Another Look at the TikTok Ban

Videos:

"USA TikTok ban: Is it really the best solution?"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vT1Yt3vYdBI   (6:00 minutes)

"TikTok creator says potential ban will hurt small businesses most | Canada Tonight"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5dZTMko7Gs   (6:26 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. In the Sky News video, Sonia Livingstone said that many children describe TikTok as "addictive." Do you agree that it's addictive? Why/Why not?

3. In the CBC News video, Joanne Molinaro said that TikTok's lawyers argued that a ban would be a violation of its users' First Amendment rights. Do you agree with this argument? Why/Why not?

4. Sonia Livingstone said that TikTok actively promotes harmful conduct. Have you experienced this on TikTok and/or other social media platforms? Is it a problem? Why/Why not?

5. Joanne Molinaro said the argument that TikTok should be banned because it's a security risk is disingenuous. Why did she think this?

6. Sonia Livingstone said that better management of TikTok would be preferable to a ban. What would better management look like? Should the government be involved in managing TikTok? Why/Why not?

7. If Joanne Molinaro is correct that the Chinese government has other ways to spy on Americans, then why do you think TikTok is being singled out by the U.S. government?

8. Sonia Livingstone said that young people like having a single app on which they can do a variety of things, like get the news, shop, and create. Do you agree? Why/Why not?

9. Joanne Molinaro said that billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs have been added by creators and small businesses that started on TikTok. Were you surprised to learn of that impact? Why/Why not?
10. Sonia Livingstone talked about TikTok's algorithm. What is an algorithm?
11. Joanne Molinaro said she became a consumer of TikTok because of political speech. Have you encountered political speech on TikTok? Do you think it should be protected? Why/Why not?
12. Sonia Livingstone said she would prefer regulations that focused on preventing apps from amplifying "harmful conduct." Should the government have the authority to decide what conduct is and isn't harmful? Why/Why not?
13. Joanne Molinaro said creators and businesspeople on TikTok will be negatively impacted financially by a ban. If we were to assume that TikTok is a security risk, would this trade off be worth it? Why/Why not?
14. If TikTok is banned, will you be personally affected? If so, how?
15. Do you use TikTok? If so, what have been the pros and cons of your experience on the platform? Do the pros outweigh the cons? Why/Why not?
16. Should social media in general be more regulated by the government? Why/Why not?
17. Should social media in general be more regulated by the platforms themselves? Why/Why not?
18. Did these two videos share any common ground? Were there any points on which they agreed? If so, what were they?
19. Should one of the arguments we heard carry more weight than the other? If so, which one? Why?
20. 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?
21. What else would you like to learn about this topic?