Independent Reading and Presentation Assignment

Your Personal Due Date:

This assignment challenges your ability to read closely, synthesize information, think critically, and to present it effectively. This is not a night-before-it’s-due assignment. I can help you along the way at any time. Good luck.

Step One: Find an article written in the last five years that interests you.

**Acceptable topics:** science, business, health, medicine, tech, the arts, politics, world affairs, economics, education, social justice and civil rights (issues of gender, race, and sexuality), education


Step Two: Read the article using method modeled by me (See Model for Reading Articles).

Step Three: Now, find a second article that provides context for the first article. This second article could have been written at any time before the first article. In order to find one using the acceptable magazines, you may have to search your topic as well as a specific magazine.

A contextual article (or article that provides context) helps to explain:
1) A *historical precedent* for the article and topic you chose
2) A *cause* of the the first article and topic you chose

Step Four: Read the second article using the same method, modeled by me (see Model for Reading Articles).

Step Five: Now find a third article that is a supplement to the first article. This article could be from any time period before or after the first article. In order to find one using the acceptable magazines, you may have to search your topic as well as a specific magazine.

A supplemental article (or, article that adds to your first article) helps to explain:
1) an *additional* example of your first article
2) an *analogy* to your article (analogy = similar issue, different topic)
3) *provides a counterargument* to your first article
4) *provides additional information* or thinking about your first article

Step Six: Read the third article using the same method modeled by me (see Model for Reading Articles).
**Step Seven:** Watch my video, as well as the transcript of my video, and my presentation in class as an example of what to do.

**Step Eight:** Your ultimate task is to present a topic or issue, provide context for that issue with a second article (historical precedent, or cause for your topic), and supplement that issue with a third article (additional information, new example, counterargument, or analogy).

**Models for Reading Articles:**

When reading the article, take notes on at least six major points made in the article.

In two of your three articles you should mention the rhetorical appeals that the writer of the article uses (we will be studying these in the upcoming week).

In your notes for article two, you should explain why this article provides a cause or historical background for your first article.

In your notes for article three, you should explain why this third article supplements the first article (as a counterargument, analogy, addition, or further example).

You do not need to turn these notes in to me, but it will be obvious to me if you’ve done this or not when you present. The content should be there in the presentation.

Notice that I’ve accomplished all of these aspects in each of my three articles on the next few pages …

The arrows on the following pages shows you where I mentioned the rhetorical appeals in my notes, as well as my explanations for how article two explains a cause or historical precedent for article one, and how article three provides an addition.
"When Conservatives Try to Talk About Rap"

by Conor Friedersdorf

The Atlantic

1/31/13

- Introduces idea the conservatives are out of touch with our culture.
- Highlights Mark Steyn, a conservative who writes outstandingly about American culture.
- And yet when Mark Steyn talks about rap, he describes it as having an "absence of human feeling." Additionally, he seems limited in his understanding of education regarding rap.
- The writer references several rap songs that are multiplatinum sellers that demonstrate his "human feeling." He demonstrates his credibility as an adult music critic.
- Friedersdorf then points out an article written by Steyn's colleague that "Rap is a symbol for the West." He says that there's much more to be worried about.
- Ultimately, if this is what conservatives share about rap, it's clear they don't have anything new or interesting to say about it.
"Obscenity or Art? Trial on Rap Lyrics Opens" NYTimes
Sara Rimer
10/17/1990

Diner reports on an obscenity trial against rappers 2 Live Crew in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The rappers are being charged with distributing obscene lyrics through their music.

The jury was unable to hear clips of their songs as evidence because they were of poor quality — lyrics were obscured.

The defense for group argued that their work is exaggerated parody and humorous. Experts on literature will testify to prove the artistic value of 2 Live Crew's work.

Abrams, whom is to the reader's emotions and sense of morality by comparing this to trial on famous white photographer who was convicted for selling a black model.

The trial applies to other artists. Abrams wants the reader to see a double-standard when it comes to white artists.

Charges could be up to a year in prison or fine of up to $5,000. Record store owner was charged for selling the album. They are being charged for performing the album live.

Detectives had recorded the performance on microphone and they can be heard talking over it. "Is it on?"
Luther Campbell of the band was reported as saying that explaining their music to jury would be like "people from Mars explaining Earth."

The album has sold 2 million as a result of attention to the trial.

Mr. Togneri prosecuting the case claimed he was not anti-rap and even.

Sara Lee identifying such absurd details to appeal to our sense of humor and absurdity.

In doing so, she attempts to argue how foolish these trials that threaten the first amendment really are.

Comes his police department has a say-on-to drug rap group called Trends Up.

Miami Lawyer for prosecution runs his cases against rap out of a two-bedroom apartment in Florida where he keeps CBs and copies down the lyrics until he finds obscene. For potential counts cases.

This article provides a historical precedent for how conservative thinkers view rap music. Mark Steyn's misguided view of rap as lacking value has been sustained for as long as the genre has existed.
"The Neuroanatomy of Freestyle Rap"
by Lindsay Abrams 11/19/12

- Abrams reports that 12 rappers were fMRI’d while they rapped rehearsed lyrics as well as freestyles. (National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders).

- All differences found during freestyle brain changes in organization, drive activated, yet self-monitoring + editing were shut down.

- Abrams reports scientists conclusion that freestyle allows for release of inhibition/“supervisory” attention.

- Abrams reports scientists believe freestyling creates an “altered state of mind”.

- This has been studied and verified for guitar and jazz musicians too. When practicing, authors and jazz musicians’ regulatory systems showed up on fMRI, music’s regulatory systems are engaged as opposed to when improvising. This has been as opposed to when improvising. This has been as opposed to when improvising.

- This article serves as an argument to my first article. A viable argument that proves that rap can be, and is, a valid, feelings-based art form much like literary writing and jazz, despite what conservative Mark Steyn says. 
**Requirements:**

You may present in class with a PowerPoint that includes five relevant visuals (see my presentation video model for an example of relevant visuals), or you can make an iMovie of yourself with five relevant visuals.

Worth 100 points (for context, this is worth the same as your summer reading and your final timed writing for this unit).

Due at the beginning of class on the Thursday to which you are assigned. If you miss class, you will present the very next day you return to class at the beginning of class.

Note that you will be juggling a possible Friday quiz on the week you are assigned as well.

No technology excuses are acceptable AT ALL. Your project will be late if you have computer issues the night before. Remember that unexcused lateness is -12 points per day including weekends. If your project is late on a Thursday and we get to Saturday and you haven’t turned it in, you must record it on video. Presenting it on a Monday would be a 52/100.

If you are going to support your work with a PowerPoint, you need to email it to me before you get to class, or I will take off 7 points from your score. We don’t have time to spare.

**Grading:**

The speaker presents clearly, loudly, and confidently.

The speaker uses five relevant visuals to support their presentation. The presentation of visuals, and of the optional video, are seamlessly and neatly edited.

It is clear that the speaker has control over and a strong understanding of all three articles. Each article is presented clearly, as well.

The speaker has identified and can clearly communicate two rhetorical appeals they’ve found among the three articles.

The speaker is able to organize their thinking clearly between the first article, the contextual article, and the supplemental article. Synthesis has occurred.

The speaker begins and ends the presentation strongly.

The speaker is able to present on their topic with a very limited use of notes, and does not appear to be relying on them to carry the presentation forward.

The presentation is sustained for over five minutes, but no longer than ten minutes.

*For any significant comment I can make about any of these areas will result in a 7 point deduction from 100 (100, 93, 86, 79, 72, etc.)*
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