UNIT 8

Clicks and Cliques



In this unit, you will

- read about how young people form social groups in different school environments.
- review finding the main idea.
- increase your understanding of the target academic words for this unit.

READING SKILLS Highlighting and Annotating

Self-Assessment

Think about how well you know each target word, and check (✓) the appropriate column. I have...

TARGET WORDS	never seen the word before	seen the word but am not sure what it means	seen the word and understand what it means	used the word, but am not sure if correctly	used the word confidently in *either* speaking *or* writing	used the word confidently in *both* speaking *and* writing
AWL						
arbitrary						
clause						
converse						
deviate						
diverse						
domain						
gender						
guarantee						
inevitable						
institute						
intervene						
maximize						
passive						
so-called						

Oxford 3000™ keywords

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Before You Read

Read these questions. Discuss your answers in a small group.

1. Have you ever had to share a room or an apartment with someone? Did you already know the person? Describe the experience.
2. What possible conflicts might roommates have? Would these conflicts be less likely to occur if the people knew each other already? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever looked for information about a friend or acquaintance on the Internet? If so, why? Did you find anything? Do you think it's okay to look people up without telling them?

Read

This newspaper article is about an Internet tool for finding out about college roommates before you meet them.

Judging Roommates by Their Facebook Covers

Mailbox-watching is supposed to subside for North American high school seniors after they receive their acceptance letters and make their college choices. Each summer, however, many an incoming freshman[1] anxiously waits for the mailbox to produce another crucial envelope—the one holding the name of his or her future roommate.

Many people assume that college freshmen pick their dormitory roommates, as upperclassmen are allowed to do. The **converse** is actually true. Very few colleges allow incoming freshmen any choice in dorm-room assignments. It's **inevitable** that students will worry about potential problems with a roommate—a complete stranger. Students in the **so-called** millennial generation, in particular, are anxious about sharing a room with another person. Many have never shared a room at home. They are used to their rooms being their exclusive **domains**.



Roommates in their dorm room

ROOMMATE RESEARCH

For decades, residential-life offices have received late-summer telephone calls from worried students and parents. "People will read a name and address, and it fits into some category in their head," says Sarah B. Westfall, dean of students at Denison University in Ohio. They expect a **diverse** student body at almost any college, but many students fear **diversity** as much as they look forward to it. Any indication that a roommate's

[1] *freshman:* a first-year student at a four-year college, university, or high school

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life **deviates** from the familiar can heighten a student's fear of the unknown. Online social-networking sites now allow students to get more of those indications than ever before.

According to college officials, many incoming freshmen use Facebook, Orkut, QQ, and other social-networking sites, to do research on their future roommates. Since everything happens anonymously[2], normally **passive** students can spring into investigative action without having to approach a live person. On sites like these, anyone can post a profile of himself or herself free. Profiles can include photos, quotes, inside jokes, and lists of their favorite bands and TV shows. The idea is to **maximize** your attractiveness to people with tastes similar to yours. Facebook has more than 750 million registered users, about 70% of whom are outside the United States. Orkut has about 66 million users, mostly in Brazil and India. QQ, in China, is one of the largest social networks in the world, with more than 300 million active accounts.

PREVENTION BEATS INTERVENTION

Such profiles can help strangers break the ice before move-in day, but they can also cause alarm. A student's fondness for a certain kind of music or room decorations can annoy a roommate before the two even meet. As a result, administrators are spending more time dealing with compatibility issues before students arrive. At some campuses, residential-life counselors have decided it's easier to prevent roommate problems than to **intervene** in them later. Their offices have prepared guides to using profiles wisely. They mail these guides out right from the start, in the same envelope as the notice of a roommate's identity.

Most students mistakenly believe the roommate-assignment system is **arbitrary**. The school[3] might separate students by **gender**, they think, but beyond that it's a matter of chance. Actually, nearly every college prides itself on carefully considering each student's circumstances when assigning roommates. They don't **guarantee** roommates will get along, but they succeed much more often than they fail. They hate to see such careful work undone by a single click of a keyboard—especially since so many profiles are not exactly accurate.

NOT NECESSARILY TRUE

Clauses in the user agreements for social-networking sites set some rules for profiles, but nothing in the agreement says they have to be true. Even students who use social-networking sites every day tend to forget that. For that reason, some schools have **instituted** "reality training" for social networkers. "We try to explain to them that there is a lot of posturing that goes on," one advisor says. "Students are trying to create an image that makes them seem fun and cool, and they post things that may or may not be true about themselves as a result." Admission officers also have students look at their own online profiles and ask, "What kind of roommate do I look like?"



Roommates with different personalities can still get along well.

BRANDI AND SARAH

Some students say it's natural to form instant opinions when surveying their peers' profiles. Brandi, an incoming freshman at the University of Evansville in the U.S. state of Indiana, considers herself outgoing and easy to get along with. When she found out who her roommate would be, Brandi went to a social-networking site, where she found Sarah's profile. Her excitement quickly turned to disappointment.

"Her page was all pink, and I thought, 'Oh, gosh, we're not going to get along,'" says Brandi. "It said she was from California and into cheerleading, and I'm more into other

[2] *anonymously:* without giving one's name or identity

[3] *school:* In the United States, any educational **institution** at any level (including university) can be referred to as a school.

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sports. She just seemed really girly." Brandi found hope in Sarah's profile, however. Both students had listed Tim McGraw and Faith Hill as two of their favorite country-music singers. Sarah had also posted many photographs of herself with friends, who looked like the sort of people in Brandi's own clique, or group of close friends. This convinced Brandi that her roommate was probably more similar to her than she thought.

So Brandi decided to give her future roommate a chance and sent her a message through the online network. This started a conversation. Two telephone calls later, her first impression had changed. Sarah has two younger siblings, ages 15 and 17, just as Brandi does. And now that Brandi knows that Sarah took a lot of Advanced Placement classes[4] in high school, she no longer pictures her roommate as a lazy or immature student.

"I think we're actually going to be really good friends," says Brandi.

[4] *Advanced Placement classes:* college-level courses taught in high school

Reading Comprehension

Mark each sentence as *T* (true) or *F* (false) according to the information in Reading 1. Use the dictionary to help you understand new words.

___ 1. Most universities arbitrarily match roommates in dorms.

___ 2. Students could get information about future roommates even before social-networking sites became available.

___ 3. Social-networking sites were instituted by colleges and universities.

___ 4. A social-networking profile can be designed to reflect one's tastes in music, favorite activities, and so on.

___ 5. Anyone placing a profile on a social-networking site must guarantee that the information is accurate.

___ 6. Brandi considers herself a quiet, passive person and was afraid her future roommate would be too outgoing.

___ 7. Music was the first common interest for Brandi and her roommate.

___ 8. Brandi decided not to contact her new roommate because social networking is not an accurate source of information.

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READING SKILL Highlighting and Annotating

LEARN

After you read an article or chapter in a book, you may need to refer to the information again; for example, when you're studying for a test or writing an essay. Instead of copying the information you might need into a notebook, it is more efficient to *highlight* and *annotate* the reading.

Highlighting	Use a bright marker to make important passages easy to see. You might also want to underline or circle parts of the reading.
Annotating	Write little notes to yourself in the margins of the reading.

Highlight and annotate only the materials that you own! If you are borrowing a book, do not write in it.

APPLY

Follow the directions to highlight and annotate Reading 1. You will need a colored marker and a pen or pencil. Then, with a partner, use your annotations to answer the questions that follow as quickly as you can.

- First, highlight all the names of individual people.
- Second, circle each name of a college or university. In the margin next to each, write its location.
- Third, highlight or underline any statistics or important data in the article (look for numbers and source citations).
- Fourth, as you read, highlight any unfamiliar words you encounter. In the margin next to each, write a short definition using your dictionary.

1. What school is Brandi going to attend? _____
2. Where is Denison University? _____
3. How many registered users does Facebook have? _____
4. Where do most of Orkut's users live? _____
5. What other networking site is mentioned in the article? _____
6. What does *posturing* mean in this context? _____
7. Which musicians do Brandi and Sarah both like? _____
8. Who is the dean of students at Denison University? _____

REVIEW A SKILL **Finding the Main Idea** (See p. 20)

Look again at Reading 1. Find the main idea of each section of the reading. In sections 2, 3, and 4, the main idea is not the same as the heading.

1) Paragraph 2

2) "Roomate Research"

3) "Prevention Beats Intervention"

4) "Brandi and Sarah"

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Vocabulary Activities STEP I: Word Level

A. **Read this advice about behaving properly on a social-networking website. For each item, cross out the one word or phrase in parentheses with a different meaning from the other three choices. Compare answers with a partner.**

Every week or so, someone writes to me about a social networking problem. Maybe the writer is being bothered by someone, or maybe the writer posted something embarrassing. So here—just as a reminder—are six rules to keep in mind:

1. Writing a comment to everyone on your list might be nice, but why are you doing it? Just to (*raise / maximize / display / increase*) the number of comments on your page? That's lame. You know who you are.
2. The fact that someone takes time to read and comment on your blogs is a(n) (*sure sign / guarantee / assurance / source*) of affection. It proves the person cares about your inner thoughts. Don't ignore these comments.
3. Having 500 people on your list of (*nominal / so-called / supposed / dear*) friends and only 20 comments is a sign that you have to pretend people like you. Add only people you know to your list. Be as popular as you are—or aren't.
4. Never respond to a private message with a comment in the public (*arena / realm / domain / dialect*). That's rude.
5. If you post a personal 100-question survey, there's one (*questionable / unavoidable / inevitable / certain*) result: Nobody will read it.

B. **What is the converse of each of these things? Is there more than one? Read your answers with a partner and discuss (or converse about) the different possibilities.**

1. love: _____
2. youth: _____
3. happiness: _____
4. success: _____
5. passivity: _____
6. inevitability: _____

The word *intervene* means "to come between," usually to prevent or solve a problem. Although it is similar to *interfere,* intervening is usually seen as helpful and interfering is considered impolite and annoying.

Sometimes, the difference between *intervention* and *interference* depends on the perspective of the people involved. For example, a passenger in a car might give the driver directions because he thinks the driver is lost. The passenger sees this as intervention, but the driver might see it as interference and be insulted.

CORPUS

C. **Check (✓) the situations in which you would intervene. Discuss your choices in a small group. Explain your perspective and decide whether the other people involved might consider your action (or inaction) interference.**

___ 1. Two students in your class are discussing whether there is a test tomorrow. One says there is, the other says there's not. You know that there is.

___ 2. A confused-looking man you don't know is standing, with a map in his hand, on a street corner.

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___ 3. Some of your friends are playing basketball. You can see that players from the other team are tripping and knocking down players on your friends' team.

___ 4. One of your friends is arguing with his or her father. You feel the father is being unfair.

___ 5. Two of your cousins, who have very different views, are arguing about which soccer team is the best.

___ 6. As you are walking to a special dinner in a nice restaurant, you see that a car is stuck in some mud. One person is trying to drive while another person pushes, but the car is not moving.

___ 7. You are watching your son's team play basketball, and the team is losing. You think you could give them some advice that would help them do better.

___ 8. Four or five students are standing around another student, insulting him and pushing him around.

Vocabulary Activities STEP II: Sentence Level

Word Form Chart			
Noun	**Verb**	**Adjective**	**Adverb**
the converse	_____	converse	conversely
diversity	diversify	diverse	diversely
guarantee	guarantee	guaranteed	_____
inevitability	_____	inevitable	inevitably
passiveness	_____	passive	passively

D. Read another account related to college roommates. Then restate the sentences in your notebook, using the words in parentheses. Concentrate on main ideas and leave out details. Be prepared to read aloud or discuss your work in class.

1. Many college freshmen expect to socialize with their roommates, or even to be friends. They express surprise when things don't happen that way. (*converse*)

   Many freshmen expect to hang out and be friends with their roommate. They are often surprised when their real experience is converse to what they expected.

2. This probably happens because few freshmen really know what to expect. With no prior experience of anything like a roommate relationship, they may think of it as a sort of official friendship set up by the university. (*guaranteed*)

3. And it may start out that way. Two people lost on a large campus, with no acquaintances outside the dorm, will naturally look to each other for a social foundation. (*inevitably*)

4. Soon, however, each one's social network spreads wider through classes, clubs, parties, and chance meetings. (*diversify*)

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5. If both roommates succeed equally at making such contacts, there is not likely to be a problem. But if one is significantly less active in making friends, some resentment may build up. (*passive*)
6. Straight talk about this situation in orientation sessions is very important. Shy freshmen who are prepared for it and see it as bound to happen are less likely to take it personally if it happens to them. (*inevitable*)
7. Those freshmen who are more socially successful can help a roommate who is experiencing things differently. (*the converse*)
8. Of course, no student has an obligation to make sure that his or her roommate has a good time. By college, young people are presumed to have developed some social skills of their own. (*guarantee,* verb)

Word Form Chart			
Noun	**Verb**	**Adjective**	**Adverb**
deviation deviant	deviate	deviant	_____

E. Write the answers to the questions in your notebook, using the form of *deviate* in parentheses. Refer to Reading 1 for information. Compare sentences with a partner.

1. Why are many college freshmen worried about rooming with a stranger? (*deviate*)
2. Is it abnormal behavior for someone to tell lies in a social network profile? (*deviant*, adjective)
3. Would it be typical for a college to allow freshmen to choose their own roommates? (*deviation*)
4. What do you think would happen if, after checking a social-networking site, a student thought a prospective roommate was dangerously abnormal? (*deviant,* noun)
5. Why did Brandi get upset after first seeing Sarah's profile? (*deviate*)

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READING 2

Before You Read

Read these questions. Discuss your answers in a small group.

1. Within the student body at your school (or at a school you used to attend), are there smaller social groups? Do they have names? What brings people together into these groups?
2. Do you belong to any social groups at your school (or at a school you used to attend)? Are these formal groups or just informal collections of friends?
3. Have you ever known anyone who seemed totally out of place at school, who had only a few friends or none at all? Describe that person. Why do you think that person was so out of place?

READING SKILL Highlighting and Annotating

APPLY

After you read this article, you will answer these questions in a paragraph about 75 words long:

> *What social groups are there at Chaparral High School? What determines the social groups students are in?*

As you read, highlight and annotate the information you think will be valuable in your answer.

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Read

This case study from a sociology textbook examines the social groups at a high school in the U.S. state of Arizona.

High School Society: Who Belongs Where?

At lunch time, look around the sprawling Chaparral High School campus in Scottsdale, Arizona, in the southwestern United States. The social geography of the 1,850 students is clearly **instituted.** The football players and their friends have the center table outdoors. In back of them, other popular students chat cheerfully—an attractive gathering of cheerleaders, lesser jocks[1], and members of the student government. If you qualify for membership under some unwritten **clause** in the group's unwritten rulebook—even if no one has ever met you before—you've got it made. Lauren, a sophomore cheerleader, notes that "unqualified" students would never dare sit where she's sitting. "But once you're in with the girls, everyone is really friendly to you. When I made cheerleader, it was like I was just set."



OTHER GROUPS

Inside, in the cafeteria, a **converse** society exists. There are more braces[2] and glasses and hair that doesn't quite have a shape. These are the skateboarders, the **so-called** nerds[3], those who say they are just regular, the freshmen who have not yet found their place. They may have lower social status than the sunny groups outside, but they generally feel they have, or eventually will have, a social place they can live with. There are many other lunchtime **domains** as well. A group of art students eats in the studios, and some band members gather by the music building. Dozens of drama students eat in the theater building, where they are joined by some students whose looks or manners **deviate** from the norm but who find the theater group more tolerant than most.

TAKING EVERYONE

Secondary schools worldwide are shaped by the natural tendency of teenagers to form exclusive social groups known as cliques. Despite all the choices at Chapparal, a few students still have no clique. They eat upstairs or alone outside the library, or they just **passively** wander, their heads low as they pass groups of noisy

[1] *jocks:* athletes; people whose main interest is sports
[2] *braces:* teeth-straightening equipment applied directly onto the teeth
[3] *nerds:* people who are mainly interested in academics, especially math or science, and who are unconcerned about popular styles and activities

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schoolmates. They are reminders that a U.S. public high school has to admit all kinds of students, but it cannot **guarantee** them all a place in high-school society.

Chaparral is a large, well-regarded high school in an affluent suburb. It is a pleasant place, where parents, teachers, and students take justifiable pride in their facilities, their community, and their achievements. Compared with big-city schools, these schools do not look very **diverse.** The majority of the students are white, middle class, and dressed in the same few brand names. But the reality is far more complex. Those who run such good suburban schools are well aware that some of the most horrifying school violence has happened at this kind of place, not at tough inner-city high schools.

They speculate about the reasons for this. The dropout rate in the U.S. has declined sharply since the 1960s, especially in suburban schools. Poor urban schools still lose many of their problem students to the streets. Suburban schools still have them. "It used to be that the kids who were really having trouble, the misfits, would leave," said John Kriekard, the principal at Chaparral. But now, "we serve all kinds of kids and we have to try to be all things to all people."

He and others also emphasize the central role schools play in suburban life. "In big cities, there are lots of places where kids make connections, where they have pieces of their lives," he said. "But in a place like this, we're pretty much it." This **maximizes** the influence that school society has on a student's overall life. Adolescence has always been a time of identity formation, with inclusion and exclusion, trying out new ideas, styles, and friends. And these are not primarily girl issues. No matter what your **gender,** good looks, cool friends, academic achievement, and money have always defined the social terrain.

TROUBLED TEENS

A few troubled students would continually disrupt the whole school unless someone—if not the principal, then the law—**intervened.** These students are likely to be rootless and poorly directed, and their chances of finding effective control at home are slim. Economic factors are less important than family factors and previous social experience. Such behavior is a call for help, not for material goods. To a teenager who has little experience with acceptance and security, these advantages seem to be given **arbitrarily** to some people and not to others, certainly not to them.



Some high school students feel alienated from their classmates.

Carol Miller Lieber, a former principal, says many students entering high school already see themselves as losers[4]. Not surprisingly, this affects their perception of the entire school. Studies show that students who see themselves **inevitably** as outside the winners' circle have far more negative views of a school than either the teachers or the most successful students. "In these big high-powered suburban high schools, there's a very dominant winner culture, including the jocks, the advanced-placement kids, the student government and, depending on the school, the drama kids or the service clubs," she said. "The winners are a smaller group than we'd like to think, and high school life is very different for those who experience it as the losers. They become part of the invisible middle and suffer in silence, alienated and without any real connection to any adult." Interviews with Chaparral students confirm the research: the popular students who lunch outside were far more likely than the ones sitting inside to say that they love the school and feel connected to at least one teacher. ■

[4] *losers:* (slang) persons who are not successful or not popular

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Now, write the paragraph assigned to you in the Reading Skill on page 121. Use your highlighting and annotation to help you. Read your paragraph to a partner and discuss your ideas.

Reading Comprehension

Mark each sentence as *T* (true) or *F* (false) according to the information in Reading 2. Use the dictionary to help you understand new words.

___ 1. At Chaparral High School, athletes have the highest social position.

___ 2. Passive students must ask special permission from the school to eat lunch outdoors.

___ 3. Most students who don't fit in with any clique disrupt the whole school.

___ 4. Someone who becomes a cheerleader is guaranteed acceptance at that group's lunch table.

___ 5. Public schools in the U.S. are required to accept even troubled students.

___ 6. In a suburb, the school is likely to provide most of a student's social experience.

___ 7. The majority of students in a typical high school see themselves as winners.

___ 8. Social acceptance in high school leads to positive attitudes toward school.

Vocabulary Activities STEP I: Word Level

A. Complete the sentences about social groups in high school using the target vocabulary in the box. Use each item one time. Use the synonyms in parentheses to help you. (Note: The sentences are not yet in order.)

clause	gender	inevitable	intervene
deviate	guaranteed	instituted	so-called
domain			

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___ a. "When kids are tossed together every day, six hours a day, for the entire school year," says psychologist Thomas J. Berdnt, "friendship groupings are _____ (impossible to avoid)."

___ b. At one high school near Chicago, the social groups take their names from the places students like to sit. The _____ (labeled) "wall" people are fashionable students who hang out at a bench along a wall near the cafeteria. The "trophy-case" kids are students who sit on the floor under a display of sports awards.

___ c. These "friendship groupings," better known as cliques, are small, tightly knit groups that establish a social _____ (territory) for people who share interests or characteristics.

___ d. Cliques "can be based on appearance, athletic ability, academic achievement, social or economic status, talent, seeming sophistication," or ability to attract people of the opposite _____ (sex), according to adolescent development experts Anita Gurian and Alice Pope.

___ e. Members of cliques often share the same values and exhibit the same behavior. Although they have been known to form in elementary school, cliques are more normally _____ (established) among middle and high school students.

___ f. Once inside a group, a student is careful not to _____ (go in a different direction) from any of the unwritten rules.

___ g. Someone with distinctive tastes in clothes, hairstyle, or music is almost _____ (certain) to be considered part of a clique of people with similar tastes. This is true whether or not the student socializes with these people.

___ h. While every high school seems to have its own "jocks" or "nerds," the local environment at a particular school may _____ (step into the situation) and create a special set of cliques.

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B. Put the sentences in activity A into a logical order to describe high school social groups. (More than one order may be possible.) Read your sequence to a partner.

C. Many academic words are also considered formal words. Which of the target words in this unit (see the chart on page 113) are more formal synonyms for these informal words and phrases? Be sure to use the right forms of the target words.

Informal	Formal
1. by chance	_____
2. be different	_____
3. get involved	_____
4. opposite	_____
5. certain	_____

D. Read the sample sentences that feature forms of the word *diverse*. Then answer the questions below in your notebook, using a dictionary as suggested. Compare answers with a partner.

a. **Diversity** of opinion makes our staff meetings very lively.
b. My son's school is culturally **diverse**, so they celebrate 17 or 18 holidays every year.
c. The company decided to **diversify** and make a wide range of products.
d. A **diversified set** of investments will contain some stocks, some bonds, and some real estate.

1. Check (✓) the word closest in meaning to *diverse*. Consult your dictionary before you answer.

___ wayward
___ alien
___ variegated
___ complicit

2. Each of the sentences in the box above indicates that something is diverse. What is it?

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____

3. Look at the sample sentences in your dictionary for *diverse* and its forms. What is diverse in each of those samples?
4. Does *diverse* have any forms that are not used in the sample sentences in the box above? If so, what are they? Consult your dictionary.

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Vocabulary Activities STEP II: Sentence Level

Most public high schools in the United States allow students a great deal of self-expression. Rules about clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, and other fashion items are quite loose. All this freedom can shock visitors from other countries—or even Americans who haven't seen a high school in 15 or 20 years.

E. **In each of the situations below, a high school student engages in a kind of self-expression. For each situation, answer these three questions in your notebook:**

a. Is this contrary to normal behavior? How does it deviate from the norm?

b. Should the school institute a rule against it? Why or why not?

c. Should the right to do this be guaranteed? Why or why not?

Refer to the readings in this unit and your personal opinions.

1. A student wears a hat in class.

   It's unusual to wear a hat in class. I would call it rude. But it is not important enough to make rules about it.

2. Some students bring bottles of soda and drink them during class.
3. A girl wears white face makeup so thick and heavy it looks like a mask.
4. A student stands in front of his or her school and shouts criticism of the school's principal.
5. Two students text each other during class.
6. A student comes to school wearing dirty, wrinkled clothes.

F. **Discuss your opinions about the situations in activity E in a small group. Then prepare an oral report that summarizes your discussion of one of the situations. Present your report to the class.**

G. **Look at these arguments for and against being part of a clique in high school. Restate each idea in your notebook, using some form of the word in parentheses. Then write a paragraph that expresses your own opinion. Try to use as many target words as possible in your work. Be prepared to read your paragraph or debate this issue in class.**

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