Handout #1

Step 1: Write the question that will be discussed in the space below:

Step 2: Circle the letter representing who you are:

I am an A / B person

Step 3: After reading the article, The A people should write two arguments to support the question while the B people write two arguments to oppose the question. Make sure to include the paragraph number the argument was found in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to Support the Question - YES</th>
<th>Reasons to Oppose the Question - NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

Step 4: The A people explain their arguments to the B people. The B people listen while summarizing the A people’s arguments in the open box above.

Step 5: The B people explain their arguments to the A people. Then the A people listen while summarizing the B people’s arguments in the open box above.

Step 6: In this step, roles are reversed. In the space below, the A people discuss and write arguments to oppose the question. The B people discuss and write arguments to support the question. The arguments can come from the reading, videos, the earlier discussion, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons to Support the Question - YES</th>
<th>Reasons to Oppose the Question - No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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Step 7: Answer the Discussion Questions:

What is the problem presented in this article?

How much of a real problem is this in your community? Explain.

What did you decide and why? Did you support or oppose or have a new idea?

What, if anything, could you do to address the problem? If you feel nothing can be done, explain why.
Should Schools Check Facebook, Instagram, ask.fm, etc. to Ensure Student Safety?

Communication patterns have changed amongst young people. According to a Pew Research Center study, 8 out of every 10 teenagers use some form of social media.¹ Social media can be a great tool for enhancing one's education. Students at Pomona High School have used social media to facilitate study groups, remind their classmates about homework assignments or inform students who were absent about what they may have missed.

Unfortunately, student use of social media has not been completely positive. Social media has made it easier for students to engage in academic dishonesty. Furthermore, some students have used social media to harass or cyberbully other students. Cyberbullying has had disastrous consequences. In September of 2013, Rebecca Ann Sedwick, a 12-year-old girl from Florida, committed suicide as a result of cyberbullying. Before she headed for the abandoned cement factory where she jumped off the roof to her death, she changed her Kik username to “That Dead Girl” and sent messages to two of her friends, telling them goodbye forever.²

Glendale, CA, which is about 30 miles west of Pomona, has also had experiences with students committing suicide, lately. In 2013, two students in the Glendale Unified School District (GUSD) committed suicide. To combat this string of suicides, GUSD hired a company named Geo Listening to “scour an untold number of public posts by students on blogs, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.” Then when analysts “find posts they think should spur an intervention or anything that violates schools' student codes of conduct, the company alerts the campus.” Every day Geo Listening provides their clients with a “screen capture of the flagged posts, along with details of whether they were made on or off campus, the time and date, the user's name, if available, and a description of why the post caught the attention of analysts.”³

¹ http://www.pewinternet.org/2010/02/03/social-media-and-young-adults/
³ http://articles.latimes.com/2013/sep/14/local/la-me-glendale-social-media-20130915
People have mixed feelings about GUSD hiring a company like Geo Listening in order to keep its students safe. Some proponents of the decision to employ Geo Listening say that any tool to keep students safe should be used, while critics claim that this is a violation of the right to privacy. All of this brings up a very important question: should schools take information from Facebook, Instagram, ask.fm, etc to ensure student safety?

**Arguments Against Using Social Media to Ensure Safety**

Critics of schools using social media to ensure the safety of their students often point to issues of privacy. Although Geo listening only examines what is on public profiles, meaning that there is no sort of hacking involved, Lee Tien, who is a senior attorney for the non-profit organization that seeks to protect online privacy rights, says the following:

> People say that's not private: It's public on Facebook. I say that's just semantics. The question is what is the school doing? It's not stumbling into students -- like a teacher running across a student on the street. This is the school sending someone to watch them.⁴

Another criticism of schools using social media to keep its students safe is that it is an expensive endeavor. GUSD is paying Geo Listening $40,500 for its services. During these times of education cuts in California, that can be a steep price to pay. In addition, some people feel that the types of services that Geo Listening and companies like them provide are ineffective. Students can pretend to be anyone online, thus there is no guarantee that school officials are receiving accurate information.⁵

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Arguments For Using Social Media to Ensure Safety

Proponents of using social media to ensure student safety often make the claim that monitoring social media is a great tool to keep students safe. Monitoring social media is not limited to looking for cyberbullying. Schools can also ask companies like Geo Listening to search for keywords that might convey other dangers, such as drug use, violence, and truancy.⁶ Furthermore, the school can also share this information with parents, who may not know what their child is doing on their social media accounts.

Chris Frydrych, the owner of Geo Listening, says that his company does not violate the privacy of students since there is no hacking involved; his company simply collects information that is already out there for everyone to see. “No matter where they are, if they are advertising it in the public domain, it's no different than if they're standing in front of a teacher,” says Frydrych.⁷

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⁷ http://articles.latimes.com/2013/sep/14/local/la-me-glendale-social-media-20130915
Vocabulary

1. deliberation: A type of discussion where different perspectives are taken into account. This is a discussion and NOT a debate.

2. social media - places where online communication happens, such as facebook, twitter, instagram, snapchat, etc

3. scour - to dig for something. In this reading, scour is used because Geo Listening is digging for information

4. proponents - people who support an idea or cause

5. hacking - “breaking” into a social media account that is not yours

6. semantics - In this reading, the word semantics is being used to describe when words are used in a deceptive way

7. endeavor - a journey
Should the people of Ferguson stop protesting and find another way to make their demands a reality?

People in Ferguson, Missouri have been protesting since August 9, 2014 when officer Darren Wilson shot 18-year-old Michael Brown. One reason why people are so upset about this event is because witnesses claim that Michael Brown was shot while his hands were up, thus not posing a large threat. Many feel that because he had his hands up, he did not deserve to die. Another reason why the protests have been so passionate is that recently there have been many cases where people have felt that police have used excessive force while enforcing the law, especially against people of color.

On July 17, 2014, less than a month before the Michael Brown shooting, Eric Garner, a 43-year-old man, who was apprehended while illegally selling cigarettes, was choked to death by New York City policemen\(^1\). The event was captured on video and put on youtube, where millions of people have watched it.

Pomona, Ca, unfortunately, has not been immune to charges of police brutality. In October of 2011, a man named Andres Avila, was asleep in his car with his girlfriend in a hotel parking lot on Holt Blvd. in Pomona. Sheriff investigators say that after a member of the Pomona police department called for backup and approached the car, Andres Avila became violent and got out of the car, which is when officers shot and killed Andres Avila. Avila’s lawyers, however, claim the event went played out differently. The group “Justice 4 Andy” was formed and they held several protests in Pomona to demand that the federal government investigate the incident\(^2\).

\(^1\) http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/20/nyregion/eric-garner-statenn-island-police-chokehold-case-go-to-grand-jury.html
The subject of police brutality has been so prominent in the US lately that a film was released nationwide in 2013 which was about a now infamous officer involved shooting. Fruitvale Station, which is a film about the Oscar Grant shooting, where an African American man was shot by police officers in the back while laying face down in Oakland, Ca (which was also captured on video and put on youtube) was released and won many awards.

Although the Michael Brown shooting happened over a month ago, protestors in Ferguson, MO are still active. For example, on September 10th, 35 people were arrested for trying to block a highway in their town. Their reason for doing so was to call attention to their demand that the officer who shot Michael Brown should be charged with murder. Although this act of protest was relatively peaceful, there were reports of some rocks being thrown at officers, past protests in Ferguson have been violent. It is easy to find news reports of the protests where one can see protestors throwing rocks and bottles at police officers and police officers responding with tear gas canisters and shock grenades.

Although most activists in Ferguson would rather engage in peaceful protests to highlight their demands, it is reported that there are a few protestors that are looking for trouble and look to induce chaos. Looting and vandalism has also been present during the protests. Some feel, however, that the police themselves are instigating the violence by using military style equipment on the protestors, making them feel like the enemy. Given this news, should the people of Ferguson stop protesting and find another way to make their demands a reality?

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Many African American people in Ferguson, MO. feel that protesting is their only way to get their voices heard\(^6\). As a New York Times article puts it, "although about two-thirds of Ferguson residents are black, its mayor and five of its six City Council members are white. Only three of the town’s 53 police officers are black\(^7\)." Voter turnout in the area has been very low. The last mayoral election in Ferguson had a 12 percent voter turnout rate.

In addition, many people feel that when it comes to cases of alleged police misconduct, the police get preferential treatment in the court of law. Many people felt that Johannes Mehserle, the officer who shot Oscar Grant, should have been given a harsher penalty than the two years of prison he was sentenced for. It made people even more upset that he only served 11 months of that two year sentence\(^8\). Given these realities, many people feel that the police have an advantage in the court system. On top of this, since most high profile cases of police misconduct have involved a White police officer and a Black citizen, these cases usually have a racial tone that can make emotions run higher.

Lots of people, however, are against the protestors and feel that they are doing their cause more harm than good. Some of the protests in Ferguson, MO., especially the early protests, had a violent tone. The protests became especially violent on August 10th, when looting occurred and a local convenience store, the Quicktrip, was set on fire\(^9\). The Ferguson police department reported that at least 20 police cars were damaged on this day. The police assessed the situation to be so out of control that they sent in helicopters and the SWAT team.


\(^7\) http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/17/us/ferguson-mo-complex-racial-history-runs-deep-most-tensions-have-to-do-police-force.html?_r=1

\(^8\) http://www.nbcnews.com/id/43376251/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/ex-bart-officer-johannes-mehserle-released-after-months-prison/#.VBfTqy5dWmM

to help calm the protests. Schools in the area cancelled school the following day to ensure student safety. Although Michael Brown’s parents have spoken out against the violent protests. Many protests, especially the ones that occurred after dark were **tinged** with violence.

Ron Reynolds, a resident of Ferguson, is afraid that the looting will have long lasting effects once the protests are over. He fears that many of the businesses that were looted, such as Walgreens and Ross, will not come back, which is something the town of Ferguson cannot afford.

Everyone can agree that the situation in Ferguson is very difficult. Many people feel that protesting is the only thing they can do to make sure the officer who shot and killed Michael Brown should be tried for murder. However, since some of the protests have turned violent, many feel that the violent actions make it difficult to take the protesters seriously. The question remains, should the people protesting about the Michael Brown murder continue their protests to get what they want, or should they find another way to accomplish their goal of making sure the officer who shot Michael Brown is tried for murder?

**Vocabulary**

1. apprehended - arrested
2. infamous - well known for bad reasons
3. induce - to give rise to something
4. looting - stealing goods, usually during a riot or war
5. misconduct - unacceptable or improper behavior, usually by an employee or professional person

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