



Naperville North High School

Honors English 2: Journalism Summer Reading

Dear HE2J Students:

Welcome to Honors English 2: Journalism! You have chosen an exciting alternative to a traditional English 2 course. Although you will learn the same skills as your classmates in English 2, this course will present them through the lens of journalism. Whether you hope to write for a school publication or pursue a career in journalism or another field, the discipline of journalism focuses on real-world skills you can apply to your academic and professional life. You'll learn to write for an authentic audience, how to conduct real-world research, how to focus on facts and accuracy, and how to communicate in a way that will inform and interest others.

Your summer reading assignment is to create a Google Doc that lists the top 10 stories of Summer 2023 (defined as from June 1 to when school begins). To keep this project reasonably narrow, you will select your stories from *The New York Times* Morning newsletters according to your assessment of each story's impact, conflict, and proximity. You are expected to read *the main story* at the top of The Morning Newsletter each Monday-Thursday. For each story you include in your Top 10, jot down a brief note of each of the following: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How/How Much? If you don't have a hold on the answer for any of these, look up the answer.

Each week or two, add to/edit your top 10; when a story falls out of the top 10 (as many will), move it to a section below your top 10 list but do not delete the story from your document. If you'd like, you can make a note as to why the story fell out of your top 10. We'll discuss which stories "didn't make it" and why when we meet in August. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is likely to dominate the news for the foreseeable future, so we're asking you to limit yourself to five COVID-19 sub-topics out of the top 10. So, at least five should be other topics.

Here is a sample of the assignment from a few years ago: <https://tinyurl.com/4c68ycye>. This is due on the *first* day of class.

In journalism, when we encounter problems, we adapt and overcome them. Therefore, if there is some part of the instructions you don't understand, make sure that you show that you worked hard to read and understand the news. *Figure it out.* You won't be marked down for procedural errors.

For more detail, please read below:

- 1. How to access The New York Times' (NYT) Morning newsletter:** First, sign up for The New York Times Morning newsletter, which will arrive in your inbox each day. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/yxp3bfvp> OR Google "NYTimes morning newsletter." **This does not cost anything.**
 - *Read The Morning newsletter Monday through Thursday.*
If you go on vacation or want to take some time off, you may simply go back and read your old newsletter emails. However, we hope you will make this part of your daily media diet.
 - *Read the newsletter, not the links within the newsletter.*

The newsletter summarizes the day's news; each story brief contains one or more links that will take you to the whole story. We do not expect you to be reading these links; you are responsible only for reading the newsletter. Each day's reading will take you less than ten minutes.

- 2. How to create your Top 10 list:** The editor of this newsletter, and editors around the world, are making news decisions about what the most important events of the day are and trying to relate them to their audience in a way that is clear, accurate and ethical. In HE2J, you will develop your own sense of these principles.

Editors use many factors for news judgment, and we will teach you about these in-depth next year, but we will start with three of the most important factors. Consider these elements as you analyze the individual news stories in the Morning newsletter:

- **IMPACT:** What is the impact on the reader? Is the impact certain? Is it direct or indirect?
- **DRAMA/CONFLICT:** Does the story have an inherent drama to it? Are their clear sides in conflict?
- **PROXIMITY:** Do the DRAMA and IMPACT of the story affect the local audience, or is the impact more remote? As you read, be sure to consider who the local audience is; this will vary by story.

Your job is to watch the news over the summer, and see how stories develop. What stories are the biggest stories? Why? Starting June 11th, make a list of top 10 stories and list the Who, What, When, Why, Where and How/How Much? (This the basis of journalism, and really basic understanding. If you can answer those six questions, you understand the story.)

Look at your list regularly (once a week, for example), and see if your top 10 is the same. As items are moved off the list (they no longer qualify as one of the top 10), move the item to an area at the bottom of your page.

As you work, consider: What does the list say about the news? How has the news changed over the summer?

- 3. What you should be prepared to hand in at the start of school:**

Bring your top 10 lists to school (virtually, or in-person) the first week of school.

- 4. If you need some further explanations or examples, please read on:**

- **What are some examples of impact, conflict, and proximity?**

Here's an example: A story in today's newsletter is about how healthcare workers are feeling about the relentlessness and direness of their work during the pandemic; many workers are experiencing PTSD.

- **IMPACT: What is the impact on the reader? Is the impact certain? Is it direct or indirect?**

I read the impact of this story as being indirect; I am not immediately impacted by healthcare workers' emotional experiences - but I do realize that some readers are healthcare workers, so for some readers, this impact is far more direct.

Furthermore, I understand that this is one of the day's top stories because of the indirect impact it may have. For instance, if I were to try to access healthcare right now, healthcare workers' welfare becomes more immediate to me. If protocols or even legislation emerges because of the impact this trauma has had on healthcare workers, the impact on my life could become much more direct.

- **DRAMA/CONFLICT: Does the story have an inherent drama to it? Are their clear sides in conflict?**

This story has clear drama and conflict. It raises the question of who will take care of the caretakers - an issue that not many people have contemplated to this point. Without mentally healthy healthcare workers, our already-taxed healthcare system risks being further stressed.

Furthermore, the drama - not a word we're using flippantly here - comes from the human interest aspect of the story. People who are saving lives, who are frequently referred to as "heroes" in the vernacular of our time, are suffering tremendously, with no end in sight. This elicits sympathy, concern and some levels of fear for readers.

- **PROXIMITY: Do the DRAMA and IMPACT of the story affect the local audience, or is it more remote? In an NYT newsletter, be sure to consider who the local audience is; this will vary by story.**

This story interviews people from across the country and references statistics from around the globe. Everyone accesses healthcare, and this issue transcends borders. We can extrapolate that our very local healthcare professionals feel similarly, making this story multilevel in its relevance to the local, national, and global communities.

- Here's a sample "Top 10" note using this story:

1. **Headline:** "I can't turn my brain off": PTSD and Healthcare Workers of COVID-19

Who: Healthcare workers, especially doctors and nurses

What: Healthcare professionals are experiencing significant trauma and anguish due to the stress of the pandemic, especially being with so many people dying alone.

When: Presently, through the pandemic

Where: Worldwide, in the hospital setting

Why: Healthcare settings are inundated with patients who cannot be saved. Family members are not permitted to enter the buildings

How: Workers are experiencing an onslaught of dying patients, with few viable treatments available. The repeated exposure is leading to depression, anxiety, and PTSD in some healthcare professionals.

I'm looking forward to a great year,

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