Instructions: Read the following excerpt from an article about social media and political protest and complete the reading comprehension exercises.

How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks: Social Media and Political Protest

Retrieved and adapted from: Jost, J. T., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Langer, M., Metzger, M., Nagler, J., Sterling, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2018). How social media facilitates political protest: Information, motivation, and social networks. *Political Psychology*, *39*(December), 85–118. https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12478

It is often claimed that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are profoundly shaping political participation, especially when it comes to protest behavior. Whether or not this is the case, the analysis of "Big Data" generated by social media usage offers unprecedented opportunities to observe complex, dynamic effects associated with large-scale collective action and social movements. In this article, we summarize evidence from studies of protest movements in the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine demonstrating that: (1) Social media platforms facilitate the exchange of information that is vital to the coordination of protest activities, such as news about transportation, turnout, police presence, violence, medical services, and legal support; (2) in addition, social media platforms facilitate the exchange of emotional and motivational contents in support of and opposition to protest activity, including messages emphasizing anger, social identification, group efficacy, and concerns about fairness, justice, and deprivation as well as explicitly ideological themes; and (3) structural characteristics of online social networks, which may differ as a function of political ideology, have important implications for information exposure and the success or failure of organizational efforts. Next, we issue a brief call for future research on a topic that is understudied but fundamental to appreciating the role of social media in facilitating political participation, namely friendship.

How Structures of Social Networks Affect Information Exchange

In a magazine article entitled "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," the popular journalist Malcolm Gladwell (2010) argued that the types of social networks that are facilitated by Twitter or Facebook involve "weak" (rather than "strong") social ties and are therefore unlikely to motivate the types of commitment and sacrifice that are required to sustain a protest movement. Social media usage, according to Gladwell, may support certain varieties of "slacktivism" (defined by the online "urban dictionary" as "the act of participating in obviously pointless activities as an expedient alternative to actually expending effort to fix a problem"), but they pose very little threat to existing political regimes:

> [Social media] makes it easier for activists to express themselves, and harder for that expression to have any impact. The instruments of social media are well suited to making the existing social order more efficient. They are not a natural enemy of the status quo. If you are of the opinion that all the world needs is a little buffing around the edges, this should not trouble you. But if you think that there are still lunch counters out there that need integrating it ought to give you pause.

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Exercise 1: Answer the following questions. Choose the correct answer.

1. Who wrote this text?
    a. Malcolm Gladwell
    b. Jost, J. T., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Langer, M., Metzger, M., Nagler, J., Sterling, J., & Tucker, J. A.
    c. Facebook and Twitter

2. What is the purpose of this article?
    a. Demonstrate that Facebook and Twitter seriously influence political engagement
    b. Demonstrate that social media facilitates social protest participation and support.
    c. Demonstrate that researchers understand the role of social media in political participation

3. Who is this article's main target audience?
    a. Facebook and twitter owners
    b. Facebook and twitter users
    c. Other researchers

4. Why do the authors mention the relation between facebook and twitter with political participation and protest in the first sentence?
    a. To engage the readers and state the main topics of the article.
    b. To state the main argument of the article and its purpose.
    c. To contradict a common misunderstanding

5. Do the authors believe that facebook and twitter are shaping political participation?
    a. Yes, they are sure and will demonstrate it.
    b. No, they are not sure but will explore the topic.
    c. No, they don't believe it and will contradict it.

6. What is the main source of information for this research article?
    a. Protest movements in the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine
    b. "Big Data" of the of social media in the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine
    c. Other studies of protest movements in the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine

7. What are the main conclusions of this article?
    a. Social media platforms facilitate the exchange and exposure of influential information and content.
    b. Social media platforms facilitate the support and success of political protest.
    c. Social media platforms facilitate the exchange and exposure of emotional and motivational information and content.

Exercise 2: Complete the following statements based on the second paragraph. Choose the correct answer.

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1. Malcolm Gladwell works as a
    a. Article researcher
    b. Journalist
    c. Popular activist

2. He is important in this article because
    a. He is the author.
    b. He has written about the topic.
    c. He is an expert in social media.

3. Malcolm Gladwell explains that twitter and facebook cannot sustain social protest movement because
    a. People don't commit and sacrifice.
    b. The superficial social ties social media promotes.
    c. People prefer pointless activities and serious actions

4. To sustain protest movement people need to
    a. Commit and sacrifice.
    b. Create committed and strong social ties.
    c. Stop pointless activities and make efforts to change the regime.

5. Slacktivism cannot threat the existing political regime because
    a. It is a pointless alternative.
    b. It is an excuse for not making commitments and sacrifices
    c. The existing political regimes

Exercise 3: Make true or false. Type **T** if the statement is **True**, or **F** if the statement is **False**

Statement	**True**	**False**
Slacktivism is a formal or academic concept		
Social media facilitates free expression		
If people can express freely, they can impact status quo		
Status quo is a synonym of existing social order		
Social media supports status quo		
Buffing around the edge is a good synonym of Slacktivism		

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