

NEWS BREAK

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, November 13, 2016** of The Seattle Times e-Edition for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions. **Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

Article: Cellphone number can now unlock your private life (MAIN, A1)

Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

- *What is identity theft? Has this ever happened to anyone you know?*
- *Do you think people and companies can access personal information from your phone? Why or why not?*

Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.

A. commerce	1. a rapid spread or increase in the occurrence of something:
B. consequences	2. deceit, trickery, sharp practice, or breach of confidence, perpetrated for profit or to gain some unfair or dishonest advantage.
C. enable	3. the effect, result, or outcome of something occurring earlier:
D. epidemic	4. to make able; give power, means, competence, or ability to; authorize:
E. fraud	5. the crime of setting up and using bank accounts and credit facilities fraudulently in another person's name without his or her knowledge
F. identity theft	6. an interchange of goods or commodities, especially on a large scale between different countries (foreign commerce) or between different parts of the same country (domestic commerce) trade; business.

Comprehension:

1. The cellphone number is more than just a bunch of digits. It is increasingly used as a link to what?
2. Yet the cellphone number is not a legally regulated piece of information like a Social Security number, which companies are required to keep private. While we are told to hide and protect our Social Security numbers, most of us don't hesitate to do what?

3. That is a growing issue for young people, since two sets of digits may well be with them for life. What two sets of digits is the article referring to?
4. Nearly half of all U.S. households have given up their _____ and have only wireless phone service — a figure that has risen more than 10 percentage points in just three years.
5. In fact, investigators find that a cellphone number is often even more useful than a Social Security number. Why?
6. Use of the cellphone number in new, unanticipated ways has echoes in the history of the Social Security number, which was created in _____. What was its original purpose?

Group Discussion Questions or Extension Essay Questions:

It has become “kind of a key into the room of your life and information about you,” said Edward M. Stroz, a former high-tech crime agent for the FBI who is co-president of Stroz Friedberg, a private investigator.

- Did you know this about cell phones prior to reading this article?
- Will you continue to give your cell number out freely, or will you be a bit more cautious? Why or why not?

“That Social Security numbers are so broadly used and often so poorly protected is a major cause of the current epidemic of identity theft,” said Alessandro Acquisti, a computer scientist and privacy expert at Carnegie Mellon University.

The total losses in the U.S. from stolen identities used in crimes like credit-card and loan fraud were \$15 billion last year, Javelin, a research and consulting firm, estimated. And 11 percent of U.S. adults say they lost money last year in a telephone swindle, according to a Harris Poll survey sponsored by Truecaller, a Swedish maker of a cellphone app with features like caller ID and spam blocking.

- \$15 billion in stolen identities and credit card and loan fraud. Were you surprised by these statistics? Why or why not?
- How can the government tackle these problems?

News Break is posted to the Web on Wednesday and Friday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition for your class, please [register on-line](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

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Newsbreak Answer Key: November 13, 2016

Vocabulary

- A. 6
- B. 3
- C. 4
- D. 1
- E. 2
- F. 5

Comprehension Questions

1. Private information maintained by all sorts of companies, including money lenders and social networks. It can be used to monitor and predict what you buy, look for online or even watch on television.
2. When asked, to write a cellphone number on a form or share it with someone we barely know.
3. Their Social Security number and their cellphone number.
4. Landlines
5. Because it is tied to so many databases and is connected to a device you almost always have with you, said Austin Berglas, a former FBI agent who is senior managing director of K2 Intelligence, a private investigator.

“The point is the cellphone number can be a gateway to all sorts of other information,” said Robert Schoshinski, assistant director for privacy and identity protection at the Federal Trade Commission. “People should think about it.”

6. 1936; was to enable the nation’s nascent social insurance system to maintain accurate records of workers covered under the program. It was never meant as a general purpose identification number.