turn and Talk: Who is your best advocate when you are faced with a conflict?

*advocate (verb) to recommend or argue in favor of

Sample Sentence: Cheyenne advocates drinking water instead of soda.

Turn and Talk: If you had to choose one option, would you advocate for a longer school year or longer school day? Explain.

contrary (adjective) opposite; opposing

Sample Sentence: Those who take the contrary position argue that the death penalty does not lower rates of violent crime.

Turn and Talk: How do you convince your parents to agree with you when their position is contrary to yours?

prohibit (verb) to not allow; to forbid

Sample Sentence: Swimming at the beach is often prohibited when there is no lifeguard on duty.

Turn and Talk: What is prohibited at your school that you feel shouldn’t be?

release (verb) to let go; to set free

Sample Sentence: Anthony Ray Hinton was released from prison after spending 30 years on death row.

Turn and Talk: What is the first thing you do when you are released from school for summer vacation?

*release (noun) the act of allowing someone or something to go free

Sample Sentence: The zoo reported an accidental release of two lions.

Turn and Talk: What should the justice system do to help wrongfully convicted inmates upon their release?

reverse (verb) to change back; to overturn

Sample Sentence: After further investigation, the convicted felon’s guilty verdict was reversed, and he was released from prison.

Turn and Talk: What might make you reverse your decision to try out for a play or sports team?

*reverse (noun) the opposite

Sample Sentence: Many people assume that the Nile River runs north to south, but the reverse is true.

Turn and Talk: Should girls be able to play on boys’ soccer teams? What about the reverse?
**DO THE MATH**

People who advocate the death penalty say it helps society by discouraging crime and eliminating the most dangerous criminals. On the contrary, some say a society that executes its own citizens will be less moral and less fair overall. Many countries around the world, from Mexico to South Africa, have abolished the death penalty. The European Union (EU) prohibits the death penalty in all EU countries.

**Option 1:** Between 1973 and 2013, American courts sentenced 8,466 people to death. Of these people, only 1,359 were executed. What percentage of the people sentenced to death were actually executed?

A. about 6.2%
B. about 8.5%
C. about 10.3%
D. about 16.1%

**Option 2:** In 2000, a study found that 68% of death sentences between 1973 and 1995 were reversed because of serious errors. In 9% of those reversals, the defendant was eventually acquitted (freed from criminal charge) and released. What percentage of people sentenced to death were eventually acquitted?

\[
.68 \times .09 = .0612, \text{ or about 6.12%}
\]

**Discussion Question:** The study mentioned above found that in 68% of the cases where a defendant was sentenced to death, the sentence was reversed by another court because serious mistakes had been made during the trial. Death penalty opponents say this shows that the system is deeply flawed. When mistakes are so common, they say, the only way to prevent innocent people from being executed is to prohibit capital punishment, or the death penalty. On the contrary, some death penalty advocates say these statistics prove that each defendant gets a fair trial with safeguards to catch mistakes. They point out that only 9% of those reversals resulted in the defendant being acquitted. In most reversals, the defendant is not acquitted and released, but rather is still found guilty and sentenced to prison instead of death. What do you think? Do these statistics on death sentence reversals support the position of death penalty advocates or of their opponents?
Mr. Seemy was discussing the death penalty with his students. “If a state allows the death penalty, people in that state must be more scared to commit crimes than people in states that do not have the death penalty,” says James, advocating the death penalty.

“No way!” Miranda replied. “Just because the punishment is worse doesn’t mean there’s going to be less crime. When someone is going to commit a crime that bad, they aren’t thinking about the punishment.”

“On the contrary, there are studies that show that criminals do think about the punishment, and harsher punishment gives them more adrenaline when they commit a crime,” Mr. Seemy stated. “As of June 2013, twenty states prohibit the death penalty. Let’s look to see if the crime rate in states that do allow the death penalty is lower than the crime rate in states that do not allow the death penalty.”

Mr. Seemy found some interesting statistics online about the murder rates in death penalty versus non–death penalty states from 1991–2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Death Penalty States</th>
<th>Non–Death Penalty States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

What patterns do you notice within these data? Do states prohibiting the death penalty have a higher or lower murder rate?

The murder rate is lower in states without the death penalty, and the murder rate in both sets of states is decreasing.

Do these data support Miranda’s or James’ assumptions? Explain.

Miranda’s, because the death penalty does not correspond to a lower murder rate.

It is tempting to conclude that the difference you see in this graph between death penalty and non–death penalty states represents a causal effect. Why is that a dangerous conclusion? What additional data would you seek to determine whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship?

Note: Use this opportunity to review causation with your students. The murder rate is lower in non–death penalty states, but this doesn’t mean that the prohibition of the death penalty is the reason why.
**IS THE DEATH PENALTY JUSTIFIED?**

**DEBATE THE ISSUE**

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A  □ The death penalty is justified.

B  □ The death penalty is not justified.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

- Can you show me evidence in the text that...
- I believe that...
- You make a good point, but have you considered...
- I agree with you, but...
IS THE DEATH PENALTY JUSTIFIED?

TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

advocate | contrary | prohibit | release | reverse
Asthma is a respiratory disease that makes breathing difficult. Sometimes it is connected to plant and animal allergies. Asthma is not a contagious illness; it cannot be transmitted from person to person. Instead, asthma is a health condition that is triggered by environmental factors, such as indoor and outdoor pollutants that make the air dirty. But health experts are noticing a new phenomenon. Asthma appears to be getting worse in low-income, urban areas, affecting more and more children who live there.

Studies of rich and poor neighborhoods have shown big differences in asthma rates. In 2010, the low-income Bronx area of New York City—where 43% of children live in poverty—had the highest rate of child asthma. Out of every 10,000 children, 91 were hospitalized for asthma. The wealthiest region, Staten Island, had the lowest rate: only 22 cases per 10,000 children. Many asthma triggers like mold and cockroaches are far more common among low-income residential buildings. Factories, power plants, and other industrial facilities are major contributors to another asthma trigger: air pollution. Many poor residential communities are located near these industrial areas.

Low-income families often have little choice in where they live, so they may not be able to protect their children from power plants, factories, and traffic. But one major source of asthma that parents can control is smoking. Children who grow up in households where someone smokes are much more likely to develop asthma, and secondhand smoke is a trigger for acute, or severe, asthma attacks. There are many laws against smoking in public places, but people are free to smoke in their own homes. Asthmatic children frequently end up in emergency rooms to receive breathing interventions simply because their parents are unwilling to suspend smoking at home or in the car. Why don’t these parents make asthma prevention a priority? Should there be a law against smoking in any confined space where children are present, even at home?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
• What are some of the causes of asthma?
• Asthma is more common in low-income, urban areas than in wealthier neighborhoods. What explains this phenomenon?
• What might be some causes of asthma that low-income families can control?
• Is the government responsible for intervening to prevent smoking in places where children are present?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS

intervention (noun) action intended to solve a problem

Sample Sentence: It is unclear who should pay for expensive interventions to improve the air quality in homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

Turn and Talk: What interventions would you suggest to the parent of a child who does not complete her homework?

phenomenon (noun) something that happens that can be observed

Sample Sentence: Since widespread asthma is a public health phenomenon that is directly linked to pollution, many people think something should be done to decrease the amount of pollution.

Turn and Talk: One natural phenomenon is lightning. What is another example of a natural phenomenon?

priority (noun) item of high importance

Sample Sentence: Some people believe that the government should make asthma prevention a priority.

Turn and Talk: What are two top priorities of students at your school?

suspend (verb) to stop temporarily

Sample Sentence: Operations in power plants could be suspended until they lower their pollution levels.

Turn and Talk: Should schools suspend dances and other activities until all students are passing their classes?

transmit (verb) to pass on from one place or person to another

Sample Sentence: Asthma is not a contagious illness; it cannot be transmitted from person to person.

Turn and Talk: Describe the ways you transmit messages among your friends.
There was a dramatic increase in the asthma rate in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, about 14% of children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with asthma. Researchers have been working to understand this phenomenon. Asthma is a complicated illness. Unlike HIV or the common cold, it is not transmitted from person to person. Rather, doctors think a combination of genetic factors and environmental factors, like pollution, determine who gets asthma. Asthma attacks can be life-threatening, and treating asthma is expensive. For these reasons, some say fighting asthma should be a national priority. But how can we fight asthma? Realistically, we cannot suspend all activities that cause pollution. To plan effective interventions we need to know which groups are most affected. Here are some statistics:

- 16% of boys have been diagnosed with asthma, as compared to 12% of girls
- 19% of children from poor families have been diagnosed with asthma, as compared to 12% of children from families that are not poor

Option 1: According to these statistics, which of the following groups would you expect to have the highest asthma diagnosis rate?

A. girls from poor families  
B. girls from non-poor families  
C. boys from non-poor families  
D. boys from poor families

Option 2: Two boys are chosen at random. According to the statistics given above, what is the likelihood that they both have asthma?

\[ .16 \times .16 = .0256, \text{ so there is about a } 2.6\% \text{ chance that they both have asthma.} \]

Discussion Question: Childhood asthma places a real burden on families. An asthma attack is a frightening phenomenon. Normal life is suspended when a child suffers an attack, and helping the child breathe becomes the family’s priority. Sometimes, using an inhaler helps relieve the symptoms. Other times, a more serious intervention is necessary, like a doctor visit or a hospital stay. Doctors and social workers try to transmit up-to-date medical knowledge to families to help them avoid asthma triggers like mold, pollen, and cigarette smoke. Should families pay for these kinds of services themselves? Or are the government and companies that pollute the air responsible? What about families that can’t afford to pay?
The students in Mr. Seemy's class are talking about air pollution because Victor is concerned about his asthma acting up. He has a track meet after school, but the pollution has been particularly bad this week.

"Smog is definitely one of the main triggers for my asthma, so I have to be careful," says Victor. "It's a hassle. I love competing, but I have to pay close attention to my breathing, suspend strenuous activity like sports if I start to have any trouble breathing, and be prepared to intervene by using my inhaler. It usually works out okay, but I wish people would do more to keep the air clean."

"I've heard that air pollution not only triggers asthma attacks for some people with asthma, it can also cause more people to develop asthma in the first place," says Jorge. "It's more than just a medical phenomenon, it's a social injustice because some people can't afford to move out of polluted areas and into more expensive neighborhoods with cleaner air."

"Yeah," says Victor. "There was a study done in Southern California where they looked at kids who live in communities with different levels of ozone pollution from traffic. Among kids who play a lot of sports, the ones living and going to school in places with more ozone were three times more likely to develop asthma than the ones in less polluted neighborhoods."

"Three times more?" said Jorge. "Man, it seems like it would be healthier to just not exercise if you live or go to school near a freeway. Who wants to develop asthma if you can avoid it?"

"No way," said Victor. "Air pollution is a problem, but exercise is a priority if you want to stay healthy."

With Mr. Seemy’s encouragement, Victor and Jorge found a press release about the study Victor remembered from the California Environmental Protection Agency’s Air Resources Board and the University of Southern California. Here is an excerpt from the press release:

Previous evidence has shown that ozone, one of the most health-damaging air pollutants, can aggravate existing cases of asthma. The new ARB-USC study, however, points strongly to ozone as a cause in the development of asthma in young people who did not previously have the disease.

The study compared new asthma cases in 3,535 children who were followed over five years in 12 Southern California communities to determine the potential health damage caused by growing up in polluted air. Six of the communities had higher than average ozone concentrations while six had lower than average concentrations.

Researchers further refined the study by looking at children who played up to three team sports. The study showed that children in the high ozone communities who played three or more sports developed asthma at a rate three times higher than those in the low ozone communities. Because participation in some sports can result in a child drawing up to 17 times the “normal” amount of air into the lungs, young athletes are more likely to develop asthma.

Data Source: http://www.arb.ca.gov/newsrel/nr013102.htm

Based on the press release excerpt above, does this study make any recommendations about how much exercise children in polluted communities should get?

No. It says exercise can increase the risk of becoming asthmatic in areas with heavy air pollution, but it doesn’t weigh that risk against the advantages of exercise.

Who do you think is right: Jorge, who thinks children in polluted communities should exercise less to avoid developing asthma; or Victor, who thinks exercise is a health priority that outweighs the risk of developing asthma?
There are many interventions that could reduce asthma. One of the most controversial is limiting smoking by parents when they are in confined, private spaces with their children. Should parents’ right to smoke be protected when they are in their own homes, or should children be protected from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke at home?

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

- It should be illegal to smoke in confined spaces where children are present.

OR

B

- Parents should decide for themselves about smoking around their children.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

- __________________________________________

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

- You make a good point, but have you considered...

- I believe that...

- I agree with you, but...

- Can you show me evidence in the text that...
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

intervention | phenomenon | priority | suspend | transmit

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At the 2013 MTV video music awards, Miley Cyrus twerked during her performance. The morning after, CNN focused more on her dance moves than on a giant wildfire in California or new evidence of chemical warfare in Syria. The headline on the CNN webpage read, “She did what??” Pundits had dramatic reactions to her behavior. Pundits, or “talking heads,” are the people you see arguing on the news all the time. Some called Miley Cyrus “out of control” and blamed her father. MSNBC pundits called her “a mess” before their morning newscast.

The rise of 24-hour-a-day news channels has increased the demand on contemporary media for attention-grabbing reports. Often they use shock value and fear to guide their reporting. A common phrase in newsrooms is, “If it bleeds, it leads,” meaning the more horrible a story is, the more people will want to watch or read about it in the news. Sometimes a frivolous story about a celebrity will be the lead, instead of events that affect thousands of other people.

Many people believe that journalism has abandoned its job of reporting news to exploit a public more interested in celebrities’ lives and spectacular sports plays. What is more relevant to report to the public — that a new voting rights law has been passed or that a starlet had a baby? One common late night TV comedy segment has an interviewer go out on a street and ask the public questions about current events. It’s clear from these clips that many people do not know the name of the Vice President of the United States. The show’s host makes fun of these people. But when daily news reports focus more on Miley Cyrus than the Vice President, should we be surprised?

News organizations say they have to make the news more exciting so that people will watch. They point out that many Americans would not bother to watch the news if they were not interested in an entertaining story. Once the news catches a person’s attention, they may stay tuned in and learn about important worldwide issues and events. Therefore, some say that attention-grabbing stories actually help make sure the public is aware of important news.

What do you think? Have news organizations abandoned their responsibility to educate the public about important current events? Or are they just giving us more of the news that we really care about?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
• What types of topics do contemporary news reports cover?
• Should we be surprised when people do not know the name of the Vice President of the United States? Do you know?
• Why do news sources say their stories have to be dramatic?
• Do you think people in the U.S. are more interested in being entertained than in being informed about the world?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS  *and alternate parts of speech

abandon (verb) to give up; to leave behind

Sample Sentence: Last year Jack broke his arm and abandoned his hopes of playing on the baseball team.

Turn and Talk: Why might someone abandon a pet?

abandon (noun) carefree freedom

Sample Sentence: Although Janice is normally shy, she sang with abandon at the karaoke party.

Turn and Talk: What is an activity that you do with abandon?

frivolous (adjective) not important; silly

Sample Sentence: Some people think wearing makeup is frivolous and a waste of time.

Turn and Talk: What is the last item you bought that you would consider frivolous? Why?

contemporary (adjective) modern; current

Sample Sentence: Many parents think that contemporary songs lack good lyrics.

Turn and Talk: Do you prefer the style of contemporary or classic cars?

dramatic (adjective) exciting; full of emotion; extreme

Sample Sentence: Newscasters fear that people will not watch their programs if the stories are not dramatic enough.

Turn and Talk: Are teenagers more dramatic than adults, or does it just depend on the person?

exploit (verb) to take advantage of

Sample Sentence: Karla exploited her sister’s weakness for chocolate when she offered her a candy bar in exchange for help with a school project.

Turn and Talk: Have you ever exploited a friend or sibling’s weakness to get them to do something for you?

exploit (noun) something exciting and daring; an adventure

Sample Sentence: Cynthia and Pamela’s exploits included camping and telling ghost stories.

Turn and Talk: Describe your latest exploit.
DO THE MATH

Historically, a good journalist’s job has been to tell the truth. Journalists tell us when companies exploit their workers. They tell us when police officers are biased against minorities or teens or when they are heroes to a community. They cover stories that are dramatic but also important, like tsunamis, the War in Afghanistan, plane crashes, and presidential elections. They help us know what our world is really like.

Some contemporary news outlets are abandoning these responsibilities. They focus on stories that are frivolous or fun. Most people, they say, would rather learn about Charlie Sheen than health care reform. Is this true?

In March of 2011, an earthquake struck Japan. It was followed by a devastating tsunami. The country’s nuclear plants began to melt down, releasing deadly radiation into the environment. Were Americans tuned in to the disaster?

Read each headline. Decide whether each article is “information,” “entertainment,” or “both.” Put an X in the appropriate box. Can the class agree on each article? What fraction of the most-viewed articles fall into each category?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 15 most-viewed stories from cnn.com on March 17, 2011.</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Japanese settle in shelters, foreigners want out</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Japan struggles to cool reactors, spent fuel at damaged plant</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Yale killing suspect admits murder, gets 44 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. U.S. hints at Libya airstrikes as Gadhafi pounds rebels</td>
<td></td>
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<td>❑</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Estranged son of anti-gay Westboro pastor says father does ‘evil’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rob Pattinson and Kristen Stewart’s movie date (with fans)</td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Amid disaster, Japan’s societal mores remain strong</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Sandra Bullock sends $1 million for Japan relief</td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Doctors feared mass suicide after deadly ‘sweat lodge,’ survivor says</td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The moments that make us fat</td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. ‘Radiation has always been part of my story’</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Radiation: when to worry</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. LeAnn Rimes defends her slim figure</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Congress wants to cut tsunami warning centers? Really?</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Tiger Woods: being a single dad is ‘tough’</td>
<td></td>
<td>❑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion Question: What do the 15 most-viewed articles tell us about contemporary internet news viewers?

Should we be embarrassed that while Japan was in crisis, Americans were reading about LeAnn Rimes’ weight loss? Or is it natural for people to want to abandon real-world concerns and read about something “light” once in a while? What do you think about stories 3 and 9? Are they important, or are they just dramatic tales that exploit people’s curiosity? Why do you think so many people were interested in story 5 about the Westboro pastor who pickets American soldiers’ funerals?
THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

The students in Ms. Kahn’s class are talking about biased reporting in contemporary news media. Aliyah brings up an article by Michael Massing, a reporter who sees bias in the U.S. media’s stories about Mexico.

“He says that U.S. reporters focus on violent Mexican drug gangs,” says Aliyah. “They ignore important stories about poverty and corruption. Instead, they exploit violent events like shootings and murders. They want to tell stories that are dramatic rather than fact-filled, and that are frivolous rather than important.”

“Is Michael Massing right?” asks Ms. Kahn. “Does U.S. news coverage of Mexico focus on drugs and drug violence and abandon other topics? What kind of evidence could you find to help answer this question?”

Some of Ms. Kahn’s students decided to monitor The New York Times for a month. They wrote down titles of articles that related to Mexico. At the end of the month they studied their data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title of Article</th>
<th>Drugs/Violence?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>Baja Battens Down as Hurricane Approaches</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Hurricane in Baja Weakens</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Leader Urges Cooperation Against Ills Mexico Faces</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>17 Killed in Mexican Rehab Center</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>Mexican Candidate and Family are Killed in Apparent Drug Hit</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>Mexican Police Make Arrest in Killing of Candidate and His Family</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Seeking the World’s Biggest Meatball? Try Mexico</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Mexican Police Thwart Plane’s Hijacker</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>Mexico Now Enduring Worst Drought in Years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>Eyes Turn to Mexico as Drought Drags On</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Lenient Sentences Given for Plundering of Artifacts</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>Survey Shows Pull of the U.S. Is Still Strong Inside Mexico</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>Two Arrested in Attempt to Crash Border</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Mexican is Confirmed as Attorney General</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>2 Canadians Shot to Death in Mexican Resort Town</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>In Mexico City, a Political Deal Redone</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you summarize the data the students collected?

Out of 16 headlines having to do with Mexico, 5 focused on drugs and/or violence. That’s 31.3%, or almost 1/3.


Considering the results of the study, why do you think that Michael Massing sees bias in the U.S. media’s stories about Mexico?
TODAY'S NEWS: INFORMATION OR ENTERTAINMENT?

DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A  The balance of information and entertainment in today's news is a problem.

OR

B  The balance of information and entertainment in today's news is not a problem.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

- Can you show me evidence in the text that...
- You make a good point, but have you considered...
- I believe that...
- I agree with you, but...
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

abandon | frivolous | contemporary | dramatic | exploit

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The effects of cigarette smoking cause nearly one in five deaths in the U.S. each year. Smoking is linked with cancer, heart disease, and lung disease. It is now widely acknowledged to be addictive. Once people start, they have trouble stopping. It is often easy to tell whether someone smokes or not. Smokers often exhibit symptoms such as coughing, low energy, respiratory difficulties, and poor circulation. These problems often build over time. Doctors believe it is inevitable that smoking will eventually lead to an accumulation of health problems.

So why do people smoke? Some say smoking keeps them calm. Others think it makes them look cool. Teen smoking rates are lower than they once were. Still, 9.2% of high school students and 2.5% of middle school students smoke. Once a young person starts smoking cigarettes, there is a good chance that they will become lifelong smokers and customers of tobacco companies. That’s why companies use appealing advertisements and other techniques to manipulate kids into buying cigarettes. For instance, one brand developed flavored cigarettes and promoted them with fun, tropical images. Another brand advertised with hiphop themes. Critics argue that these actions contradict statements by tobacco companies that they are trying to prevent kids from smoking. They think tobacco companies should follow stricter guidelines about marketing to teens.

Tobacco companies say they support laws that block kids’ access to cigarettes. Should companies be held responsible for attracting kids to cigarettes? Is it the job of parents, teachers, and lawmakers to prevent teen smoking? Or should kids be responsible for their own choices?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

accumulation (noun) buildup

- **Sample Sentence:** Doctors are certain that smoking will eventually lead to an *accumulation* of health problems.
- **Turn and Talk:** How do you manage your time when you have an *accumulation* of homework?

contradict (verb) to argue against; to deny

- **Sample Sentence:** Critics argue that these actions *contradict* statements by tobacco companies that they are trying to prevent kids from smoking.
- **Turn and Talk:** Why might information from the internet *contradict* something that you read in a textbook?

exhibit (verb) to show; to display

- **Sample Sentence:** Smokers often *exhibit* symptoms such as coughing, low energy, respiratory difficulties, and poor circulation.
- **Turn and Talk:** How can a person *exhibit* interest and curiosity when listening to someone speak?

*exhibit (noun) an object or collection of objects put on display

- **Sample Sentence:** Susan and her mother frequently visited the African mask *exhibit* at the city museum.
- **Turn and Talk:** Would you rather see an *exhibit* of paintings or sculptures? Explain.

inevitable (adjective) unavoidable

- **Sample Sentence:** It’s *inevitable* that you will disagree with your friends sometimes, but it’s important to respect their opinions.
- **Turn and Talk:** What changes do you think will be *inevitable* as you get older?

manipulate (verb) to influence, control, or persuade with skill and often dishonesty

- **Sample Sentence:** Companies use appealing advertisements and other techniques to *manipulate* kids into buying cigarettes.
- **Turn and Talk:** How do fast food restaurants *manipulate* young people into eating their food?
In 1998, the major tobacco companies agreed not to market cigarettes to people under the age of 18. However, a study on magazine advertising contradicts this agreement. The study says that while tobacco companies stopped exhibiting ads in magazines that are strictly for kids, they placed more ads in adult-targeted magazines with many young readers, like *Entertainment Weekly*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *People*. The study claims that the accumulated effect of these new ads is that cigarette advertising reaches the same number of teens as before 1998. Have the tobacco companies manipulated the system? Do we need stricter rules? Or is it inevitable that teens will be exposed to cigarette ads? This graph shows the total amount spent by tobacco companies each year on advertising and promotions.

### Tobacco Company Advertising and Promotional Spending, 1998–2011 (in billions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spending (in billions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>$6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>$8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>$11.4</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>$10.5</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>$9.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Federal Trade Commission Reports for Cigarettes and Smokeless 2011, 2013

**Option 1:** What happened to tobacco companies’ advertising and promotional spending between 1998 and 2011?

A. It increased by 28%
B. It increased by 78%
C. It increased by 128%
D. It increased by 190%

**Option 2:** Each year, all states combined receive over $25 billion in settlement money from tobacco companies. Of this money, about $500 million is spent each year on anti-smoking programs like television ads and programs to help smokers quit. (The rest goes to smoking-related health care costs.) In 2011, for every dollar states spent on anti-smoking programs, tobacco companies spent how many dollars advertising and promoting cigarettes? (Hint: Use the graph. To solve quickly, use exponents!)

\[
\frac{(8.8 \times 10^9)}{(5 \times 10^8)} = 1.76 \times 10^1, \text{ or } \$17.60
\]

**Discussion Question:** The study mentioned above found that ads for the three most popular cigarette brands among teens (Marlboro, Newport, and Camel) had been seen by 80% of teens an average of 17 times. Advertisers consider this accumulation of exposure more than enough to “reach” a potential customer. Does this contradict the 1998 agreement? Or are the tobacco companies doing their part by pulling ads from billboards and kids-only magazines? The companies say they have a legal right to advertise to adults, and it is inevitable that kids will sometimes see these ads. However, some say the frequency with which popular teen brands are exhibited in magazines that many teens read suggests that tobacco companies are being manipulative and dishonest. What do you say? Are tobacco companies playing fair?
In 2012, the United States Surgeon General Regina Benjamin concluded that youth are more likely to start smoking if they see smoking in movies. This conclusion worries Ms. Kahn and Mr. Seemy because they know their students enjoy movies. Mr. Seemy says, “I know it’s inevitable that teens will see smoking, but maybe it’s just R-rated movies for adults that exhibit smoking.”

“I’m afraid the data contradict your thinking,” responds Ms. Kahn. “The Centers for Disease Control has been accumulating statistics. It seems that movies that teens are allowed to see still show smoking.”

Mr. Seemy sighs. “I hope our students are not manipulated by images of smoking in the movies.”

How would you summarize the data on the graph from the CDC?

Images of smoking occur in movies across all of the rating categories. They occur most often in R-rated movies and least often in G- or PG-rated movies. The variation in incidents over time is roughly proportional across the categories.

Do you agree with Surgeon General Regina Benjamin’s conclusion that youth are more likely to start smoking if they see smoking in movies? Why or why not?
DEBATE THE ISSUE
Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A
☐ Tobacco companies are responsible for teen smoking.

OR

B
☐ Teenagers themselves are responsible for teen smoking.

OR

C
☐ Parents, teachers, and lawmakers are responsible for teen smoking.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

"Can you show me evidence in the text that..."  "You make a good point, but have you considered..."

"I believe that..."  "I agree with you, but..."
Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

accumulation | contradict | exhibit | inevitable | manipulate
In 2011, 16-year-old Kalief Browder was accused of stealing a backpack. Of the 1,111 days that Kalief spent in jail awaiting his trial, two thirds were spent in solitary confinement. The robbery charges against him were eventually dismissed, but he had missed the last two years of high school and even his graduation. He felt the system had “robbed him of his happiness.”

In the early 1800s, systems of confinement and labor were developed to deal with criminals, replacing hangings or public beatings. It was thought that prisoners placed in isolation could reflect on their misbehavior. Subsequently, solitary confinement became a widespread practice in the U.S. prison system.

Today, solitary confinement is often used to remove dangerous and violent criminals from the general prison population. However, it can also be imposed as a punishment for violating prison rules. While in solitary confinement, prisoners are kept in closed cells for 22–24 hours per day. Food is pushed through a small hole in the metal door. Often the cells have no windows and a light is kept on all day and night.

The 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibits the use of “cruel and unusual punishment.” Many critics of solitary confinement point to the mental and physical suffering caused by long-term isolation. The United Nations considers more than 15 days in a row in solitary confinement to be a form of torture. Kalief spent 10 months in isolation after being a victim in a fight. After his release from jail, he explained, “...in my mind right now I feel like I’m still in jail, because I’m still feeling the side effects from what happened in there.” In June 2015, he committed suicide.

Supporters of solitary confinement argue that it keeps prisoners and prison guards safe. For example, solitary confinement can be used to protect a prisoner at risk because of race, sexual orientation, or religion. In fact, when Kalief went to prison, his brother told him to break a rule and get sent to solitary if he felt threatened. The federal supermax prison in Florence, Colorado, has 490 solitary confinement units, and was created in response to the murders of two prison guards on the same day in Ohio. Prison workers already perform a dangerous and risky job, and solitary confinement allows them to feel protected from the most dangerous inmates while performing their job duties.

When, if ever, do you think solitary confinement should be used?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
• What does “cruel and unusual punishment” mean?
• Why did Kalief’s brother advise him to go into solitary confinement?
• What rights should prisoners have?
• Should people who commit heinous crimes still have rights?
• What about people who are awaiting trial?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS

isolation (noun) separation from others

Sample Sentence: People thought that prisoners placed in isolation would reflect on their misbehavior.

Turn and Talk: Do you prefer to work on your homework around other people or in isolation?

confinement (noun) restriction within limits

Sample Sentence: The kitten was kept in confinement until her wound healed.

Turn and Talk: Think of one or more situations that would lead to a person’s confinement to a wheelchair.

system (noun) a way of doing something that follows a plan

Sample Sentence: Catalina developed a system to organize her music collection.

Turn and Talk: Come up with suggestions for improving the education system.

mental (adjective) relating to the mind

Sample Sentence: Meditation and exercise are some activities that can improve mental health.

Turn and Talk: What activities do you do for your mental health?

solitary (adjective) without others; alone

Sample Sentence: Solitary journeys in nature are a rite of passage in some cultures.

Turn and Talk: Do you think it’s healthy to have some solitary time in your day? Explain.
DO THE MATH

Solitary confinement takes a toll on prisoner health. Most doctors agree that long-term isolation causes paranoia, anxiety, and mental illness. For example, inmates in solitary confinement are 7 times more likely to hurt themselves than inmates in the regular population. In the summer of 2013, 30,000 adult inmates in the California prison system took part in a hunger strike. By refusing to eat their meals, prisoners drew attention to the use of long-term, indefinite solitary confinement in California prisons. Some prisoners refused to eat for the full 60 days of the hunger strike. Finally California lawmakers agreed to gather information about the use of long-term isolation in the state. Forced isolation may be even more harmful to young prisoners. The Department of Justice estimates that one third of youth in prison have been isolated from other residents, and more than half of these prisoners have been confined for longer than 24 hours.

**Option 1:** The floor of a solitary cell is usually 6 feet by 10 feet. Which array shows an area equivalent to the area of a solitary confinement cell?

- [ ] = 1 square foot

A. 

B. 

C. 

D. 

**Option 2:** To get a better sense of the size of a solitary confinement cell, it is helpful to compare a cell to another space that you know well. For example, you could compare a solitary cell (about 6 feet by 10 feet) to a public bathroom stall. Most public bathroom stalls measure 3 feet by 5 feet.

What percent of a solitary confinement cell would a public bathroom stall occupy?

- Bathroom stall area = 3’ x 5’ = 15’
- Cell area = 6’ x 10’ = 60’
- 15 ÷ 60 = .25
- The stall would occupy 25% of the cell.

**Discussion Question:** Prison guards have one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses among professionals. These injuries are often caused by inmates. As the U.S. prison system becomes more crowded, prisoners become harder to control and attacks on prison guards become more frequent. Supporters of solitary confinement say that isolating the most dangerous and powerful inmates makes prisons safer for guards and other inmates. But critics say that solitary confinement is mental torture. Since the Constitution forbids “cruel and unusual punishment,” they argue that solitary confinement should be prohibited. Do you agree? Or is it more important to protect the right of the guards and other prisoners to be safe?
THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn’s class is discussing the use of solitary confinement in the prison system, and in particular its health effects. It turns out that scientists have actually studied the effects of isolation. The class read about a presentation on solitary confinement that some researchers gave at a conference. Ethan and Sumiko summarized some of the information the scientists shared:

Prisoners in isolation tend to become confused about who they are. They also suffer from high rates of depression, dizziness, rapid heartbeats, hallucinations, headaches, and suicidal thoughts. Additionally, prisoners in isolation tend to develop vision problems and lose weight.

Extreme stress from loss of personal contact can even cause parts of the brain to shrink over time. One important brain structure that can shrink this way is the hippocampus, which is involved in memory, decision-making, and control of emotion.

Activity:

Use Ethan and Sumiko’s report to list the ten effects of solitary confinement that you think are the most serious. Then, check the boxes to indicate whether each effect is physical, mental, or both.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects:</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Answers will vary.

One of the goals of the prison system is to make inmates better members of society when they are eventually released. How might solitary confinement affect this goal?
DEBATE THE ISSUE
Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A ❌ Solitary confinement should never be used.

OR

B ❌ Prisons should use solitary confinement when they think it is necessary.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

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Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

"Can you show me evidence in the text that..."

"I believe that..."

"You make a good point, but have you considered..."

"I agree with you, but..."
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

isolation | confinement | system | mental | solitary
Buying and selling alcohol was prohibited in the U.S. from 1920 to 1933. Alcohol was sold illegally during those years. Violent crime increased as sellers fought with each other. Now, however, selling alcohol to adults is not a violation of the law, and selling alcohol is no longer a source of violent crime. Some people have proposed that drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin also be legalized. Advocates of drug legalization suggest that the world of drugs would be safer if the criminal element were removed from selling them. They also argue that if drugs were legal, police could focus on more serious crimes. Furthermore, they point out that the government’s limited resources could then be used for improving schools and providing better health care rather than funding more jails for drug dealers.

In the last three decades, more than 80% of the prison population increase resulted from drug convictions. Most of those prisoners were minorities. African American Congressman Charles Rangel feels strongly that illegal drugs should not be legalized. He says that legalizing dangerous drugs like cocaine and heroin would kill even more young black men. He is outraged that the U.S. government has not made the drug problem a higher priority. Rangel thinks everyone should work together to unify and strengthen efforts to fight drug abuse and related crime. He believes that legalizing drugs is incompatible with initiatives aimed at improving the lives of urban youth.

Should we temporarily legalize drugs and see if crime levels go down? Or is the risk too great that more young people will become addicted to harmful substances?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS

decade (noun) ten years

Sample Sentence: In the decade from 1985 to 1995, more than 80% of the prison population increase resulted from drug convictions.

Turn and Talk: In your opinion, what was the highlight of the last decade?

incompatible (adjective) inconsistent; unable to exist together

Sample Sentence: Rangel believes that legalizing drugs is incompatible with efforts to improve the lives of urban youth.

Turn and Talk: Can everybody get along, or are some people incompatible with each other?

temporarily (adverb) for a while; not permanently

Sample Sentence: Some suggest temporarily legalizing drugs to see if crime levels go down.

Turn and Talk: Would you be able to temporarily give up sugary drinks like soda and juice?

unify (verb) to bring together

Sample Sentence: Rangel thinks everyone should work together to unify efforts to fight drug abuse.

Turn and Talk: What is an issue that unifies students at your school?

violation (noun) breaking of a rule; offense against something such as privacy or trust

Sample Sentence: Today, selling alcohol to adults is not a violation of the law.

Turn and Talk: What behaviors are considered a violation of your school’s rules?
Between 1998 and 2007, the number of juveniles (people under the age of 18) arrested for drug violations each year was around 200,000 (note that the baseline of the graph above is 180,000). Americans have unified in their desire to keep kids out of trouble, but are divided about the best way to do that. Should we fight harder to get rid of illegal drugs? Or should we legalize them, removing the criminal element? Is drug legalization incompatible with a functioning society?

Option 1: In what year(s) did the number of arrests exceed 202,000?

B. 2000 and 2003
C. 2000 and 2001
D. 2000

Option 2: In 1995, 39.9% of drug arrests were for marijuana. By 2007, the percentage of arrests for marijuana had risen to 47.4% of total drug arrests. While 5.3% of all drug arrests were for marijuana trafficking and sale, 42.1% were for marijuana possession. Are law enforcement officials temporarily focusing their efforts on marijuana possession? Or is this a trend that will continue? If 42.1% of all drug arrests were for marijuana possession, how many of the juveniles arrested in 2007 would you expect to have been arrested on this charge?

195,700 x .421 = about 82,390

Discussion Question: In 1971, President Nixon declared drug abuse “public enemy number one.” In that year, 108,100 juveniles were arrested for drug violations. Decades later, almost twice that many juveniles are being arrested each year for drug violations, and some are saying the “war on drugs” has been lost. What is our best strategy? Should we permit marijuana, and focus on policing more serious drugs? Without unifying drug laws nationwide, there could be problems. For example, California’s medical marijuana laws were incompatible with federal anti-drug laws. Medical marijuana stores were permitted by state law, but were still being raided by federal agents. If you were temporarily in charge of the nation’s drug policies, what strategy would you follow?
After a class discussion about drugs in Mr. Seemy’s class, Kyra and Victor look into the history of drinking laws and find out that decades ago, in the 1970s and 1980s, each state in the U.S. decided on its own drinking age. The drinking age was 18 in some states and 19, 20, or 21 in others. However, the National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 created a unified law for the whole country that made the drinking age 21.

Kyra and Victor report that some scientists think that 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds started to drink even more alcohol after this law was passed, a result that is incompatible with the law’s goal. Perhaps these lawbreakers wanted to violate the rule because it seemed too strict to them, or because they found breaking the rule exciting. Victor wonders if laws against drugs might have the same effect: Would legalizing drugs make the number of users go down? Kyra thinks not.

Mr. Seemy told Ms. Kahn about Kyra and Victor’s question about the unintended effect of rules. Mr. Seemy and Ms. Kahn decided to test the idea in the classroom by temporarily “legalizing” a behavior that is against the rules: For five weeks Mr. Seemy allowed cursing in the classroom and Ms. Kahn prohibited it. They kept track of how many incidents of cursing there were in each class over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of “Cursing in Class” Incidents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Seemy’s Class (cursing allowed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Kahn’s Class (cursing prohibited)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did Mr. Seemy and Ms. Kahn’s experiment show any differences between the two classes? Explain.

Yes. When cursing was “legalized” in Mr. Seemy’s class, the amount of cursing suddenly increased for one week and then dropped below the fairly steady level of cursing in Ms. Kahn’s class.

The data above are not strong enough to prove anything, but which of these claims do these data support more? Explain.

**Claim 1:** Prohibiting a behavior causes it to happen more.

**Claim 2:** Prohibiting a behavior causes it to happen less.

The data only supported Claim 2 for the first week. For the rest of the experiment, Mr. Seemy and Ms. Kahn’s data supported Claim 1. However, it would help to know how much cursing there had been in each class during the weeks leading up to the rule change.

Students often complain that school rules are incompatible with how they like to behave. Given the chance, would you rather attend a school with no rules?
SHOULD DRUGS BE LEGALIZED?

DEBATE THE ISSUE
Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

☐ Drugs should be legalized.

☐ Drugs should not be legalized.

☐ CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

Can you show me evidence in the text that...

You make a good point, but have you considered...

I believe that...

I agree with you, but...

I
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

decade  |  incompatible  |  temporarily  |  unify  |  violation

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Dan Snyder, owner of the Washington, D.C., NFL football team, has announced that he will “NEVER” change the team’s name from “redskins,” despite widespread objections to the name on the grounds that it is an ethnic slur. The term “redskin” stereotypes Native Americans based on skin color. Imagine the objections if Latinos were referred to as “brownskins” or Caucasians as “paleskins”!

Snyder’s defenders say the name dates back to an era when the term “redskin” was common in western movies and TV shows. They argue it is not meant to stigmatize or offend Native Americans any more than the names Cleveland Indians or Atlanta Braves or Kansas City Chiefs. Those teams have not changed their names, but they have modified their logos in response to complaints, removing pictures that implicitly stereotype Natives and substituting symbols like arrowheads and feathers. Well-known sportscaster Bob Costas points out that terms like Braves, Chiefs, and Warriors honor Native Americans, whereas “redskins” can only be considered a stigmatizing slur.

But why is “redskin” a particularly offensive ethnic term? According to many opponents, it was introduced in the 1800s as a derogatory name for Native Americans and thus still carries those negative connotations. Ray Halbritter, of the Oneida Indian Nation, explained why the term is offensive: “Its origin is hated... [It] was used against our people when we were forced off our lands at gunpoint.” On the other hand, not all Native Americans object to the term. Robert Green, former Chief of the Fredericksburg-area Patawomeck Tribe, said:

“You can’t rewrite history – yes there were some awful bad things done to our people over time, but naming the Washington football team the Redskins, we don’t consider to be one of those bad things.”

There are many terms that are used with intent to offend by some people but are not perceived as slurs. Some Latin Americans call U.S. citizens “yanquis” with derogatory intent, but most Americans don’t mind being referred to as Yankees. When white people use “the N-word,” it is considered a serious, perhaps unforgivable ethnic slur, but some black people use the word with each other with no negative connotations. Ethnic slurs are common, and many other terms can be offensive or friendly depending on how they are used. Perhaps the term “redskin” could be reclaimed as a badge of pride, as has happened for the term “gay.” Gay and queer used to be insults, but when gay men and women started promoting gay pride and queer theory, they redefined the connotations of the words from negative to positive. So calling someone “gay” is now not derogatory at all.

So should the word “redskin” and other terms that stereotype or stigmatize particular ethnic groups be eliminated from our speech? Or should we focus instead on getting rid of prejudice and intergroup conflicts that make such words offensive?

**Questions for Classroom Discussion:**
- Who are Native Americans? What do you know about their history?
- What does it mean for something to be offensive? How does it feel to be offended by something?
- What are some words or behaviors that you find offensive? Why?
- Who gets to decide if something is offensive?
- What is more offensive: an ethnic slur or a history of mistreatment? What is the link between these two?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS  *and alternate parts of speech

**derogatory** *(adjective)* insulting or disrespectful towards a person or group of people

➤ *Sample Sentence*: Mr. Lee’s class rules prohibited students from making derogatory comments.

➤ *Turn and Talk*: What do you do when someone makes a derogatory remark about someone you care about?

**stereotype** *(verb)* to mentally classify an entire group using a single characteristic

➤ *Sample Sentence*: The term “redskin” stereotypes Native Americans based on skin color – imagine the objections if Latinos were referred to as “brownskins” or Caucasians as “paleskins”!

➤ *Turn and Talk*: Does spending time with diverse groups of people encourage or discourage people from stereotyping others? Explain.

*stereotype* *(noun)* an unfair or untrue belief about an entire group of people

➤ *Sample Sentence*: Stereotypes about women have prevented them from advancing in the workplace.

➤ *Turn and Talk*: Where do stereotypes come from (TV, family, music, etc.)?

**connotation** *(noun)* the feeling or association suggested by a word

➤ *Sample Sentence*: “Redskin” was introduced in the 1800s to put down Native Americans and it still carries those negative connotations.

➤ *Turn and Talk*: What connotation does the word “family” have for you? Explain your answer.

**slur** *(noun)* an insulting or disrespectful name or remark

➤ *Sample Sentence*: There are many terms that get used with intent to offend but are not perceived as slurs.

➤ *Turn and Talk*: How would you respond if you heard one of your friends use a racial slur?

**stigmatize** *(verb)* to label or brand negatively

➤ *Sample Sentence*: They argue it is not meant to stigmatize or offend Native Americans any more than the names Cleveland Indians or Atlanta Braves or Kansas City Chiefs.

➤ *Turn and Talk*: Are some students at your school stigmatized for the clothes they wear? Explain your answer.
DO THE MATH

The debate over the name of the NFL football franchise the Washington Redskins was reignited in 2013. The term “redskins” is considered by some to be derogatory towards Native Americans, and dismissive of a past when they were stigmatized and nearly exterminated. Others, including the team’s owner, refute claims that the name is a slur; rather, they argue that the name promotes positive stereotypes about Natives such as bravery and strength. If the team does change its name, some fans would purchase new merchandise to support their team, which could potentially bring in large sums of money.

Option 1: In 2013, Forbes Magazine estimated that the Washington Redskins were worth $1.7 billion, making them the third most valuable NFL team after the Dallas Cowboys and New England Patriots. Which number represents 1.7 billion?

A. $1.7 \times 10^8$
B. $1.7 \times 10^9$
C. $17 \times 10^9$
D. $1.7 \times 10^{10}$

Option 2: About 1/3 of the money from jersey sales goes to the NFL, while the other 2/3 goes to retailers and athletic companies. Let $j =$ the number of jerseys sold and $c =$ the cost of each jersey. Write an expression that could be used to estimate the revenue that the NFL takes in from jersey sales. Then calculate how much revenue the NFL will receive from the sale of 10,000 jerseys if each football jersey costs $100.

\[ j \times (\frac{1}{3} \times c) \]
\[ 10,000 \times (\frac{1}{3} \times 100) = \text{about } $333,333 \]

Discussion Question: Those who support the term “redskins” claim that it is the opposite of a slur, and actually stereotypes Native Americans in a positive way. They say that when the term is paired with a winning sports team and the image of a dignified Native, it connotes strength and skill. Others argue that stereotypes are inherently derogatory, even when they seem to promote positive qualities. For example, Asian Americans are often stereotyped as good at math, which can lead to the stigmatization of those who struggle in math class. Can you think of a stereotype that is positive, or are stereotypes harmful by nature? Explain your answer.
THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Psychologist Mahzarin R. Banaji was surprised to find out that she is biased, meaning that she has prejudices against certain groups. The revelation came when Dr. Banaji was completing a computer-based task that she helped design, which asked her to associate black and white faces with positive and negative words. “It was stunning for me to discover that my hands were literally frozen when I had to associate black with good. It’s like I couldn’t find the key on the keyboard,” she recalled. This shocked Dr. Banaji, since as an immigrant, she is a member of a group that has been stigmatized and treated unfairly. She consciously avoids stereotyping groups and does not use racial slurs. So, how could someone like Dr. Banaji be biased?

Dr. Banaji is a doctor of psychology—the scientific study of the mind. Her research uses a computerized test called the Implicit Association Test to show that people can have opposing explicit and implicit attitudes. For example, a person who declares that people of all races are equally honest has explicit non-biased attitudes. However, the same person might more easily associate white faces with images of honesty and black faces with images of dishonesty, revealing implicit biases.

*Explicit* means clear and obvious.

*Implicit* means unspoken or hidden.

Give examples of how joy can be expressed explicitly and implicitly.

Next to each of the descriptions below, write whether the action reveals implicit or explicit attitudes about race.

1. A person looks at pictures of people of different races and associates light-skinned people with being American more frequently than dark-skinned people. ____________

2. A person answers “yes” to the question, “Are you biased?” ____________

3. An employer decides to hire a white person over an Asian person because of his beliefs about all Asian people. ____________

4. A father teaches his daughter to cross the street if she notices a black man walking behind her. ____________

5. Without realizing it, a principal gives harsher punishments to Hispanic students than to white students who break the same rule. ____________

How might supporting a team named “Redskins” affect people’s explicit and implicit attitudes towards Native Americans?
SHOULD THE NFL REQUIRE THE WASHINGTON REDSKINS TO CHANGE THEIR NAME?

derogatory | stereotype | connotation | slur | stigmatize

DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

☐ The Washington Redskins should not change their name.

OR

B

☐ The Washington Redskins should change their name.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

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Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

Can you show me evidence in the text that...

I believe that...

You make a good point, but have you considered...

I agree with you, but...

You make a good point, but have you considered...
SHOULD THE NFL REQUIRE THE WASHINGTON REDSKINS TO CHANGE THEIR NAME?

derogatory | stereotype | connotation | slur | stigmatize

TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

derogatory | stereotype | connotation | slur | stigmatize
This year, 16-year-old Jason decided not to return to high school. Jason is one of the 1.2 million American students who drop out of high school each year. Dropout rates for African American, Hispanic, and Native American students are higher than those for white or Asian students. Rates are also significantly higher in urban than suburban or rural districts – sometimes as high as 75%.

Some think dropping out is not a big issue, but others point out that it is an enormous national problem that has been persistent for many years and that now threatens the integrity of the American economy. High school dropouts are more likely to be unemployed or incarcerated. Dropouts who do get jobs typically earn less than graduates and are twice as likely to find themselves in poverty. Once students leave school, many are reluctant to return because they think it’s too late.

Young people drop out of high school for a variety of reasons. Students who are failing, missing many days of school, or having trouble getting along with their classmates and teachers are at a high risk for dropping out. Some high school dropouts say school is too boring. Those from low-income families may need to work to earn money. Others quit because they feel the academic standards are too high for them to reach.

While some adults think dropouts aren’t willing to work hard, many people think differently. They say that high school is the problem, not teenagers. They have some suggestions about how to decrease the dropout rate. One option would be to start the school day later so teens could sleep in. Alternatively, the school day could end earlier to give teenagers time for a part-time job after school – the half-school, half-work model. A third option would be to model high school after college, allowing students to choose their own classes and schedules. A final option would be to reduce high school to three years instead of four, enabling teenagers to look for full-time employment or go to college one year earlier.

What do you think? Should schools do more to prevent students from dropping out? Or do teens need to do more to meet the demands of high school? What might convince teens to stay in school?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS

**convince** (verb) to persuade

Sample Sentence: Something must be done to convince teens to stay in school.

Turn and Talk: Why do you think it is necessary to convince restaurant workers to wash their hands before handling food?

**enormous** (adjective) huge

Sample Sentence: Many people think that the amount of students dropping out of high school is an enormous problem.

Turn and Talk: Do you consider litter to be an enormous issue in your community?

**integrity** (noun) honesty; morality

Sample Sentence: Some think today’s teens lack integrity and would rather take the easy way out than put in an honest day’s work.

Turn and Talk: How do you know when a friend has integrity?

**persistent** (adjective) continuing despite difficulty; relentless; continuing longer than expected

Sample Sentence: There has been a persistent problem with students dropping out of high school in this country.

Turn and Talk: Why do you think people are told to be persistent when working towards a goal?

**reluctant** (adjective) unwilling; hesitant

Sample Sentence: Once students leave school, many are reluctant to return because they think it’s too late.

Turn and Talk: What is something that you are reluctant to do even though it might be good for you?
Although many people consider the national dropout rate an enormous problem, it can be difficult to get the facts. In some states, there have been persistent problems getting schools to accurately report how many students drop out. High dropout rates look bad, and when lots of students are dropping out, some schools are reluctant to tell the truth. If some school officials lack the integrity to be straightforward, how can we convince them to report the facts?

Option 1: In a school district in Texas, about 13,500 students are enrolled in eighth grade each year. But only 8,000 students graduate from high school each year. Based on these numbers, what percentage of the district’s eighth graders do not complete high school there?

A. about 20%
B. about 35%
C. about 41%
D. about 57%

Option 2: In the United States, there are over 1,000 high schools where fewer than 60% of students graduate. These schools are known as “dropout factories.” Half of all high school dropouts in the United States each year come from dropout factories.

a) Let $x$ be the number of students enrolled in a high school. Write an expression that represents the minimum number of students a school can graduate before it becomes a dropout factory.

$$0.6x$$

b) Can the district mentioned in Option 1 be considered a “dropout district”? Explain your answer.

Yes, because the school district graduated less than the 60% threshold.

$60\% \times 13,500 = 8,100 > 8,000$

$8,000 \div 13,500 = 59.3\% < 60\%$

Discussion Question: The persistent dropout problem has enormous consequences for America’s youth. Students who drop out face low wages and limited opportunities. To solve the dropout problem, we need to have the facts. Most school officials act with integrity when reporting their dropout rates, but some do not. How would you convince reluctant officials to be honest about how many students are dropping out?
Mr. Seemy and Ms. Kahn are worried about the high dropout rate at a nearby high school. They know that when students drop out, they take an enormous risk with their futures.

These two teachers have a lot of integrity and want to know what they can do that might help convince reluctant students to stay in school. They find data about this persistent problem in a report called “The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts.” It was released by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2006.

In this report, researchers John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio, Jr., and Karen Burke Morison asked dropouts directly what they believed would improve students’ chances of staying in school. Here is how they responded.

What Dropouts Believe Would Improve Students’ Chances

- Better teachers who keep classes interesting (81%)
- Smaller classes with more individual instruction (75%)
- Better communication between parents & school, get parents more involved (71%)
- Parents make sure their kids go to school every day (71%)
- Increase supervision at school; ensure students attend classes (70%)

Imagine Mr. Seemy and Ms. Kahn asked you to think of one specific recommendation for them that could help with the problem. What would you suggest? Remember to base your recommendation on this data or on other factual information.

Answers will vary.

Imagine that one of your good friends is persistent about wanting to drop out of school. What would you say to convince your friend to stay in school?
DEBATE THE ISSUE
What is the best solution to the high school drop out problem?

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

☐ High school should start later in the day.

OR

☐ High school should only be a half-day so students can work too.

OR

☐ High school students should be able to choose their classes and make their own schedules.

OR

☐ High school should only be three years instead of four.

OR

☐ [Create your own]

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

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Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

• Can you show me evidence in the text that...

• You make a good point, but have you considered...

• I believe that...

• I agree with you, but...
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

convince | enormous | integrity | persistent | reluctant
Ron Malin’s father and Serena Johnson’s father were each killed on the same day, 9/11/2001. Ron’s father died when terrorists flew an airplane into the building where he was working. Serena’s father was killed in front of his house in a drive-by shooting. To help Ron’s family recover, the government compensated them with three million dollars. Serena’s family got financial compensation, too. However, theirs was only three thousand dollars.

Some people say that if families experience equivalent tragedies, it is not fair to compensate them differently. They say that every victim’s family should receive the same amount. Many religions also support this view. These religions regard all human lives as equally valuable.

Crime victims’ families receive money from the government to pay for certain expenses caused by the crime. However, the government created a special fund to give larger sums to families of 9/11 victims. Many people say 9/11 victims deserve special treatment because they died during an attack on our country.

Some say families of 9/11 victims received high payments because many were wealthy. Others voice yet another concern. They say that government officials were worried that these families would sue the airlines. People who win lawsuits can receive enormous sums, many times the amount that Ron’s family received. With thousands of victims, the airlines could have gone bankrupt. The insurance companies who pay damages if airlines are successfully sued could have gone bankrupt too.

Although money can never bring back someone who has died, it can help a family recover from a tragedy. What do you think? Should victims’ families all receive the same compensation?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
- How do the sums that the two families received differ?
- What was the reason the government gave for the huge financial compensation given to the families of 9/11 victims?
- What are some ways that money could help a victim’s family recover?
- How is the idea of equal compensation related to a religious view?
- Why would the government worry about the airlines being sued?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

**compensation (noun)** something given as payment, or to make up for a loss, injury, or death

*Sample Sentence:* Serena’s family got financial compensation from the government when her father was killed in a drive-by shooting.

*Turn and Talk:* Do you think you deserve compensation for all the time you spend in school?

**financial (adjective)** having to do with money

*Sample Sentence:* After spending her allowance on movie tickets, Tara became aware of her financial situation and started watching movies at home.

*Turn and Talk:* What can you do to make sure that you won’t have financial problems when you are older?

**fund (noun)** a supply of money for a specific purpose

*Sample Sentence:* However, the government created a special fund to give larger amounts of money to families of 9/11 victims.

*Turn and Talk:* What can you do now to establish a college fund for when you graduate from high school?

*fund (verb)* to provide money for a specific purpose

*Sample Sentence:* Lily’s parents funded her school trip to Washington, D.C., but not her trip to the shopping mall.

*Turn and Talk:* Which would you fund first in your community: a new park or a new stadium? Why?

**recover (verb)** to return to normal; to regain strength; to get something back

*Sample Sentence:* These programs help victims recover after a tragedy.

*Turn and Talk:* Talk about a time when you or someone you know had to recover from an injury.

**sum (noun)** amount

*Sample Sentence:* The government gave larger sums to families of 9/11 victims.

*Turn and Talk:* What do you think is a fair sum of money to pay for school lunch?
DO THE MATH

Each state has a crime victim compensation program. These programs oversee funds to help crime victims or their families recover crime-related financial losses. Each state has its own rules. For example, Michigan’s crime victim compensation program will pay for funeral expenses, medical bills, and lost wages. However, the maximum award is $25,000. The average sum awarded is $6,964.

Option 1: The federal government set up a special victim compensation fund for September 11th victims and their families. This fund awarded an average of $1.8 million to each victim or family. In the state of Michigan, the maximum award a crime victim or their family can receive is $25,000. How many $25,000 awards would it take to total $1.8 million?

A. 7  
B. 72  
C. 720  
D. 1,700

Option 2: The average sum awarded by the federal September 11th victim compensation fund was $1.8 million. The highest sum awarded was $7.9 million. In 2014, the median household income in the U.S. was $53,891. If $50,000 can support an average household for a year, how many years of support would $1.8 million provide? How many years of support would $7.9 million provide? (Hint: To solve quickly, use exponents!)

\[
\frac{(1.8 \times 10^6)}{(5 \times 10^4)} = 36 \text{ years of support}
\]

\[
\frac{(7.9 \times 10^6)}{(5 \times 10^4)} = 158 \text{ years of support}
\]

Discussion Question: Victim compensation programs help victims recover after a tragedy. The funds awarded cover costs like medical bills for wounded people, funeral expenses for murder victims, and lost wages. When lost wages are considered, people who have earned more money receive more financial help than people who have earned less. Is this fair? Or should we develop a different system that awards an equal sum to each victim?
THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn’s class is having a lively debate about the compensation fund for the families of victims after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Ms. Kahn explains that government compensation is meant to replace victims’ income and help families recover financially.

“In a system like that,” says Ms. Kahn, “not everyone gets the same financial compensation. Part of the goal is to replace the future income of the person who was killed or disabled. Therefore, the families of lower earners get smaller sums than the families of higher earners.”

“That’s not fair,” says Alyssa. “Rich people and poor people are worth the same.”

Many of her classmates agree, but Daylen says, “It’s not about what people are worth as human beings, it’s just about replacing the future income that families have lost. And that lost income isn’t necessarily equal.”

“The amount of compensation doesn’t just vary based on someone’s past income,” Ms. Kahn adds. “The type of crime is also considered when deciding how much to compensate a victim or their family. Let’s look at some recent data about how much money the national victim compensation fund has given for different types of crimes.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Category</th>
<th>Total Number of Paid Claims</th>
<th>Total Amount Paid</th>
<th>Average Compensation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>29,369</td>
<td>$119,772,572</td>
<td>$4,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>$446,164</td>
<td>$3,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>132,210</td>
<td>$430,614,819</td>
<td>$3,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>17,358</td>
<td>$36,219,991</td>
<td>$2,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>23,890</td>
<td>$30,699,800</td>
<td>$1,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Abuse</td>
<td>50,216</td>
<td>$48,257,983</td>
<td>$961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015 OVC Report to the Nation

What word in the table indicates that victims of the same type of crime did not necessarily receive the same amount of money? **Average**

Based on this data, Alyssa concludes that victims of terrorism always received more compensation than victims of robbery. Is she correct? Explain.

No. Victims of terrorism received more than victims of robbery on average. Compensation varies, and we cannot conclude that every victim of terrorism received more than every victim of robbery.

Why do you think Ms. Kahn thought it was important to share this information with her students?

Why might more money be given to victims of certain types of crimes than others?
DEBATE THE ISSUE
Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

☑ Victims’ families should all receive equal compensation from the government.

OR

☑ Compensation should vary based on the type of attack.

OR

☑ Compensation should vary based on the amount of money the victim was making before the crime.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Can you show me evidence in the text that...

You make a good point, but have you considered...

I agree with you, but...

I believe that...

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

compensation | financial | fund | recover | sum

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Sam Ellis was a strong supporter of one candidate for President. He agreed with all of her positions. He planned to vote for her in the election. Then, one morning, Sam read in the newspaper that his candidate had once been caught with marijuana. This had happened back when the candidate was in high school, over 25 years earlier. Sam was disappointed. He wondered if she still deserved his vote.

During campaigns, we learn a lot about political candidates. Some have abused alcohol or drugs. Some have cheated on their spouses or stolen money. Do we have a right to know personal details about political candidates? Some people say yes. They point out that a candidate is asking for the public's trust. They ask how we, the public, can understand a candidate's ethics if we don't know about his or her personal life.

Others think that if we exclude everyone who ever made a mistake, we might leave out people who would make good leaders. Some people think we should only focus on how candidates will handle crucial issues like terrorism, education, and global warming, not how they handle their marriage or their private mistakes. Should some parts of a candidate's personal life be off-limits?

Imagine this: One of your friends posted a photograph of you being a clown and doing something very embarrassing at a party (use your imagination). If one day you decided to run for public office, you could be sure that this photo would be displayed in newspapers, on television, and all over the internet. One funny moment from years earlier would follow you into your future. Would you feel like your privacy had been invaded? Or would you believe that the public has the right to know about your teenage behavior?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

candidate (noun) a person being considered for a position

Sample Sentence: Sam Ellis was a strong supporter of one candidate for president.

Turn and Talk: What do you think makes for a strong presidential candidate?

campaign (noun) a political contest; a series of activities to achieve a goal

Sample Sentence: During campaigns, we learn a lot about political candidates.

Turn and Talk: What are some things that candidates do during a presidential campaign?

*campaign (verb) to work towards a goal (such as winning an election)

Sample Sentence: Some countries do not allow politicians to campaign on television because they do not want wealthier candidates to have an unfair advantage.

Turn and Talk: Do you think politicians should be allowed to campaign on television? Why or why not?

ethics (noun) beliefs about what is morally right

Sample Sentence: Some people ask how we, the public, can understand a candidate’s ethics if we don’t know about his or her personal life.

Turn and Talk: What are some examples of ethics in school?

issue (noun) a matter of public concern; an important topic of debate

Sample Sentence: Some people think we should focus on how candidates will handle crucial issues like terrorism, education, and global warming, not how they handle their marriage or their private mistakes.

Turn and Talk: Which issue needs to be addressed more urgently in your community: teen smoking or teen pregnancy? Explain.

*issue (verb) to give out or supply

Sample Sentence: The mayor issued 100 extra building permits to allow for more construction in the city.

Turn and Talk: Would students learn more if they were issued digital tablets to use in the classroom? Explain your answer.

display (verb) to show something; to put something where people can see it

Sample Sentence: If one day you decided to run for public office, you could be sure that photos from your past would be displayed in newspapers, on television, and all over the internet.

Turn and Talk: Where in your school are awards displayed?

*display (noun) a performance or exhibit

Sample Sentence: The soldier was honored with a medal for his display of courage on the battlefield.

Turn and Talk: Should athletes be disciplined for making emotional displays when they don’t agree with a referee’s call?
DO THE MATH

In 2008, New York Governor David Paterson called a press conference to admit to an ethical mistake. Years earlier, he confessed, he had several affairs while he was married to his wife. Some people said that his honesty was a display of good ethics. Others wondered why he chose to put his mistakes on display. When it comes to politicians and political candidates, which issues should be private, and which should be public?

In March and April 2008, New Yorkers were asked the following question: Do you think the press should report if a married politician has an affair? Below are the most common responses.

- 33% said: Yes, always.
- 34% said: Only if the politician used public money to pay for the affair.
- 15% said: Only if the politician ran a campaign based on family values.

**Option 1:** How many New Yorkers thought that the press should always report if a married politician has an affair?

A. about one in two
B. about one in three
C. about one in four
D. about one in five

**Option 2:** In the same poll mentioned above, 40% of respondents said that the press should report illegal drug use by a politician under any circumstances, even if the drug use occurred when the person was much younger. Based on this information, were New Yorkers more tolerant of politicians who use drugs, or of politicians who have extramarital affairs? Explain.

Based on the statistics given, Americans are more tolerant of politicians who have extramarital affairs. 40% want drug use made public under any circumstances while only 33% want affairs made public under any circumstances.

**Discussion Question:** When someone decides to become a candidate for political office, are they deciding to put their marriage or relationship on display? Or should cheating on your spouse only become an issue if it involves some other unethical behavior directly related to the candidate’s public role, like stealing money or running a hypocritical campaign?
Mr. Seemy has been discussing an upcoming election with his students. He is still undecided about which candidate he will support even though the campaign is nearing its end. He is unhappy about some ugly comments one of the candidates wrote on a social media site. Even though the comments were made 10 years ago, the candidate’s opponent is displaying the information and is claiming that it is an important issue of ethics for voters to consider.

Mr. Seemy doesn’t like the comments, but he also questions whether it’s ethical to dig through a candidate’s old posts. He wonders what his students think about the issue, so he creates the following survey.

**Ethics Survey**

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = totally unethical and 5 = highly ethical), please evaluate the following behaviors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Totally Unethical</th>
<th>Highly Ethical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lying about your age on Facebook.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading a text message on your friend’s phone without their permission.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a $20 bill on the hallway floor and keeping it.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting that a restaurant has bad food.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing a photo of someone without their permission.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not challenging a rumor even though you know it’s untrue.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching through old posts online to try to find something embarrassing about a political candidate.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think of two more behaviors and ask a classmate to evaluate them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Totally Unethical</th>
<th>Highly Ethical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*When you use social media, do you ever decide not to display something because it might come back to haunt you later on? Explain.*
POLITICS AND PRIVACY: WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT A CANDIDATE?

DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

- The public should know about a candidate’s ethics.
  Candidates should be prepared to have their personal lives on display.

OR

- Only information about a candidate’s illegal activities should be revealed during a campaign.

OR

- Candidates’ personal lives should stay private.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

- Can you show me evidence in the text that...
- You make a good point, but have you considered...
- I believe that...
- I agree with you, but...

You make a good point, but have you considered...
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.
Jessica made a mistake. She sent her boyfriend a nude photo of herself using her cell phone. Without her consent, her boyfriend sent the message to other students in their school. An incident like this can be hurtful to the student in the photo. It can make it hard for them to concentrate on schoolwork, and will be a constant reminder of a bad decision.

Sending sexually explicit pictures using a cell phone is sometimes called “sexting.” A recent survey showed that one third of teens in the U.S. had sent this kind of inappropriate picture.

It is not just teens that engage in this kind of risky behavior. Anthony Weiner, a popular seventh-term Congressman from New York, sexted a number of women. When the photos were disseminated widely, he was forced to resign from Congress and publicly apologize to his wife.

Sexting can have legal consequences. Depending on the ages of the senders and receivers, they can be charged with disseminating child pornography. In one case, six middle school students on Cape Cod in Massachusetts faced charges for disseminating a photo showing a semi-nude schoolmate. Their parents argued that such charges would be extreme. They said that what began as a teenage mistake should not end up as a criminal charge on their sons’ permanent records.

Who is accountable for sexting? Should students involved in sexting be charged as criminals, or should their acts simply be seen as teenage mistakes?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS

accountable (adjective) responsible for something; obliged to explain one’s actions

Sample Sentence: Some say that the parents of these students should be held accountable for their children’s text messages.

Turn and Talk: At what age are children old enough that their parents should not be accountable for their misbehavior?

inappropriate (adjective) not proper or suitable for the situation

Sample Sentence: A survey showed that one third of teens in the U.S. had sent inappropriate pictures.

Turn and Talk: Do you think texting while talking to someone else is inappropriate?

constant (adjective) not changing; continuous; happening all the time

Sample Sentence: The humiliation was constant. Students called her names day after day.

Turn and Talk: How might constant humiliation affect a person?

disseminate (verb) to scatter, spread, or broadcast

Sample Sentence: The media disseminates information about the latest national disasters, like hurricanes and tornados.

Turn and Talk: In your opinion, who should be in charge of disseminating information to you about drugs and alcohol: a teacher in school or your parents? Why?

legal (adjective) having to do with the law; allowed by law

Sample Sentence: In some states, texting while driving can have legal consequences.

Turn and Talk: Should drivers caught texting while driving face legal consequences? Why or why not?
According to a recent poll, three in 10 young people have sexted nude or partially nude photos of themselves. In several high-profile cases around the country, prosecutors have worked to hold students legally accountable for forwarding inappropriate photos. A 14-year-old in Washington suffered constant harassment when her explicit photo went viral. She had sent the photo to her boyfriend, and when they broke up, he sent it to one female friend. This friend forwarded it to her entire contacts list, along with a message calling the student in the picture a terrible name. After police got involved, three students were charged with disseminating child pornography.

Option 1: Fourteen percent of male students and 9% of female students report having seen a sext that has been passed around. Which of the following is true?

A. about 1 in 10 students has seen a sext that has been passed around  
B. about 1 in 5 students has seen a sext that has been passed around  
C. about 1 in 20 students has seen a sext that has been passed around  
D. about 1 in 25 students has seen a sext that has been passed around

Option 2: Twenty percent of young people say that a friend has forwarded a text or email without permission. In one case, a student made a mistake and sent an inappropriate photo to his girlfriend at noon. By 1 p.m. she had shared it with two friends (two more people, for a total of three). By 2 p.m. each of those friends had shared it with two other friends (four more people, for a total of seven). If things continue at this rate, by what time will their entire class of 100 students have seen the picture? (Hint: Try making a table!)

By 6 p.m., all 100 students will have seen the picture.

Discussion Question: Many students have constant access to cell phones and the internet, and some inappropriate use is inevitable. But when a photo is disseminated that humiliates a student, what is the appropriate response? In the case of the 14-year-old in Washington, prosecutors decided that three students were most responsible for spreading the picture, and held them legally accountable. But when hundreds of students have seen a photo, and many of them have forwarded it, is it fair to single out only a few? Some parents complained that the original sender should be held accountable, because she sent the photo to her boyfriend in the first place. What do you think?
Ms. Kahn has been noticing lots of news stories about “sexting.” Some stories say that parents aren’t holding their children accountable for actions that are inappropriate for their age. Some talk about legal consequences. In all of the stories, the fact that 20% of teens are sexting remains constant.

“Says who?” Ms. Kahn thinks. “This statistic is widely disseminated. But where did it come from?”

Ms. Kahn does some research and discovers that the “20% of teens” statistic is based on a single study. And worse yet, other researchers have been saying that the study was wrong. Ms. Kahn decides to find out for herself if her own students are sexting. She knows that this is a sensitive topic, so she has to think carefully about the most appropriate way to collect the data. She has to consider that her students might not answer truthfully if they feel they will be identified.

Ms. Kahn is having trouble thinking of how to collect the data in a convenient way that is also accurate and anonymous.

Come up with a step-by-step procedure that you could recommend to Ms. Kahn to collect her data.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Answers will vary.

Compare your method with another student’s. Whose do you think would be most accurate? Most convenient? Most confidential?
DEBATE THE ISSUE

Think back to the scenario presented at the beginning of this unit, where Jessica’s boyfriend distributed a nude photo of her without her permission. Considering what you have learned about sexting, what should be done?

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

☐ The students who disseminated Jessica’s photo should be held legally accountable.

OR

☐ Jessica is the only person accountable. She sent the photo first.

OR

☐ No one should be held legally accountable for disseminating the photo.

CREATE YOUR OWN

☐ ____________________________

☐ ____________________________

☐ ____________________________

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

☐ ____________________________

☐ ____________________________

☐ ____________________________

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

"Can you show me evidence in the text that..."

"You make a good point, but have you considered..."

"I agree with you, but..."

"I believe that..."
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

accountable | disseminate | constant | inappropriate | legal

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Dating violence is a pattern of emotional, verbal, sexual, and/or physical abuse intended to control a girlfriend or boyfriend. Most victims are female, but females can be abusers as well. According to loveisrespect.org, one in three adolescents experience verbal or physical abuse from a dating partner. The rates are the same for LGBTQ couples. Even though about 72% of 8th and 9th graders state they are “dating,” this national problem is rarely discussed. Only 33% of teenage victims tell someone else what is happening to them.

Dating violence occurs among adults as well. In February 2014, a cell phone video surfaced showing football player Ray Rice dragging his unconscious fiancée, Janay Palmer, out of an elevator. He was later charged with aggravated assault. The NFL officially suspended Rice for two games and there was immediate criticism that his punishment was too light. Several months later, a video taken from the security camera in the elevator showed Ray punching Janay in the face and knocking her out. The Ravens fired Ray because the video showed that his original story distorted the truth.

Abusers often accuse victims of triggering their anger, implying that the victim “caused” the violence. This tactic makes victims blame themselves and discourages them from seeking medical or legal help. In fact, Janay publicly apologized for her part in the attack, saying that she had “agitated” Ray. Many commentators were critical of Janay and her statement, wondering why she hadn’t left Ray and pressed charges against him.

Imagine that, as you are leaving the movies, you happen to see your friend being yelled at in a threatening manner by her partner. You pause to make eye contact with her, but she won’t look at you, so you leave. The next day you ask your friend about her partner’s behavior. She says, “It’s just like that sometimes. Don’t worry.” You recall seeing some bruising on her arms that she had trouble explaining. After witnessing the episode at the movie theater, you are wondering if she is being abused.

What would you do in this situation? Is it your responsibility to report your suspicions even if your friend denies being abused?

Questions for Classroom Discussion:
- Do you think the NFL gave Ray Rice an appropriate punishment? Why or why not?
- How do abusers get victims to blame themselves?
- How is physical abuse different from verbal and emotional abuse?
- What are some signs that someone is being abused by their partner?
USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

**assault** *(verb)* to attack suddenly or violently

→ *Sample Sentence:* At first, neither girl could believe that the beloved pop music singer physically assaulted his girlfriend.

→ *Turn and Talk:* What should happen in school when a student physically assaults another student?

**assault** *(noun)* an attack

→ *Sample Sentence:* Some gun owners feel that any law that limits access to guns is an assault on their freedom.

→ *Turn and Talk:* Is the government reading your emails and text messages an assault on your privacy? Explain.

**abuse** *(verb)* to inflict harm

→ *Sample Sentence:* One in three adolescents is physically, emotionally, or verbally abused by a dating partner.

→ *Turn and Talk:* How can someone verbally abuse another person?

**abuse** *(noun)* harmful treatment

→ *Sample Sentence:* Erika became a vegetarian because she does not want to contribute to animal abuse.

→ *Turn and Talk:* Is paying employees a low wage a form of abuse? Explain.

**trigger** *(verb)* to make something happen

→ *Sample Sentence:* Sometimes people blame the victim of dating violence by saying he or she did something that triggered the assault.

→ *Turn and Talk:* What is something that could trigger a bully to physically or verbally harm someone?

**trigger** *(noun)* something that causes something else to happen

→ *Sample Sentence:* Pictures of snakes were a trigger for Marie: Upon seeing them she became nervous and upset.

→ *Turn and Talk:* What foods might act as triggers for people with nut allergies?

**distort** *(verb)* to misrepresent or give false meaning to

→ *Sample Sentence:* The pop star’s attitude toward women and violence may have been distorted due to his upbringing.

→ *Turn and Talk:* Why might a candidate running for office distort the truth about his or her past? Discuss with your partner.

**physical** *(adjective)* of or involving the body

→ *Sample Sentence:* Bruises and broken bones are evidence of physical abuse.

→ *Turn and Talk:* Name some sports that are more physical than golf.
assault | abuse | trigger | distort | physical

DO THE MATH

Many dating violence victims have distorted ideas about relationships. They may think that jealous behavior and even physical assaults are ways of showing love. They may blame themselves for triggering verbal or physical abuse. Violence prevention programs urge teens to recognize that mean and controlling behavior has no place in a healthy relationship and can lead to more serious abuse. Loveisrespect.org provides the following dating violence statistics:

- Each year, 1 in 3 adolescents is verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a dating partner.
- 1 in 10 students report being physically hurt by a girlfriend or boyfriend.

Option 1: What percentage of students have been physically hurt by a girlfriend or boyfriend?

A. 10%
B. 15%
C. 20%
D. 25%

Option 2: In a group of 5 students, what is the likelihood that there are NO victims of any form of abuse by a dating partner?

2 out of 3 students (67%) are not victims. .67 x .67 x .67 x .67 x .67 = .135, so there is about a 13.5% chance that there are no victims in the group.

Discussion Question: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 72% of 8th and 9th graders date. In your opinion, do students understand healthy relationships or do they have distorted ideas about how dating partners should act? Do students know which behaviors constitute abuse? Which do you think is a more common problem: physical assault or emotional abuse?
THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Mr. Seemy’s class is discussing dating violence. He mentions that some researchers think this kind of abuse stems from distorted ideas about gender. “Some young men believe that ‘being a man’ means solving arguments with physical force. These men might not know how to solve their problems with words, and then a disagreement can trigger an assault.”

“I don’t think male teenagers are like that,” said Pedro, “even if they become more like that as they grow older. And I have an idea of how I might collect some data!”

Here is Pedro’s plan for his exploration:

Procedure: On 10 cards, write down 5 words that are connected to violence and 5 words that are neutral. Ask male teenagers to sort the cards into categories as quickly as possible. The 4 categories are male, female, both, and neither. Then ask men in their 20s, 30s, and 40s to do the same thing. Compare results to see if older men place more of the violent words in the “male” category than younger men do.

Pedro could label one ellipse male, the other female, their intersection both, and the area outside the ellipses neither. Study subjects could place the cards to indicate their associations.

If Pedro asked you for advice to make his investigation more scientific, what would you tell him?
DEBATE THE ISSUE

Think back to the scenario presented at the beginning of this unit, where you suspected that your friend was being abused by her partner. Considering what you have learned about dating violence, what is the best way to help your friend?

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

☐ Try to convince her to leave the relationship.

OR

☐ Try to convince her to talk to the school counselors.

OR

☐ Tell her parents.

OR

☐ Call the police and report the suspected abuse.

OR

☐ ____________________________________________

☐ ____________________________________________

☐ ____________________________________________

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

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___________________________________________________

Think back to the scenario presented at the beginning of this unit, where you suspected that your friend was being abused by her partner. Considering what you have learned about dating violence, what is the best way to help your friend?

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:

"Can you show me evidence in the text that..."
TAKE A STAND

Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

assault | abuse | trigger | distort | physical

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## Word Generation | Series 1 | Part B

### FOCUS WORDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1.13</th>
<th>advocate</th>
<th>contrary</th>
<th>prohibit</th>
<th>release</th>
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<tr>
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<td>intervention</td>
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