

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Social Media Influence Quiz for High School Freshman

Challenge assumptions through critical analysis of parasocial relationships and algorithmic ethics rather than just surface-level scrolling habits.

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**1. An influencer specializing in 'cottagecore' aesthetics promotes a minimalist lifestyle while simultaneously linking a dozen new fast-fashion products in their bio. This scenario best illustrates which sociological conflict?**

**Answer:** B) The tension between authentic branding and commercial monetization

Influencers often face a 'paradox of authenticity' where they must appear relatable and genuine while fulfilling contractual obligations to advertisers that may contradict their public persona.

**2. A tech-review influencer receives an undisclosed equity stake in a startup before giving its product a 'glowing' review. In the United States, which regulatory body is primarily responsible for investigating this lack of transparency?**

**Answer:** C) The Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

The FTC mandates that influencers must clearly disclose any material connection to a brand, including gifts, payments, or ownership stakes, to prevent deceptive advertising.

**3. When a follower develops a one-sided psychological bond with a creator, believing they have a close friendship despite never meeting, it is known as a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship.**

**Answer:** B) Parasocial

Parasocial relationships are common in the influencer economy, as creators use intimate camera angles and personal storytelling to foster a sense of closeness with millions of strangers.

**4. True or False: The 'echo chamber' effect on social media is primarily caused by users intentionally blocking everyone they disagree with, rather than by automated platform algorithms.**

**Answer:** B) False

While user choice plays a role, algorithms prioritize high-engagement content (which is often material the user already agrees with), creating 'filter bubbles' that limit exposure to diverse viewpoints.

**5. Consider the rise of 'de-influencing'—creators telling followers what NOT to buy. What is the most likely strategic motive behind this trend in a competitive digital market?**

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**Answer:** C) To build trust and long-term authority by appearing objective and non-commercial

De-influencing is often a high-level branding tactic used to cultivate an image of honesty, which actually makes the influencer more persuasive when they eventually do recommend a product.

**6. True or False: 'Virtue signaling' refers to the practice of influencers supporting a social cause primarily to enhance their own public image rather than to effect tangible change.**

**Answer:** A) True

Virtue signaling is a common critique of influencer activism where the focus remains on the creator's 'goodness' rather than the complexities of the social issue itself.

**7. The concept where an influencer's niche popularity translates into significant financial or political power is known as \_\_\_\_\_ capital.**

**Answer:** A) Social

Social capital refers to the networks of relationships and the 'credit' a person has within a community, which influencers monetize through brand deals or use to mobilize political action.

**8. In the context of influencer ethics, 'performative activism' is characterized by which of the following?**

**Answer:** C) Surface-level participation in a trend (like a hashtag) without deep engagement

Performative activism is often criticized because it creates the illusion of support for a cause while requiring minimal effort and ignoring the systemic roots of the problem.

**9. The \_\_\_\_\_ economy is a term used to describe a marketplace where human focus is the most valuable commodity, fought for by creators and platforms alike.**

**Answer:** B) Attention

In an attention economy, influencers succeed not just by being talented, but by mastering the 'hooks' and psychological triggers that keep users from scrolling past their content.

**10. True or False: Using AI to generate a 'virtual influencer' (a computer-generated person) exempts a brand from having to disclose that the content is a paid advertisement.**

**Answer:** B) False

Modern advertising laws generally apply to the message, not the messenger; if a virtual entity is promoting a product for a brand, the commercial relationship must still be disclosed.

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