

Name:

Period:

Date Due:

Directions: Do brushstrokes #1-5 to annotate the article while you read. Then answer the questions at the end of the article in COMPLETE sentences for full credit.

“The Argument against Headphones”

By Virginia Heffernan / *New York Times* / January 7, 2011

One in five teenagers in America can't hear rustles or whispers, according to a recent study in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. These teenagers exhibit what's known as slight hearing loss, which means they often can't make out consonants like T's or K's, or the plinking of raindrops. The word "talk" can sound like "aw." The number of teenagers with hearing loss — from slight to severe — has jumped 33 percent since 1994.

Given the current ubiquity of personal media players — the iPod appeared almost a decade ago — many researchers attribute this widespread hearing loss to exposure to sound played loudly and regularly through headphones. Earbuds are even worse: they don't cancel as much noise from outside as do headphones that rest on or around the ear, so earbud users typically listen at higher volume to drown out interference. Indeed, the August report reinforces the findings of a 2008 European study of people who habitually blast MP3 players, including iPods and smartphones. According to that report, headphone users who listen to music at high volumes for more than an hour a day risk permanent hearing loss after five years.

Another problem is that listening to headphones is antisocial. As Llewellyn Hinkes Jones put it not long ago in *The Atlantic*: "The shared experience of listening with others is not unlike the cultural rituals of communal eating. Music may not have the primal necessity of food, but it is something people commonly ingest together."

Make it a New Year's resolution, then, to use headphones less. Allow your kids periodically to play music, audiobooks, videos, movie, television and radio audibly. Listen to what they're listening to, and make them listen to your stuff. Escapism is great, and submission and denial, too, have their places. But sound thrives amid other sounds. And protecting our kids' hearing is not just as important as protecting their brains; it *is* protecting their brains.

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Directions: Write your answers to the following questions in complete sentences for full credit.

Block 1 - Author's Purpose & Audience

Read the article. What is the author's purpose? Also, who is the intended audience?

Block 2 - Reading for Evidence

1. The number of teenagers with hearing loss has gone up since 1994. By how much?

2. Write down another good piece of evidence the author uses to prove her point.

3. The author also quotes an expert. What is Mr. Jones saying in the 3rd paragraph?

Block 3 - Vocabulary

Find the following words in the article. From context, guess what each word means.

1. ubiquity _____

2. permanent _____

3. periodically _____

Block 4 - Responding to Text

The author wrote this article for parents. Let's say her editor says, "Change the audience to teenagers." What revisions/changes would she make? How would she change her language? Her evidence?
