



Identifying Issues and Debates – Prensky Article (Sample Answers)

Initial Questions	Use these questions to start thinking about the issues and debates in the article.
What is the author’s main argument?	
Prensky argues that for the education system to be effective , teachers have a responsibility to improve their approaches to teaching in order to engage today’s more digitally literate students.	
What is the author’s main goal? Why did they write the article?	
Prensky is motivated by his desire to promote computer use, especially computer games, as part of the learning experience. He wants educators to link innovation with increased use of digital technology .	
What field(s) of study does the writer connect with?	
Prensky’s arguments clearly engage with the fields of education and learning . But his work might also be of interest in the fields of computer gaming and the development of other educational computer resources.	
Who is the writer’s audience?	
Prensky’s audience are educators and people working in the fields of curriculum development, as well as those in the technology fields interested in educational resources.	
These sample answers have highlighted key phrases that are clues to identifying the issues and debates in the article.	
Issues and Debates	<p>Use these steps to present the issues and debates in the article.</p> <p>A. Using the ideas from above, identify two or three different issues or debates in the article.</p> <p>B. Indicate what position the article takes on that debate.</p>
Issue or Debate #1	
Describe the issue or debate.	
Education:	
How should students be taught? What should students learn in school? What role does technology have in the education system?	
What position in the issue or debate does the author take?	
Prensky emphasizes an education system that appeals to the preferences of a younger digital generation. Not everyone agrees this is necessary or beneficial.	
Issue or Debate #2	
Describe the issue or debate.	
Digital Literacy:	
What new skills are important in the digital era? In a world shaped increasingly by our use of digital technology, what skills do we need to succeed?	



Sample Answers

What position in the issue or debate does the author take?
Prensky emphasizes skills in multitasking, in game play, and in the fluent ability to use digital technology. Other writers identify different skills.
Issue or Debate #3
Describe the issue or debate.
Digital Divide: What assumptions do we make about who has access to, and so benefits from, digital technology and who does not?
What position in the issue or debate does the author take?
Not all writers agree with Prensky's idea that the generational divide is accurate or even the most important issue. Issues like class, urban and rural living, and the priorities of the education system also affect how competent people are with technology.