**Whistleblowers: Traitors or Patriots?**

**Subject area/course:** English/Language Arts, Composition 2

**Grade level/band**: 11–12

**STUDENT PROMPT SECTION**

1. **Task context**:

In June 2013, Edward Snowden, a former contractor working for the National Security Agency, began releasing documents that revealed the details of a number of secret United States government surveillance programs. Snowden’s revelations have caused Americans to rethink laws that establish privacy rights in the United States and the relevance of those laws in the post-9/11 world. Some have argued that the right to privacy is sacrosanct, while others have claimed that some privacy must be sacrificed for the sake of security.

Amid all the controversy, one issue is of particular interest for this task: How should whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden and others like him be viewed? Is he a traitor for revealing national secrets? Is he a patriot for defending the rights of American citizens? Is he something else altogether?

1. **The task**:

After researching a case in the U.S. in which someone made revelations that the government or a company would have liked to keep secret, write a 5- to 6-page argumentative paper that addresses whether that individual should be prosecuted as a criminal, pardoned as a whistleblower, or treated in some other fashion.

Support your position with evidence from the text(s). Your paper should:

* Acknowledge competing views and evidence.
* Consider your audience and purpose.
* Employ standard English grammar and usage.
* Use in-text citations and a Works Cited page to cite your sources using MLA citation format or another style that your instructor selects.
* Be prepared to share and discuss your research and conclusions with the class.
1. **Materials/resources**:

You will need access to reference materials, including government documents and other sources of general information about whistleblowers in the United States. You may also want to consult sources of news and opinionated articles from newspapers and magazines like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Atlantic*. The *Opposing Viewpoints* electronic resource/database (available in most college libraries) would be extremely helpful for this project.

To correctly *document* your sources, follow the MLA documentation guidelines. You will find information about the MLA format either in your writing textbook or online at a site like the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/).

1. **Time requirements**:

You will have approximately two weeks to complete this project. Follow the timeline that your teacher gives you for all deadlines and due dates.