

Episode Nine: TikTok: Its Popularity and Concerns *(originally aired 3/22/2020)*

VIEWING & DISCUSSION GUIDE

TARGET AUDIENCE

English and Language Arts, Social Studies, Media Studies, Social Emotional Learning, Environmental Science: Ages 11–14

EPISODE THEMES

- Culture/Economics
- Climate Change
- Youth Activism
- Media Consumption
- Human Rights

U.S. EDUCATION STANDARDS

Media Literacy

ISTE 1.c. Use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

ISTE 7.a. Use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.

ISTE 7.d. Explore local and global issues and use collaborative technologies to work with others to investigate solutions.

**English and Language Arts
Reading Informational Texts**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7
Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.7
Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

EPISODE OVERVIEW

Produced by the BBC World Service, *My World* is a program for tweens and teens who want to know more about the key stories and issues shaping our world. Episode Nine showcases a variety of these timely issues and topics, including:

- The appeal and growing popularity of **eSports**.
- The critical role of **oceans in removing CO₂** from the atmosphere.
- Restoring the population of great **whales as a defense against climate change**.
- **Mehwish Hayat**, a Pakistani actress, and her role in attempting to break stereotypes.
- **Protest** as a form of freedom for a Russian youth.
- **Public opinion about Vladimir Putin** and his 20-year rule over Russia.
- A tour of **Harare, Zimbabwe** led by an entrepreneurial teenager.
- The **growth of TikTok** and potential user concerns.

NOTE: This episode covers multiple topics. If you want to take a deeper dive into a particular topic from this episode, head over to our chaptered segments. Each segment is 3-5 minutes and includes a list of prompts to engage your students in the topic covered in that segment.

- Should eSports Go Olympic?
- Oceans: Our Defense Against Climate Change
- Russia Takes Away Youth Right to Protest
- Social Media and Free Speech

PREVIEWING DISCUSSION

Suggested prompts include:

- Do you play and/or follow eSports?
- How are oceans affected by climate change?
- How do you think climate change has impacted oceanic habitats?
- Why might celebrities be the target of online trolls?
- Why should journalists present a range of opinions in their reporting?
- What do you know about Vladimir Putin?
- Where is Zimbabwe? What do you know about this country?
- Do you use TikTok?
- What do you think makes TikTok so appealing to users?

National Council for the Social Studies Themes

5. Individual, Groups, and experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

7. Production, Distribution, and Consumption: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

9. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

10. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

Next Generation Science Standards

MS-ESS3-2 Analyze and interpret data on natural hazards to forecast future catastrophic events and inform the development of technologies to mitigate their effects.

MS-ESS3-5 Ask questions to clarify evidence of the factors that have caused the rise in global temperatures over the past century.

CASEL Core Competencies— Collaborating States Initiatives

Social Awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Responsible Decision Making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.

POST VIEWING DISCUSSION

- What do you think is the widespread appeal of eSports?
- How are oceans like the rainforests, which serve as “the lungs” of the planet?
- What role do whales play in storing CO₂?
- How is Mehwish Hayat a trailblazer in Pakistani cinema?
- How does she use her celebrity for good?
- What motivates Nikita from Moscow to participate in protests?
- How is Sivuse (from Zimbabwe) entrepreneurial?
- What is the significance of the emblem on the Zimbabwean flag?
- What is the concern surrounding the TikTok app?
- How are users trying to monetize (make money) from their TikTok posts and followers?

INFOBASE SUGGESTED RESOURCES

For additional instructional opportunities, Infobase suggests reviewing these resources.

EXTEND AND CONNECT

1. In August of 2020, the Trump administration almost issued an executive order to ban the TikTok platform in the United States. Students can research the causes and outcomes of this story. Additionally, students can investigate the current status of TikTok’s viability for US users.
2. Vladimir Putin has led Russia for almost 20 years. How was he able to consolidate and hold onto power for so long? What roles has he played in Russian government and what has been his impact nationally and internationally?
3. What is the value of whale poop for the earth’s ecosystem? Students can examine these [infographics](#) from the whale and dolphin advocacy group, [us.whales.org](#), to further understand the critical role whales play as a key defense against climate change. What is “whale pump”? What is “whale fall”?
Source: “The Green Whale,” [uk.whales.org](#), <https://uk.whales.org/2021/01/05/save-the-whales-save-the-world-convincing-governments-that-whales-will-help-us-fight-the-climate-crisis/>. Accessed 12 November 2020.
4. Mehwish Hayat is a vocal advocate for gender pay equity in film. While she has succeeded in commanding equal pay, what is the outlook in Hollywood, Bollywood, and the general film industry? Students can evaluate the state of pay equity and produce an infographic such as a chart or graph with their findings.
5. Endorsements offer big payouts when advertisers promote their brands with people who have a large viewership or followers. How are eSports and TikTok influencers using their platforms to gain endorsements? Students can explore the advertising stemming from the growing popularity of these pop culture phenomena. What types of companies are jumping into these spaces? How much revenue (money) is spent to reach eSports and TikTok followers? Are there emerging regulations about the role of endorsements in these spaces? Students can debate the ethics of these endorsements, and who ultimately benefits from them.