pose | contact | prime | minimum | unmonitored

This week's issue:

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING TEENS FROM ONLINE PREDATORS?

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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USE THE FOCUS WORDS *and alternate parts of speech

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

Sample Sentence: Sometimes 40- and 50-year-olds **pose** as teenagers on Facebook.

Turn and Talk: If you could **pose** a question to the president, what would it be?

contact *(verb)* to get in touch with

Sample Sentence: Sometimes online predators **contact** teenagers through the website to try to become their friends, and sometimes they say sexual things.

Turn and Talk: What kind of information can you find on the "**contact** us" section of a company's website?

***contact** *(noun)* communication; connection; touch

Sample Sentence: Before the reunion, Tanja and Max hadn't been in **contact** for 10 years.

Turn and Talk: Is there a friend you've lost **contact** with? Would you like to be in **contact** with that friend again?

prime *(adjective)* best or most important

Sample Sentence: These adults are looking for someone to harm, and they think lonely teens are **prime** targets.

Turn and Talk: Why do you think the period from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. is called "**prime** time" for TV shows? What does this mean for advertisers?

***prime** *(noun)* best part; most successful time

Sample Sentence: Most soccer players reach their **prime** before they turn 35.

Turn and Talk: When do you think most actors reach their **prime**? Explain.

minimum *(adjective)* smallest or lowest

Sample Sentence: Raising the **minimum** age will not stop imposters, but might make teenagers and parents more aware of the dangers.

Turn and Talk: Do you think that the **minimum** age of 13 to sign up for Facebook is too young?

***minimum** *(noun)* the least amount possible, required, or reached

Sample Sentence: Cecil worked hard to keep his mistakes to a **minimum**.

Turn and Talk: Do you like noise to be at a **minimum** when you study, or do you prefer some sound such as music or a fan?

unmonitored *(adjective)* not watched or checked up on

Sample Sentence: If Facebook raises the minimum age, teens might turn to **unmonitored** websites.

Turn and Talk: Should elementary schools allow students to use the internet when they are **unmonitored**? Why or why not?

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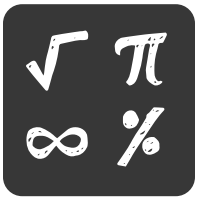
UNIT 3.15



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DO THE MATH

Option 1: Many teens are **unmonitored** when they use the internet. 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 a victim of unwanted sexual talk or sexual requests online. 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 online 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 in the U.S. spend a **minimum** of an hour a day online.

As of 2014, approximately 2.92 billion people worldwide were using the internet. Which represents 2.92 billion?

A. 29.2×10^{10}
B. 2.92×10^{9}
C. 22.92×10^{11}
D. 2.92×10^{8}

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?

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THINK 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 website filter your parents set up. And you're not the only one: These days most teens know how to get **unmonitored** access to the web."

"Many of you are tech savvy," said Ms. Kahn. "But does that make you less of a 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 **prime** victim. You have to learn how to minimize the chance of being **contacted** by internet predators."

Aliyah and Ethan carefully read information on a Department of Homeland Security website. 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 best 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	A few people	No
Do you reply to emails from people you don't know?	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Do you tell other people your passwords?	Anyone who asks	Only special friends and my parents	No one or my parents only
Have you ever sent photos of yourself, 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, eye color, or height – with someone you don't know?	Many times	Maybe one or two times	Never and I never will
If you felt threatened by someone or by something you read online, would you 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; and 3 points for each answer in Column 3.
20–21 points: Super safe. It is unlikely that a predator could get much information about you.
18–19 points: You're playing it safe, but can improve. A predator could get some information about you.
14–17 points: Get up your guard! It would be fairly easy for a predator to get information about you.
7–13 points: You're a **prime** target. Please talk to an adult today about protecting yourself!

How did you score? What steps could you take to improve your safety online?

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

What 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 easy targets for online predators.

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DEBATE THE ISSUE

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

A

❑ Social networking sites like Facebook should be responsible for protecting kids from online predators.

OR

B

❑ Parents should be responsible for protecting their kids by monitoring their internet activity.

OR

C

❑ Kids should take responsibility for their own safety and report inappropriate activity online.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

❑ _____

_____

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

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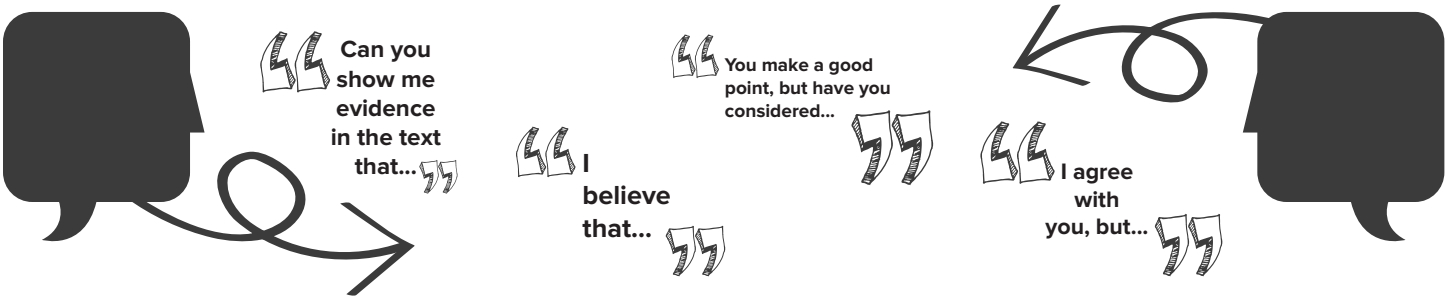
Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:



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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.

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