
Was Snowden Right or Wrong?

Segment Length: 3:47 minutes; 7:06 minutes

Videos:

“Why Snowden Is Wrong”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DxxZjFM6Bg>

“Snowden: Traitor or Hero?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqaA8dnmIyc>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. Matt Holland says that intelligence agents are normal people with difficult jobs, who are trying to make things better. How would Edward Snowden respond?
2. Edward Snowden says that he felt the American people needed to know about the NSA’s illegal spying. Do you agree with him? Why/Why not?
3. Matt Holland says that intelligent agencies must go through thorough vetting processes to make sure their ideas are legal before being implemented. How would John Stossel respond?
4. Some U.S. officials say that Snowden should have reported the NSA through legal channels, but Snowden explains that doing so can have serious consequences. How would Matt Holland respond?
5. Matt Holland questions Snowden’s motives, accusing him of lashing out at intelligent agencies rather than just exposing illegal practices. Do you think this is true? Why/Why not?
6. Snowden says that the NSA’s program didn’t stop a single terrorist attack. How would Matt Holland respond?
7. Matt Holland emphasizes that the role of intelligence agencies is to keep us safe. Does this justify violations of privacy and civil liberties? Why/Why not?

8. If Snowden returns to America, he faces a lengthy jail sentence. Do you think this is justified? Why/Why not?
9. Before watching these videos, how much did you know about Edward Snowden?
10. Have these videos changed your opinion of Edward Snowden? If so, how?
11. Have these videos changed your opinion of U.S. intelligent agencies? If so, how?