

# TIKTOK COMES UNDER FIRE

Mar 2nd, 2023

**WARM-UP QUESTIONS:** *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. Which phone apps do you use most often?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it is about?

**VOCABULARY:** *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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|--------------------|--|
| 1. Come under fire | a) everywhere in a country   |
| 2. Potentially     | b) to say that something is officially not allowed   |
| 3. Ban             | c) disliking people from outside your own country  |
| 4. Nationwide      | d) to be criticized  |
| 5. Propaganda      | e) false information, especially when it is purposefully given                                       |
| 6. Misinformation  | f) to use in a bad way   |
| 7. Xenophobic      | g) to claim someone has done something wrong   |
| 8. Restrict        | h) to limit  |
| 9. Accuse          | i) information like statements and images that support only one side of an argument, often political |
| 10. Abuse          | j) something that could happen, possibly   |

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**LISTEN:** *Listen to the audio track on [esnewsstories.com](https://www.esnewsstories.com) or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text (below).*

TikTok, a popular video sharing app, is potentially \_\_\_\_\_ according to some Western governments. Government employees in the United States, Canada, and Denmark, have been told they must remove TikTok from their government-issued \_\_\_\_\_. American politicians are also preparing a law that would help President Biden to ban TikTok nationwide if he chooses to do so.

TikTok is owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance. Critics say that the Chinese government could use \_\_\_\_\_ collected by the app, or that the app could be used to spread propaganda

or misinformation. By law in China, companies have to supply data to the government if it is related to \_\_\_\_\_ security.

Researchers say that the amount of data collected by TikTok is not different from that collected by Facebook, and this raises the question, is the targeting of TikTok xenophobic? \_\_\_\_\_, would it make more sense to restrict the collection of data by all social media companies?

The Chinese government reacted strongly to the recent moves against TikTok. They accused the US of abusing its power to help \_\_\_\_\_ companies. China, however, banned American social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube long ago.

**WORD FORMS:** Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an *x*, the word is unimportant for ESL students, has a different meaning, or does not exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.

VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	NOUN
x		potentially	
		x	misinformation
x	xenophobic		
restrict			

**FULL STORY:**

TikTok, a popular video sharing app, is potentially dangerous according to some Western governments. Government employees in the United States, Canada, and Denmark, have been told they must remove TikTok from their government-issued phones. American politicians are also preparing a law that would help President Biden to ban TikTok nationwide if he chooses to do so.

TikTok is owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance. Critics say that the Chinese government could use data collected by the app, or that the app could be used to spread propaganda or misinformation. By law in China, companies have to supply data to the government if it is related to national security.

Researchers say that the amount of data collected by TikTok is not different from that collected by Facebook, and this raises the question, is the targeting of TikTok xenophobic? Moreover, would it make more sense to restrict the collection of data by all social media companies?

The Chinese government reacted strongly to the recent moves against TikTok. They accused the US of abusing its power to help American companies. China, however, banned American social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube long ago.

Sources: apnews.com, theguardian.com  
For source links, see the article on ESLNewsStories.com

**COMPREHENSION:** *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. TikTok is a popular clock sharing app. ( T / F )
2. TikTok has to be removed from government phones. ( T / F )
3. TikTok will be banned throughout the US. ( T / F )
4. Facebook is banned in China. ( T / F )

**COMPLETE:** *Re-order the following sentences. Capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. data / users / tiktok / from / collects
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2. misinformation / app / could / the / spread / to / used / be
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**DISCUSSION:** *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. What did you think about this story? Was there any surprising information?
2. Do you have TikTok on your phone? Do you have other social media?
3. What kinds of things do people see on TikTok? Why is it so popular?
4. How important is privacy to you?
5. What kinds of data do apps and websites collect from us? Do you care about this kind of data collection?
6. Do you think that TikTok is potentially dangerous to national security?
7. What do you think about the relationship between the United States and China?
8. Should foreign social media companies be allowed in China?
9. There is a lot of misinformation on the internet. How can we identify accurate information?
10. What are the pros and cons of social media?

**WRITING:** Write a paragraph that clearly states your opinion on the above news article. Give reasons for your opinion.

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**ANSWERS**

VOCABULARY: 1-d, 2-j, 3-b, 4-a, 5-i, 6-e, 7-c, 8-h, 9-g, 10-f

WORD FORMS: potential, potential, misinform, misinformed, xenophobically, xenophobia/xenophobe, restricted, restrictedly, restriction

COMPREHENSION: 1-F, 2-T, 3-F, 4-T

COMPLETE: 1. TikTok collects data from users. 2. The app could be used to spread misinformation.