

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

## 5: “Protests in Every Corner of the Globe”

*Instructions:* Read the following article. Then, drawing on the article and the new knowledge you’ve acquired by examining the photos and doing research, write a short one-page reflection answering the writing prompt questions below.

### “The Story of 2019: Protests in Every Corner of the Globe”

by Robin Wright in *The New Yorker* (December 30, 2019)

When historians look back at 2019, the story of the year will not be the turmoil surrounding Donald Trump. It will instead be the tsunami of protests that swept across six continents and engulfed both liberal democracies and ruthless autocracies [governments led by a single person with absolute power]. Throughout the year, movements have emerged overnight, out of nowhere, unleashing public fury on a global scale—from Paris and La Paz to Prague and Port-au-Prince, Beirut to Bogota and Berlin, Catalonia to Cairo, and in Hong Kong, Harare, Santiago, Sydney, Seoul, Quito, Jakarta, Tehran, Algiers, Baghdad, Budapest, London, New Delhi, Manila, and even Moscow. Taken together, the protests reflect unprecedented political mobilization. The global consequences dwarf the turmoil of the Trump year and his rippling impact beyond America’s borders.

“People in more countries are using people power than any time in recorded history. Nonviolent mass movements are the primary challenges to governments today,” Erica Chenoweth, a political scientist at Harvard, told me. “This represents a pronounced shift in the global landscape of dissent.”...

Paolo Gerbaudo, a political sociologist at King’s College London and the author of “The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism and Global Protest,” said the demonstrations may signal an even greater crisis in the future. “These protests are popular insurgencies [rebellions against author-

ity]. They reflect the failure of nation-states in the global era. They’re not a passing crisis that can be remedied through the regular levers of the state [governmental processes],” he said. “These movements may be the early symptoms of a new global crisis. They are like seismographs. They are like dials that announce things that are coming on the horizon.”...

Protest movements will almost certainly be a feature of 2020 as well. “Protests are becoming part of ordinary political engagement,” Richard Youngs, a democracy expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the author of “Civic Activism Unleashed: New Hope or False Dawn for Democracy?,” told me. “The range of protests is quite staggering if you think about what’s happening across Latin America, in several African countries, in Eastern Europe, in both poor and wealthy Asian nations and even in the most difficult of circumstances in Russia. It’s remarkable. There’s not a political model that seems to be doing well or that is inoculated [protected] from the kind of uprisings the world is witnessing.”

The growing array of protests has coincided with a notable decline in voter turnout around the world, despite an increase in the number of voters and the number of countries with elections, according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. For five decades, between the nineteen-forties and nineteen-eighties, the average global turnout was stable: at least seventy-six per cent. By 2015, it had dropped to sixty-six per cent. The data suggests less confidence that elections make much difference, and that citizens are instead voting with their feet, on the streets....

### Writing prompt:

- According to the author, what is the significance of the recent wave of popular protests?
- What role do you think protests play in a democracy?