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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?

Unit 3.15 - Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?

Focus Word Chart

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
pose	(v.) - pretend to be what one is not; present			
contact	(v.) - to get in touch with			
prime	(adj.) - the best or most important			
minimum	(adj.) - smallest or lowest			
unmonitored	(v.) - not watched or checked up on			

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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?

Who is responsible for protecting teens from online predators?

Debating the Issue



GO!

1. 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:

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?

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Science Activity



This activity is designed to help you practice thinking like a scientist and to use this week's focus words. Sometimes the data are based on real research, but they should never be considered true or factual.

Warnings about online sexual predators are often highlighted on **prime**-time news. The news reports typically urge parents to **monitor** their teens' internet use, especially on sites like MySpace, a social networking site for young people. But do online predators **pose** as big a threat to children as the media suggest?

The following study was conducted by researchers who wanted to find out if parents and teens have different ideas about how dangerous the internet is. If teens underestimate the danger, that could be a reason to set a **minimum** age for viewing some websites. They **contacted** 300 teens and their parents to find out.

Question:

Do MySpace users and their parents/ guardians have different views about the number of online predators?

Hypothesis:

Parents and guardians will estimate that there are more online predators than teens will.

Materials:

- ▶ Teen and parent/guardian surveys
- ▶ 300 teens and their parents/guardians

Procedure:

Recruit teens who use MySpace at least once a month. Distribute surveys to them and to their parent or guardian.

Data:	Prevalence:	Parents'	Teens'
		opinions	opinions
		6%	18%
		31%	46%
	Quite a few	63%	36%

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better experiment?



Exemplary

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

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