

A.C.T! - I.O.W - R.W.E.

How to do it Right!

A central focus of learning is to read and to write and to think reflectively. In each of my classes we will practice *Active Reading and Reflective Writing*. Senior Current Issues uses IOW (Issues of the World) and AFN (Africa News Weekly) to take on global concerns. RWE (Real World Economics) will provide you a working insight into the real world of economics. And A.C.T! deals with our government and your actions in holding it accountable to its charter. Hopefully, these assignments will inspire you to actively and intelligently engage the subject matter in order to bring your thinking to a higher level. Consequently your insights should be deeper; your arguments will have more impact.

Each of these assignments counts fifty points. The Active reading portion of each assignment constitutes a separate twenty point grade and will be assessed individually if you are working with a partner on the assignment.

#1 - Article Identification

Write the name of the article that you are reflecting on. Provide the source, the date of publication, and the online link to that article. Make sure that the source reliable and not a blog. If in doubt check the article and source with Mr. Wood before proceeding with the assignment.

#2 - 5 W's

Who, What, When, Where, Why

Finalize your format and provide brief information on the above five issues regarding your news source. A sentence or two for each topic works. What and Why might run a bit longer than the others.

#3 - Quote

Select a Quote that in your opinion best characterizes the entire article. Note the quote and the author. If you are quoting the author of the article (text in the story) – note that he wrote the article. And then provide a paragraph or two on the relevance of that quote to the issue at hand and to the article. On IOW, ANW, and RWE reflections I provide a one grade bonus for what I think are superior Quote and summaries.

#4 - Summary

In paragraph form, explain exactly what occurred in the article. Use your own words, but make sure that you are thorough in your expression. You may quote. You may write in first (I), second (you), or third (he / she) person. Capture the essence of the story. Three to five paragraphs.

#5 - Reflection

This is probably key to the assignment. Note that I am not asking your opinion...I want your reflection. There is a huge difference. A reflection forces you to take the article and sift it through your thoughts.

You should be able to write three to five solid paragraphs. You may pose the discourse in the first person. If you are working in a team, may speak for the group and define your opinion as “We”. You may even separate out and define each individual take on the issue – identifying the person in the group and what each member thinks. Make sure that you provide depth to the piece. The key here is that this thing runs deeper than mere opinion - that it not only says something about the article, but also about how the piece filters through your thoughts and experience. Feel free to bring other issues into your reflection and quote them or link them as needed. I’m expecting some HLT - Higher Level Thinking here.

#6 - Q & A

Your final requirement is to ask a solid question that encapsulates the entire article. Then answer that question in a couple of paragraphs. Your question and answer should be insightful to the article and provide proof that you have a grasp of the issues brought forth in the article. Think, if you were to provide this article as an assignment to somebody - write a question and answer that would make them accountable to the basis of the article.

#7 - Active Reading (separate 20 point grade)

Make that news article BLEED. Read it thoroughly, with the idea of the written assignment in mind. Ask yourself questions. Make comments. Draw stars, circles, pictures, exclamation points - anything to remind you of the specifics that matter most in the article. If you are working as a team - both actively read copies need to be turned in and each will count as an individual twenty point grade for the author.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Make sure as you search for news articles that you take your time. Don’t go google the first thing that you come across. You may choose a weak article which will then make your reflection more difficult to do and ultimately less effective. And your grade will reflect that. Dig for good news, informative news, articles that will widen your scope on the issue that you are supporting. In the end, these articles must serve as your knowledge base for further research and correspondence. Nothing will impact your knowledge of the issue and your grade more positively than the selection of an interesting (to you) article for evaluation. The key, remember, is not the grade ...it is to change the World!

Look below for reliable news sources...

New York Times - <http://www.nytimes.com/>

Washington Post - <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Los Angeles Times - <http://www.latimes.com/>

Christian Science Monitor - <http://www.csmonitor.com/>

Atlantic Magazine - <http://www.theatlantic.com/>

The Nation - <http://www.thenation.com/>

Detroit Free Press - <http://www.freep.com/>

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

National Public Radio (NPR) - <http://www.npr.org/>

Wall Street Journal - <http://online.wsj.com/home-page>

Economist - <http://www.economist.com/>

The World - <http://www.theworld.org/>