

# How to Read an Editorial

## LEARNING STRATEGIES:

Graphic Organizer, SOAPSTone, Substituting/Replacing

## ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

An **editorial** is an article in a newspaper or magazine expressing the opinion of its editor or publisher.

## My Notes

## Learning Targets

- Use specific strategies to analyze an editorial.
- Examine the impact of audience and context on a writer’s decisions.

## How to Read an Editorial

As you read through the following guidelines for reading **editorials**, paraphrase each of the points by writing a word or two in the margins that will help you to remember the point.

- Examine the headline, sub-headline, and related cartoon (if it exists). What will this editorial be about? What guesses or assumptions can you make about the author’s perspective at this point?
- Look at the author’s name and affiliation, if given. What do you know about the author’s background and/or potential bias at this point?
- Read the first two to three paragraphs very carefully. What issue is the author discussing and what is his or her stance on this issue?
- Once you have determined the author’s stance on the issue, stop reading for a moment or two. What is the other side to the issue? Who might think differently? What are one or two reasons that you know that might support the other side of the author’s stance?
- Continue reading the editorial. What are two of the strongest pieces of evidence that the author uses to support his or her side of the issue? Why are they effective?
- Did the author persuade you? Did the author address or refute the main objections of the opposition? Give an example. What did he or she not address? Why might the author have chosen not to address this element? Do you think the author was fair to the other side? Why or why not?
- Go back through the editorial and circle words and phrases that are “slanted.” How do these words affect your feelings about the issue? About the author?
- If the author were standing right next to you now, what would you say to him or her?

## Before Reading

1. How is an editorial different from a news story?

## During Reading

2. Read the unsigned editorial “Facing Consequences at Eden Prairie High” beginning on the following pages, and use the eight prompts in “How to Read an Editorial” to guide your initial analysis. For further analysis, you may want to consider using the SOAPSTone reading strategy.



My Notes

**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

After you have read the first couple of paragraphs, determine the issue the author is discussing and his or her stance on the issue.

**KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS**

**Tone** refers to an author's attitude toward his or her subject or subject matter. What is the author's tone in this piece? Identify passages in which you think the tone is especially clear.

Editorial

## Facing Consequences at Eden Prairie High

from the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune*

**1** This just in: Some high school students drink alcohol and, in the Internet age, some underage drinkers are foolish enough to post party photos on popular websites. In the case of Eden Prairie High School vs. the partying Facebook students, we give administrators credit for their judgment and flunk the students on common sense.

**2** Similarly, any parents considering taking legal action because they think the school went too far in disciplining students need a reality check. Teen drinking remains a serious problem in this state and Eden Prairie administrators deserve praise—not legal threats or complaints from parents—for taking decisive action that they knew would be controversial. Face it, parents, the Facebook kids screwed up, and here's a chance to talk about personal responsibility in the context of an underage drinking escapade that, thankfully, did not involve death or injury.

**3** And here's the reality for students: We know high school students drink, and some experiment with drugs. Most of your baby boomer parents certainly did one or both, and some lost driver's licenses, had serious auto accidents and were suspended from the football team. That's how it goes with risks and consequences.

**4** Your parents can probably tell you a few stories about binge drinking, too, either from their high school or college days or both. If not, go to the search field at [startribune.com](http://startribune.com) and type in these names: Jenna Foellmi, Rissa Amen-Reif, Amanda Jax and Brian W. Threet. In the past four months, these four young people all died in drinking-related incidents in Minnesota. Brian's funeral was Thursday afternoon in Farmington.

**5** With that backdrop, protests over invasion of privacy are ridiculous. School administrators weren't surfing social networking sites without cause. They received a complaint and had a responsibility to investigate and act according to school policies. Students who think the Web has been used against them unfairly should fast-forward a few years and consider how they'll feel when a potential employer uses Facebook or MySpace in a background check, with a job offer on the line.

**6** Some are viewing the athletes among the students who were caught red-cupped in Eden Prairie through a surprisingly sympathetic lens. That's wrongheaded. The Minnesota High School League requires student-athletes and their parents to pledge that the students will abstain from alcohol and illegal drugs. Break the pledge, lose the privilege.

**7** We were encouraged by the reaction of Eden Prairie High School parent Larry Burke, whose daughter was not involved in the drinking incident. "The posting is very foolish," Burke told the Star Tribune. "But from a perspective of a parent, I'm glad it happened. There are a lot of discussions going on in a lot of households about alcohol and consequences."

**8** Let's hope other parents bring as much common sense to those conversations as Burke.

