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WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING TEENS FROM ONLINE PREDATORS?

Word Generation - Unit 3.15

Focus Words

pose | contact | prime | minimum | unmonitored

WEEKLY PASSAGE

Sixteen-year-old Matt describes himself as a 24-year-old intellectual on his MySpace profile. He says it is “easier to be taken seriously if people don’t know they’re talking to a 16 year-old” (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Matt’s story 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 forty- and fifty-year-olds **pose** as teenagers on MySpace. 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. The adults 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 MySpace friends as possible. They often accept any “friend request.”

Some people think MySpace should be responsible for protecting teens from online predators. They say that MySpace needs to do more to ensure that people are not posing as someone else. For example, they believe that MySpace should find a method to check users’ real identities. Others believe that MySpace should raise the minimum age to 18 instead of the current limit, 14. Raising the **minimum** age will not stop imposters, but might make teenagers and parents more aware of the dangers.



Moreover, eighteen-year-olds are legal adults and should be able to use MySpace safely.

Others say MySpace cannot do any more than it is already doing. There is no method to check a user’s real identity. If MySpace raises the minimum age, teens might go 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 has the safeguard of a school-affiliated email address.

Some think that the 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 teen’s 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 their internet activities.

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

TEACHER: Discussion Questions

- ▶ Who are online predators according to the article? Are there other online predators?
- ▶ According to the article, who are considered prime targets for online predators?
- ▶ Why would unmonitored websites be more dangerous than MySpace?
- ▶ According to the article, why do some teens accept friend requests from people they don’t know?
- ▶ How can parents monitor their children’s internet use?
- ▶ What do people lie about on MySpace? Why do they lie?

PLEASE NOTE:
THE STUDENT VERSION OF THIS
PAGE IS FORMATTED
DIFFERENTLY

Unit 3.15

Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?

FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

pose : (verb) pretend to be what one is not; present

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

contact : (verb) to get in touch with

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

prime : (adjective) the best or most important

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

minimum : (adjective) smallest or lowest

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

unmonitored : (adjective) not watched or checked up on

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:



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Unit 3.15

WORD CHART FOR TEACHERS

This chart is not in the student book. It is a resource for teachers to support students in the use of the focus words each week. Students are provided one page in each unit immediately following the weekly passage with a basic definition printed and space for taking notes.

| Word | Meaning | Forms | | | Related Words |
|-------------|---|---|--------------------|--|---|
| | | Inflectional | Basic Word Classes | Prefixes/Suffixes | |
| pose | (v.) - pretend to be what one is not; present | poses posed posing pose (n.) | | poser position impostor/ impostor poseur | posit; pose (v.) - to put forth; propose; impose; suppose; oppose |
| contact | (v.) - to get in touch with | contacts contacted contacting contact (n.) | | | contact lens tactile tangent |
| prime | (adj.) - the best or most important | | | primely primeness primal | primary; primarily; primer; primeval; prime minister |
| minimum | (adj.) - smallest or lowest | minimum (n.) minima (pl.) minimums | | minimal minimally minimalist minimize | minor maximum (ant.) |
| unmonitored | (v.) - not watched or checked up on | monitors monitored monitoring monitor (n.) | monitor | | admonish premonition |

Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?



PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

Option 1: Many teens use the Internet **unmonitored**. They may go online late at night, or at other times when parental supervision is at a **minimum**. For predators, the Internet is a **prime** environment to seek out victims. They may **pose** as other teens to make **contact**.

One in five teens is an online victim of unwanted sexual talk or sexual requests. There are 300 students at Highland High School. About how many are likely to be victims?

- A) 5
- B) 45
- C) 60**
- D) 105

Option 2: The number of internet users is on the rise. Every day, millions of people read online newspapers and magazines. They learn new things and look at pictures of **posing** celebrities. They play games. They **contact** old friends. Today's teens are **prime** internet users. Some are monitored by parents or teachers, while others are **unmonitored**. Most teens spend a **minimum** of an hour a day online.

As of 2009, approximately 1.67 billion people worldwide were using the internet. Which equation represents 1.67 billion?

- A) 16.7×10^{10}
- B) 1.67×10^9**
- C) 11.67×10^{11}
- D) 1.67×10^8

Math Discussion Question: A new study says that most online predators exploit teens by first cultivating their friendship. They might find out a teen's interests from an online profile and then use this personal information as an excuse to **contact** the teen. A predator may **pose** as an understanding friend to gain a victim's trust. Teens who post suggestive messages or pictures are **prime** targets. Parents and teachers can't **monitor** teens all the time. So what should they do? What are the **minimum** safety precautions that would protect teens from predators online?

Sentrypc.com (n/d) Online child predator statistics. Retrieved on August 18, 2008 from <http://www.sentrypc.com/statistics.htm>

Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?

THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY



Ms Kahn's class was studying how flowering plants sexually reproduce. She assigned a research project that required reading on three Internet sites. Ethan protested, "My parents **monitor** what I read online. There is no way I can open a website with the words 'sexual reproduction'!"

"Don't **pose** as a cyber newbie, Ethan!" laughed Aliyah. "You're a computer wiz! At a **minimum**, you can break any Web site filter your parents set up. And you're not the only one: these days most teens have **unmonitored** access to the web."

"Many of you are tech savvy," said Ms. Kahn. "But does that make you less of a **prime** target for predators?"

"I think the more you're online the more likely you are to be **contacted** by a predator," said Aliyah.

Ethan agreed. "Predators, phishers, cyberbullies, real creeps—they're all just a click away! But if you think before you connect, you won't be a victim. You have to learn how to **minimize** the chance of being **contacted** by Internet predators."

→ Aliyah and Ethan carefully read information on a website from the Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/stc/stc-chatting-with-kids-accessible.pdf>. Then they created the following survey for their classmates.

How Safe are You on the Web?

Circle the answers in columns 1 through 3 that describe what you do online.

| | column 1 | column 2 | column 3 |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| When you are online do you share your phone number or home address? | Always, to anyone who asks | Sometimes to good friends | Never to anyone |
| On your social networks, do you have "friends" that you don't know? | Lots of people | 1 or 2 | No |
| Do you reply to emails from people you don't know? | Always | Sometimes | Never |
| Do you tell other people your passwords? | Anyone who asks | Only special friends and my parents | Only with my parents, or no one. |
| Have you ever sent photos of you, or of a friend, to someone you don't know? | Many times | Maybe one or two times | Never and I never will |
| Have you ever shared personal information -- like your age, grade, color of eyes, or your height -- with someone you don't know? | Many times | Maybe one or two times | Never and I never will |
| If you feel threatened by someone or by something that you read online, will you immediately tell an adult? | No | Yes, but I might wait | Yes, immediately |

Score Yourself. Give yourself 1 point for each answer in column 1; 2 points for each answer in column 2; 3 points for each answer in column 3.

20 – 21 points: Super safe. It is unlikely that a predator will get much information about you.

18 – 20 points: You're playing it safe, but can improve. A predator could get some information about you.

15 – 18 points: Get up your guard! It is fairly easy for a predator to get information about you.

7 – 15 points. You're a prime target. Please talk to an adult today about protecting yourself!



Take the survey. How did you score?

What new questions would you add to this survey? What questions would you rewrite? To answer these two questions, think about other things that teens do that could make them become a target for online predators.

Do you think that Ethan and Aliyah's survey is a good indication of how safe you are on the Internet?

Students' evaluation of the survey may vary. Other things they might think about include the strength of passwords, whether friends can be trusted to protect information you share with them, how to judge between joking and bullying, etc.

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DEBATING THE ISSUE



I. Get ready...

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

A

MySpace should be held responsible for protecting teens from online predators because MySpace created the social network. They should at least set a minimum age of 18.

B

The government should help set up school-affiliated email accounts for all middle and high school kids. This would create a protected space so adults cannot interact with teens online.

C

It is the parents' responsibility to protect their children. They need to monitor their kids' internet activity.

D

Nothing should change. Setting limits of any kind will only push teens to use other unmonitored websites.

E

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

...because...

I disagree with part of that...

An example might help
convince me. Can you give me an
example?

What part of the passage
makes you think that?

TEACHER

Whatever debate format you use in your class, ask students to use academically productive talk in arguing their positions. In particular, students should provide reasons and evidence to back up their assertions. It may be helpful to read these sample positions to illustrate some possibilities, but students should also be encouraged to take their own positions on the issue at hand.



Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?

WRITE ABOUT IT

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

Focus Words

pose | contact | prime | minimum | unmonitored

TEACHER

Ask students to write a response in which they argue a position on the weekly topic.

Put the writing prompt on a projector (or the board) so that everyone can see it. Remind students to refer to the word lists in their Word Generation notebooks as needed.