



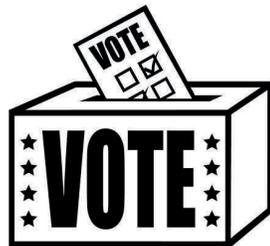
Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?

GETTING ORIENTED

The weekly passage covers issues related to Internet safety. Here is some information that might be helpful to students less familiar with the topic.

Legal Ages

In the United States, an 18-year-old is considered a legal adult. This means they are old enough to legally work, vote, marry, join the military, and give sexual consent. If a young person is under 18, they can get written consent or permission from their parents or legal guardians for some purposes. The idea is that, at 18, most young people are old enough to make thoughtful, mature decisions. Their parents are no longer responsible for them. The age of 18, as the legal adult age, has changed over the years. For example, the legal age to vote in the United States used to be 21. Then, in 1971, the 26th Amendment to the Constitution was passed, changing the legal age to vote to 18. Supporters of this amendment argued that, if young men and women could begin military service and possibly be killed at the age of 18, they should be old enough to vote, as well.



Social Networking

The first social networking sites began in 1994 and 1995. The idea was simply to have easier interaction, particularly for business people. Online networking was very good for people who did business internationally and had major time differences in their workdays. Chat rooms were created so that people could easily discuss their ideas about many different topics. In the late 1990s, more sophisticated or advanced features were developed to help users with similar interests to find each other. Online networking quickly became a mainstream internet activity for anyone interested in communicating with others regarding any interest or activity around the world. Social networking websites and phone applications came to be called "social media", as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others became more and more widely used. Social media is now an important method for connecting remotely with friends and family. Companies and organizations use it to promote their products or ideas, and many people even get their news updates from social media. There are now over 2.46 billion social media users across the world.

Predators

The word *predator* comes from the word *prey*. The definition of the word predator is, "any organism that exists by *preying* on or harming others." Many animals in the animal kingdom prey on other animals for their survival. A lion, for example, is a predator of other smaller animals that they kill for food. Among humans, this word has come to have a sexual connotation or meaning. An online predator is an adult who uses the internet to connect with children or teens, usually for illegal or abusive purposes.





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EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
Teens	Most teens believe that they are old enough to make their own decisions on the internet. Many have their own smart phones and don't want to be monitored or restricted by their parents or by social networking websites. Some young people think it is exciting to get to know strangers online. They don't feel fearful since they believe they can stop chatting with anyone they aren't enjoying. They feel that it is their right to be able to use the internet and talk to who they want.	Some teens think that social networking sites should be responsible for protecting users from online predators. They may feel that these sites profit from their use and that they should put more of that money back into making their websites safer. These teens believe they should be able to talk and connect to their friends through social networking sites without worrying about predators.
Parents	Although most parents are probably in favor of websites monitoring teens' access, they may believe it is their own responsibility to protect their children. They believe they have the ability to talk to their teens about the dangers of online predators and to set safe boundaries. These parents feel their children are aware of the dangers of getting involved with someone they don't know and will obey household rules about internet use. They may believe that their teenagers' use of social networking is an unavoidable part of modern life. Some parents may also monitor their children's cell phone and internet use.	Many parents believe that websites such as Facebook have a social responsibility to protect young people until they are 18 years old. They may believe social networking sites should restrict teens' access, verify users' real identities, or put more resources into monitoring for online predators. They do not think young people are sophisticated enough to make safe decisions when dealing with strangers. Their biggest argument is that no one knows whether people in social networking sites are telling the truth.
Producers of Social Networking Websites	Social networking producers may not want the responsibility of trying to protect teens from online predators. They set up their networks for purposes that they believe are useful and enjoyable and may have lots of money at stake. They may feel that it is parents' and teens' responsibility to protect themselves and that monitoring everyone on their site would be too difficult or expensive.	Some producers of social networks may feel an obligation to protect minors and may put up restrictions and monitor users as much as possible. However, these producers may worry that teens can get around any restrictions or that they will just switch to using a less-protected website. They may say it is not possible to protect everyone.

Additional Information

- One in five U.S. teens who use the internet say they have received an unwanted sexual solicitation.
 - 75% of children are willing to share personal information online about themselves and their family in exchange for goods and services.
 - 77% of the targets for online predators are age 14 or older. Another 22% are ages 10-13.
 - Contact with online predators happens mostly in chat rooms, on social media, or in the chat feature of a multiplayer game.
 - 24% of Americans say that they are not at all confident in their ability to use privacy settings on social networking sites.
 - Only 5% of online predators pretend they're kids. Most reveal that they're older, which is appealing to 12-to-15-year-olds who are most often targeted.
- Statistics about Online Predators
www.sentrypc.com/statistics.htm
- Common Sense Media: Facts about Online Predators
www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/the-facts-about-online-predators-every-parent-should-know
- Making the Internet Safer for Children and Families
http://enough.org/stats_social_media
- Online Exploitation
<http://www.missingkids.com/theissues/onlineexploitation>



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ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Features of Academic Text: *Dense and concise*

Word Generation's weekly passages do not always use academic language. In fact, they can be used to illustrate the differences between academic and more informal texts. For example, the four highlighted sentences in the second paragraph provide an example of more informal writing. Academic writing could express these ideas more concisely with fewer sentences.

To practice this, ask students to look at the highlighted sentences and try to rewrite them into a single sentence. Here is one way to rewrite it:

"Older adults have posed as teenagers on Facebook in order to befriend teenagers and request their personal details or make sexual comments."

Sixteen-year-old Matt describes himself as a 24-year-old intellectual on his Facebook profile. He says that it's easier to be taken seriously if people don't know they are talking to a 16-year-old. Matt's case is an example of how easy it is to lie on social networking websites.

Matt's lie may seem harmless, but some lies can put people in danger.

Sometimes 40- and 50-year-olds pose as teenagers on Facebook. Sometimes they contact teenagers through the website to try to become their friends. Sometimes they say sexual things. Sometimes they will ask for personal information, such as a telephone number or an address. They are looking for someone to harm or exploit, and they think lonely or insecure teens are prime targets. These adults are called online predators.

It is sometimes difficult for a teenager to know how to deal with strangers online. Many teenagers try to have as many Facebook friends and Instagram followers as possible. They often accept any "friend request."

Some people think Facebook should be responsible for protecting teens from online predators. They say that Facebook needs to do more to ensure that people are not posing as someone else. For example, they believe that Facebook should find a method to check users' real identities. Others believe that Facebook should raise the minimum age to 18 instead of the current limit of 13. Raising the minimum age will not stop imposters, but might make teenagers and parents more aware of the dangers. Moreover, 18-year-olds are legal adults and should be able to use Facebook safely.

Others say Facebook cannot do any more than it is already doing. There is no reliable method to check a user's real identity. If Facebook raises the minimum age, teens might turn to **unmonitored** websites. These websites may be even more dangerous. Some think middle and high school students should have their own social networking site that requires the safeguard of a school-affiliated email address.

Some think that schools have enough to do and it would be too difficult and costly for them to protect teens from online predators. They think parents are responsible for keeping their children safe by monitoring their internet use. For example, putting the family computer in a common space, such as the living room or family den, is one way that parents can monitor internet activities.

What do you think? Who should protect teens from online predators?



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GENERATING WORDS

Clarifying Meaning – roots and multiple parts of speech

prime

The word **prime** has a variety of meanings and should be examined carefully in order to be used correctly. The root of **prime** comes from the Latin *prima* meaning first.

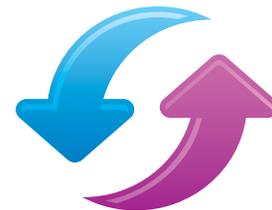
Look **prime** up in the dictionary, and you will see that it can be a noun, an adjective, or a verb.

<p>prime (noun) - the first or most important part of something</p> <p>The athlete was in the prime of his life when he was arrested for having drugs.</p>	<p>prime (adjective) - the best or most important</p> <p>Teens are a prime target for internet predators.</p>	<p>to prime (verb) - to prepare or make something ready</p> <p>My teacher primed us for the field trip by explaining everything we would see at the museum.</p>
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Here are some other ways that you may see or hear the word *prime* or variations of the word.

- **prime minister** -- the leader of a government (the first minister)
- **prime numbers** -- a number greater than 1 and exactly divisible only by 1 and itself
- **primer** -- a children's book for the time when a child learns to read
- **primary** -- first stage of development or beginning school grades
- A person in his/her **prime** is in the most important, strongest time of life.
- A **primitive** tool is something that people used thousands of years ago or something that is very old and does not make use of modern technology.

In a group or with a partner, think of other words that contain this root. Try to use the words in a sentence, below.



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DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

What's **wrong** with this conversation?



Paired Academic Conversation: Elaboration

We often have conversations because we want to understand something better or learn more. In order to make this understanding happen, people must have a few skills. One skill that people need is to **challenge** or **question** more. In order for you and your conversation partner to have a new and better understanding of the topic, you need to challenge each other.

Adults should just not talk to kids on the internet.	
	Really?
Yeah. They should only talk to other adults.	
	Are you sure?
Yes. That's why I said it.	
	Well...
Is there something you're not saying to me?	

Words and phrases that people say when they need to challenge someone:

- I am not sure that... will work because... But I do agree that...
- I wonder if that is even possible to...
- Perhaps, but it might be more feasible to...
- Maybe a middle ground might be...
- While I understand why you say.... have you considered...
- Why do you think that?
- What do you mean by...

Words and phrases that people say when they are responding to a challenge:

- Let me explain my reason...
- I think we can meet in the middle if you will agree that...
- I hadn't thought of that, but...
- I originally thought... but now...

Directions: Have an academic conversation with your partner about who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators. Partner A should read any of the statements below. Partner B should ask for elaboration by using some of the words and phrases above. Partner A responds. Switch roles.

Statement Card

- ➔ "Online predators pose a huge threat to young people using the internet."
- ➔ "The minimum age for using social network sites should be 18."
- ➔ "The government should monitor and prosecute all people who lie online."
- ➔ "Parents should be required to monitor and have access to their children's accounts."

Points I want to remember:

- ➔ _____
- ➔ _____
- ➔ _____
- ➔ _____