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ANONYMOUS DECLARE CYBERWAR

Scan to review worksheet

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1 **Warm up**

Discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.

1. Have you ever taken part in an online protest?

2. Have you ever *trolled* someone, or been trolled by someone online?

3. Why do you think people troll other people on the Internet?

4. Why do you think some people choose to hide their identity online?

5. Some governments around the world have tried to pass laws making it illegal to be anonymous online. Do you think this is a good or bad idea? Why?

6. Do you have a negative reaction when you hear the word "hacker"? Do you think that hacking can be a tool used for the greater good, at times?

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2 **Pre-listening task**

You're about to listen to a report about the recent Anonymous cyber-attacks on Russia. Complete the pre-listening task below.

First, look at the image on page 1 of the masked person. What do you think of when you see the image? Write down some ideas that come to mind.

Now, in pairs or groups, make a list of famous protests you can think of throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

3 **Listening comprehension**

Listen to the report. Decide if each statement is true, false or not given.

1. Twitter banned an account linked to Anonymous after it declared a cyberwar on Russia.

2. The collective known as Anonymous has claimed responsibility for a number of cyber-attacks on Russian targets.

3. A DDoS attack involves hacking government officials to gain access to passwords and secret information.

4. Two special types of viruses called 'Wipers' have targeted Ukraine in the last few weeks.

5. A virus that relied on a 'worm' to infect computers originated in Slovakia.

6. The techniques used by Anonymous tend to focus on damaging morale rather than infecting computers with viruses.

7. On February 26th, Russian state TV decided to broadcast the truth about what was happening in Ukraine.

8. According to a sub-group of Anonymous based in Germany, the aim of the collective is to force Russian hackers to focus on defensive measures.

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4 General vocabulary

Part A: Match the words and phrases in bold with the correct definitions.

1. Some people see desktop computers as rather **quaint**, preferring to use tablets and phones for their online activities.

2. Many would agree that ordering armed forces to capture a nuclear power plant is **courting** disaster.

3. I became **embroiled** in my friends' failing marriage after they asked me to help them solve a dispute.

4. The police warned us that **infringements** of the pandemic regulations could lead to fines.

5. The government are launching a **crackdown** on adult websites.

6. In the United States, **law enforcement** officers have found themselves deeply unpopular since the killing of George Floyd.

7. Billy was suspended from school even though the attack on another child had been **retaliatory**.

8. As resources run low, experts are predicting that there will be an increase in **strife** around the world as people battle over the leftovers.

9. Her novel about life during the pandemic has been widely celebrated for embodying the **zeitgeist**.

10. Politicians **condemned** the riots, but refused to address the problems that had led to violence breaking out.

a. an action that breaks a rule, law etc.

b. a situation in which someone in authority starts to deal with bad or illegal behaviour in a more severe way

c. become involved in an argument or difficult situation

d. describing something that is seen as strange or old-fashioned, in either a positive or negative way

e. do something that might result in something unpleasant happening

f. intended to harm somebody because they harmed you first

g. the general mood or quality of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs common at the time

h. the police or other officials who attempt to stop crime or catch criminals

i. to criticise someone or something strongly, usually for moral reasons

j. violent or angry disagreement

Part B: Complete the short text with the correct words from Part A. You may need to change the form of the words.

I became _____[1] in the Occupy movement while working at a major bank. At the time, there was mounting _____[2] around the world, especially towards people working in finance. Compared to the current situation in Ukraine, it all seems rather _____[3] now, but back then I remember feeling more and more worried as I watched the demonstrations from my office window. One week, people started to put up tents outside my workplace, and even though the protests appeared to be peaceful, the mayor ordered a _____[4]. I came into work one morning to find _____[5] officers dragging people away and tearing their crude shelters down. Apparently, politicians had _____[6] the protests, accusing demonstrators of various _____[7], such as attacking the police or damaging buildings.

The same day, I quit my job and joined the demonstrations. I knew the truth – I'd seen it with my own eyes. The only violence committed by protestors had been _____[8], and on a very small scale. The mayor continued to _____[9] controversy by declaring his intention to outlaw peaceful protests, but people were starting to see through him, and he was voted out in the next elections. Meanwhile, I met my future wife at one of the marches we used to organise. She was a musician in a punk band, and later that year she went on to release a song that went viral, perfectly capturing the _____[10] of the Occupy movement.

Discuss these questions in pairs.

1. Have you ever considered a career in **law enforcement**? Do you know anyone who works in this field?

2. Can you think of a time in which you became **embroiled** in a situation you didn't want to be part of?

5   Reading for general understanding

You are going to read a text about the collective known as Anonymous. Scan the text quickly and match the paragraph headings with the correct paragraphs. One heading cannot be matched to any of the paragraphs and should be marked 'Not given'.

a.   Fighting for a free Internet?

b.   A reflection of our times

c.   A dream that isn't likely to be realised

d.   From pranksters to protestors

e.   A declining force?

f.   Different approaches emerge

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5/8

Behind the mask

A brief history of Anonymous

1. When the "hacktivist" group Anonymous waded into the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, it seemed, to many, like a logical progression for an organisation that started out as a meme in the murky waters of the 4chan online community. Entrenched in internet folklore, the collective that calls itself Anonymous can seem quaint, a relic of the early days of the Internet. Originating in 2004, they were largely seen as pranksters in their formative years, with attacks on social media websites that the group referred to as "raids" prompting a somewhat irrational response from media outlets such as KTTV, which called the group "hackers on steroids" and "domestic terrorists." They would go on to court genuine controversy. In 2008, they launched a DDoS attack on the Church of Scientology. Members of the collective appeared in a YouTube video wearing the now-infamous Guy Fawkes masks taken from the graphic novel V for Vendetta. Battle lines had been drawn, and the moment marked both a change in direction and escalation for the collective.

2. As the 2010s came to a close, Anonymous became embroiled in another online war. Internet piracy was the topic of the day, with the entertainment industry concerned by the rise of The Pirate Bay, a file-sharing website often used by those who wished to download illegal copies of films and music. Anonymous sided with the pirates, hacking the website of an anti-copyright infringement group and taking aim at law firms and businesses that supported crackdowns on file-sharing. The issue appeared to have struck a chord with the group largely because of their anti-censorship stance, one of the defining qualities of an organisation that can appear fragmented and unfocused, at times. Indeed, in-fighting and disagreement on which battles to fight seem to be a dilemma the group has faced since the beginning. At the core of the collective there are two conflicting ideals: the urge to "troll" or play pranks for one's own amusement, and the desire to help to change things for the better.

3. This division may well have resulted in the formation of splinter groups, such as LulzSec and Operation AntiSec. In a departure from the milder actions of their peers, these groups carried out a series of cyberattacks on U.S government targets, including military contractors and police officers, which resulted, inevitably, in the attention of law enforcement agencies. Some of these attacks were retaliatory, and many were petty in nature. One notable example involved the hacking of Aaron Barr, the CEO of a security firm in response to his threat to expose group members. LulzSec posted racist tweets from Barr's account and published his private emails online. Meanwhile, Anonymous itself was becoming more political. The collective became involved in the Occupy Wall Street protests and targeted individuals and organisations accused of homophobia. They hacked Chinese government websites urging Chinese people to "fight for justice, fight for freedom" and promised a "massive cyberassault" against Israel for its actions in the Gaza Strip.

4. On November 5th, 2013, protestors around the world gathered for special demonstrations, known as the Million Mask March. The protests would go on to become an annual global event, although numbers have dwindled in recent years. The group itself had, at one point, appeared to be fading into the footnotes of history. Arrests of high-profile members and internal strife over suitable goals and targets were touted as potential causes of the collective's downfall. During the build-up to the 2016 presidential elections, the group seemed to devolve into factions that either opposed or supported the then-candidate, Donald Trump. In 2017, a conspiracy theory known as QAnon emerged on the 4chan message boards – the birthplace of the Anonymous movement. The conspiracy theory would go on to become a global political movement, adopted and influenced by the far-right.

5. Anonymous resurfaced in 2020 after a quiet few years, releasing a video addressed to the Minneapolis Police department in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. In a time when the Western world was united in outrage and a new wave of protests were rippling through the streets, it seemed that, once again, Anonymous had its finger on the pulse of the zeitgeist. It should, then, come as no surprise to see the familiar logo in the news as the world comes together to condemn the invasion of Ukraine. Anonymous may be many things, some good, some

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bad, but at its heart the group is a reflection of the world we are currently living in, a mirror to the anger that many of us feel and a collective opposition to the injustices that we endure together.

6 Reading comprehension

Read the article again. Complete the sentences with between ONE to THREE words from the article.

1. Anonymous, a group rooted in _____, can appear quaint, a relic from the past.

2. Early pranks led to a somewhat _____ from some.

3. The Pirate Bay allowed users to _____ of films and music.

4. The issue of online piracy and copyright infringement _____ with the collective because of their anti-censorship stance.

5. Some members of Anonymous broke away to form splinter groups, and _____ attacks on various targets.

6. Chinese government websites were among those _____ by the collective.

7. The Million Mask March has turned into an _____, although it has become less popular in recent times.

8. The 4chan message boards, often considered to be the _____ of Anonymous, gave rise to a conspiracy theory known as QAnon.

9. After a _____, Anonymous reappeared in 2020 as the world processed the murder of George Floyd.

10. Seeing the familiar logo appear in news reports around the world should come as _____.

7 Talking point

In pairs or small groups, discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever downloaded something illegally? Why do you think people do this?

2. Is the internet completely free from censorship in your country?

3. Do you think that freedom of speech is more important than security? Should there be a balance?

4. Can the internet be effectively used as a tool of protest?

5. Why do you think Anonymous came into being? Do you think the group is a product of its time, or is it a timeless idea?

6. Do you think Anonymous has generally done more harm than good? Why/why not?

7. The V for Vendetta mask has become a symbol of protest around the world. Why do you think this is?

8   Extended activity: post-reading

Match the words and phrases in bold with the correct definitions.

1. The situation in Ukraine has **prompted** many European countries to act.
2. The riots and looting marked an **escalation** in the demonstrations.
3. Whenever a new political movement arises, **splintergroups** tend to pop up as well.
4. The Prime Minister should have known better than to **wade into** the argument about rising rent costs.
5. Although progress has been made in recent years, there have been accusations of **homophobia** within the armed forces.
6. Protests from the murder of George Floyd **rippled** outwards, turning into the Black Lives Matter movement.
7. King Henry VIII of England is **infamous** for having six wives, some of whom met unpleasant ends.
8. There is a theory that great art cannot be made unless the artist has **endured** great hardships.
9. The invasion has led to widespread **outrage** around the world.
10. Our business is being merged this week. I can't help feeling that we're heading into **murky waters**, and that many will lose their jobs.

a. a fear or dislike of gay people

b. a feeling of anger and shock

c. a group of people who have left a political party or other organisation to form a new separate organisation

d. a situation that is not well-known and may be dangerous.

e. become involved in a difficult situation, often without thinking about it carefully

f. encourage someone to act or react to a situation

g. spread through a group of people like a wave

h. suffer something difficult, unpleasant or painful

i. the act of becoming or making something greater, more serious or worse

j. well-known for something considered bad

Transcripts

3. Listening comprehension

Newsreader:	The hacker collective Anonymous has declared a cyberwar on Russia. Following the invasion of Ukraine, a Twitter account linked to the group announced that it was "officially in cyberwar against the Russian government."
Newsreader:	Since the tweet was posted, Anonymous have claimed credit for a number of cyber attacks on Russian targets. Actions taken included DDoS (distributed denial of service) assaults on government websites. Typically, this type of attack involves overwhelming a site with web traffic, in order to make it inaccessible.
Newsreader:	Although temporary, DDoS attacks can have lasting consequences, and the method appears to have been used by Russia against the websites of Ukrainian governmental departments, such as the defence ministry. Additionally, cybersecurity experts have identified a further attack on Ukrainian computers. A special type of virus known as a 'wiper', which could have the capacity to permanently disable computers.
Newsreader:	The virus is the second of its kind to target Ukraine in recent weeks. The first, given the name HermeticWiper by a cybersecurity firm in Slovakia, relied on a 'worm' to infect computers and local networks.
Newsreader:	By contrast, Anonymous tend to focus on creating confusion and damaging morale, rather than spreading malware. On February 26th, the collective claimed to have hacked Russian state TV in order to "broadcast the truth about what happens" in Ukraine. Regular broadcasts were replaced with Ukrainian music and images of the ongoing invasion.
Newsreader:	The informal nature of the group makes it hard to definitively attribute any of the cyber attacks to Anonymous, although the actions taken against Russian targets appear similar to their previous activities. Their aim seems simple. While acknowledging that DDoS attacks alone are unlikely to bring down Putin's regime, a German sub-group of the hacker collective stated that the intention was to keep Russian hackers busy, to try to prevent them from launching fresh cyber assaults on Ukraine.

Key

1.   Warm up

5 mins.

Tell the students they will be listening to a report about the recent Anonymous cyber-attacks on Russia and reading an article giving more background about the collective. This discussion activity is suitable for pairs or small groups. Explain that 'troll' can be used as a verb meaning "to write false or offensive messages online in order to make people angry or provoke a strong negative reaction."

2.   Pre-listening task

5 mins.

For the first question, students should jot down some ideas that come to mind when they see the Anonymous photo. This activity could also be done as a class brainstorm task on the board. The second question is more suited to pair or group work. Possible protests include: Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo Movement, the Suffragettes.

3.   Listening comprehension

5 mins.

Students should answer the questions true, false or not given.

Allow students to listen a second time if needed to be able to give reasons for their answers.

1. Not given. All we know is that the announcement was made through Twitter.

2. True. Anonymous have claimed credit for a number of cyber-attacks on Russian targets.

3. False. Typically, this type of attack involves overwhelming a site with web traffic, in order to make it inaccessible.

4. True. A special virus known as a 'Wiper' has been identified, the second attack of its kind in recent weeks.

5. False. The virus was identified in Slovakia.

6. True. Anonymous tend to focus on creating confusion and damaging morale, rather than spreading malware.

7. False. Anonymous claimed to have hacked Russian state TV in order to broadcast the truth about what was happening in Ukraine.

8. True. A German sub-group of the hacker collective stated that the intention was to keep Russian hackers busy, to try to prevent them from launching fresh cyber assaults on Ukraine.

4.   General vocabulary

10 mins.

Students should match the words in bold with the correct definitions. Ensure students know how to pronounce target vocabulary. For part B, students should read through the short text and choose the most suitable word for each space. Students may need to change the form of the word. For the discussion activity, students can complete the task in pairs or groups.

Part A

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

Part B

1. embroiled
2. strife
3. quaint
4. crackdown
5. law enforcement
6. condemned
7. infringements
8. retaliatory
9. court
10. zeitgeist

5. Reading for general understanding

5 mins.

Ask students to skim through the text quickly to match the headings to the correct paragraphs. You may want to do this as a strictly-timed exercise.

a. Paragraph 2
b. Paragraph 5
c. Not given
d. Paragraph 1
e. Paragraph 4
f. Paragraph 3

Sources:

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https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/27/anonymous-the-hacker-collective-that-has-declared-cyberwar-on-russia

https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/anonymous-russia-hackers-ukraine-message-b2024989.html

6. Reading comprehension

10 mins.

Students should complete the task individually or in pairs. Students should read the article again, and complete the sentences with between one to three words from the text itself.

1. Internet folklore
2. irrational response
3. download illegal copies
4. struck a chord
5. carried out
6. hacked
7. annual global event
8. birthplace
9. quiet few years
10. no surprise

7. Talking point

10 mins.

Ask students to discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.

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8. Extended activity: post-reading

10 mins.

Students should match the words and phrases to the most accurate meaning. Students should refer to the text above for this exercise.

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