
Banning TikTok

Videos:

“TikTok ban bill: What you need to know”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmneQ-hkq9w>

(4:00 minutes)

“Should the US ban TikTok?”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jf5tfN2q2s

(9:03 minutes)

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. What are the opposing ideas in these two videos?
2. Senator Mark Warner said TikTok has the potential to be used as a propaganda tool in the United States. Do you agree with this? Do you think TikTok has that kind of influence over people? Why/Why not?
3. The Learn Liberty video said that any information from a Chinese company can be accessed by the Chinese government. Were you aware of this before watching these videos? Does it affect how you feel about TikTok? Why/Why not?
4. Senator Warren said that in order to ban TikTok, a new bill needs to be passed to overcome existing issues, including First Amendment issues. Does this concern you? Should the government be passing bills to give them more authority over First Amendment issues? Why/Why not?
5. In the Learn Liberty video, Will Duffield said: “The U.S. taking the lead here...to utilize what is ostensibly a national security concern to really force the sale of a foreign business to U.S. firms legitimizes other countries following this route.” What did he mean by this? What is the danger of legitimizing something like this?
6. Senator Warren said that while users would still be able to access TikTok even if it were banned from app stores, he believes people would think twice before using it. Do you think this is true? Would you keep using TikTok even if it were banned? Why/Why not?

7. Will Duffield said that even if TikTok were banned, the Chinese government would have many other ways to access Americans' information. If that's the case, why do you think there's such a focus on TikTok?
8. Senator Warren said that in China, TikTok users see content related to science and technology, and that this is an example of content manipulation. Do you see a problem with this? Should social media companies be allowed to determine the content their users see? Why/Why not?
9. Will Duffield said: "Americans use this app to communicate with one another, to express themselves. It's a valuable tool for the exercise of their First Amendment rights." Do you agree with this? Do you use TikTok for these purposes? Have you found it valuable?
10. Senator Warren said that the company that owns TikTok has to be loyal to the Chinese Communist Party, not its shareholders or customers. Does this justify banning TikTok? Why/Why not?
11. The Learn Liberty video said: "As much as banning TikTok over security concerns is a legitimate thought, it seems like a bit like an overstep on the part of the U.S. government to ban an app through executive orders." Do you agree? Would the government be overstepping by banning a consumer app? Why/Why not?
12. If TikTok were banned, would you be personally affected? If so, how?
13. Do you think people spend too much time on social media? Why/Why not?
14. Should we be more concerned about our privacy when it comes to social media? Why/Why not?
15. If there are legitimate concerns about TikTok being used to invade privacy or for propaganda, is a government ban the best solution? What other solutions might there be?
16. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
17. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
18. Did you have an opinion on this topic before watching these videos? If so, what was it? Has your opinion changed? If so, how? What did you learn from these videos that affects your views on this topic?
19. What else would you like to learn about this topic?