Assignment Sheet for Copyright Extension
Role 1

Topic: Extending the timeframe for copyright protection
Role: The grandchild of a musician whose work was originally copyrighted 50 years ago

The issue is...
In 1998, a law was passed extending copyright protection from the previous period of the life of the author plus 50 years to the new period of the life of the author plus 70 years. This law sparked heated debate and lawsuits. Some people thought that the protection was good for authors and other creators. Others said it mainly protected corporations such as Disney, which lobbied hard for the law, since Disney holds valuable copyrights. Many argued that it violated the intent of the framers of the Constitution, who specified that copyright should be granted for only a limited time. Others said that it kept important works out of the public domain, where they could be used freely.

The question is...
Should copyright be granted for a period as long as 70 years after the author's or creator's death or should the work move into the public domain sooner?

Research
Use the internet to research the topic. The following keywords may be useful in your search:

- Mickey Mouse
- public domain
- copyright dispute
- Sonny Bono law
- copyright extension

As you review the information you find, be sure to note the date each article was written. Identify who the author is and what perspective he or she might have on the topic.

Take a Stand
1. Would changing the copyright law to cover only 50 years from a work's original copyright date likely help or hurt a person in your role? In what ways?

2. Would a person in your role likely be for or against changing the copyright law to cover only 50 years from a work's original copyright date? Why?

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Persuade Others

Imagine that there is a new bill before Congress to limit the time for which a work can be protected by copyright to 50 years, and you have to speak to Congress about the issue. Try to persuade Congress to vote for or against the new bill, based on how a person in your role would vote.
Use the Persuasion Map < http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/> to plan your argument for or against the new bill. Then present your argument to the class. Before you begin, you might want to think about the following:

Think About:

1. What do you want your audience to do after it hears your argument?

2. What are the strongest points you could make about this topic to persuade someone to see it from your point of view? What makes these arguments strong?

3. What facts or scenarios did you read about in your research that might help convince someone to agree with your point of view?

The rules:

- Your group must speak for no less than three minutes and no more than five minutes.

- Every person in your group must speak.

- You must turn in your answers to the questions in the Take a Stand and Think About sections, your completed Persuasion Map, and a completed Persuasion Meter.

Your oral argument will be evaluated **on:**

- how well your argument is defended with specific examples or scenarios.

- how well your argument matches your assigned role.

- how well you present the information, including eye contact with your audience, good rate of speed for your voice, and the clarity of your speech.

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