Column #1

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/ezra-klein/2010/10/wonkbook_obama_talks_corporate.html>

<http://www.bloombergview.com/contributors/ezra-klein>

<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2014-02-19/the-future-looks-dull-from-here>

Task 1

Bio including a picture of your columnist

Ezra Klein (born May 9, 1984) is an American journalist, blogger, and columnist. He is most known for his former work as a blogger and columnist for The Washington Post, as well his ongoing work as a contributor to Bloomberg News and MSNBC. He was formerly an associate editor of The American Prospect political magazine and a political blogger at the same publication.

At The Washington Post, he managed a branded blog called "Wonkblog," which featured his writing and the writing of other policy reporters. Issues discussed in the blog included health care and budget policy. He wrote a primer on policy called "Wonkbook," which was delivered by e-mail and on his blog each morning. In 2011, Klein's blog was the most-read blog at The Washington Post.

In 2011, he was named one of the 50 most powerful people in Washington by GQ. In 2010, he was named Blogger of the Year by The Week magazine and the Sidney Hillman Foundation. His blog was also named one of the 25 best financial blogs by Time Magazine in 2011. In 2013, Klein won the Online News Association's award for best online commentary. He also won the American Political Science Association's Carey McWilliams Award, for "a major journalistic contribution to our understanding of politics." He appeared as one of 80 men featured in Esquire's 80th anniversary issue and in a feature in the New York Times style magazine.

In January 2014, he announced he would be leaving the Washington Post in order to start a new media venture with several other veteran journalists. He has joined Vox Media as Editor in-Chief for Vox.com.



Task 2

1. The central idea of the column

The central idea of this column is the decline of America as the center of the political universe and perhaps more importantly the end of Washington as the most important place in America as the states seize leadership for creating legislation that effects people’s lives. Klein notes that even within America, largely as a result of the do nothing Congress; that the states have handled important new legislation ranging from gay marriage to medical marijuana. He notes that America is a country that is changing “*In 2011, single mothers accounted for 48 percent of first births, meaning we’re near the point -- or perhaps past it -- at which the majority of first births occur outside marriage. In 2012, a majority of children in the U.S. under the age of 1 were nonwhite*.” Klien continues to note that America is not only changing, but that the world is an ever changing reality with new leaders found in the burgeoning populations of India and China, where life expectancy is growing as is the expectations of those within those realms and around the world.

2. Identify the appeals to logos, pathos, or ethos

Klein uses logos and ethos to make his points. He is a well-known and highly respected columnist, widely recognized as one of the most influential writers in America. Also, he now functions as a pre-eminent writer and editor in an emerging blog-o-sphere that increasingly dominates the news and news media that is consumed by America and around the world. Klien’s logical approach is backed up by the statistical data that helps to frame the points he makes and emphasizes in his article.

- (by what means does the columnist seek to convince readers of the truth of his central idea?)

3. The chief rhetorical and stylistic devices at work in the column

Klein employed a host of rhetorical devices including

1. Exemplum: citing an example; using an illustrative story, either true or fictitious

Example, *Which isn’t to say that Americans don’t live in interesting times. The country is changing even if Washington’s laws are not. In 2004, a spate of anti-gay-marriage amendments on the ballot in swing states was considered -- perhaps incorrectly -- to have turned out enough conservative voters to re-elect President George W. Bush. Today, same-sex marriage is legal in 16 states, and a 17th -- Illinois -- will legalize it in June. Marijuana is now legal in Colorado and Washington. In 2011, single mothers accounted for 48 percent of first births, meaning we’re near the point -- or perhaps past it -- at which the majority of first births occur outside marriage. In 2012, a majority of children in the U.S. under the age of 1 were nonwhite. The velocity of demographic and cultural change borders on breathtaking.*

1. Analogy compares two things, which are alike in several respects, for the purpose of explaining or clarifying some unfamiliar or difficult idea or object by showing how the idea or object is similar to some familiar one.
2. Asyndeton consists of omitting conjunctions between words, phrases, or clauses.
3. Sentential Adverbs is a single word or short phrase, usually interrupting normal syntax, used to lend emphasis to the words immediately proximate to the adverb.
4. Distinctio is an explicit reference to a particular meaning or to the various meanings of a word, in order to remove or prevent ambiguity.

4. The tone (or tones) of the column

Klein’s tone is optimistic, yet couched in realism. He points out that America may be stymied by the “do nothing” Congress and Washington may be fading as the world’s most important place, but says “*The rising power of autocratic governments is a real concern. But we have even greater cause to be thrilled that billions of people will be better able to develop and use their talents as economic demand increases and technology advances*” he goes on to note that America will need change its perspective and fears that a struggle may ensure and writes, “The question, then, is whether the U.S. will accept that shift, or try, somehow, to fight it, alienating or even fighting some of the world’s most populous and powerful countries along the way”

5. Errors of logic (if any) that appear in the column

The article appears to be free in errors in logic if viewed from a liberal perspective. However, should reader have a more conservative, much of what Klien writes could be seen a fabrication and anti-American. The error could easily be determined in statements like “*That shift will be accompanied by loss of the pre-eminence in global affairs that the U.S. has known -- and exploited -- since World War II*” which could very easily be determined as holding a particular bias when viewed through a political lens.

6. The way the author uses sources, the type of sources the author uses (Be sure to pay attention to this one!

Klein appears to use quality and widely respected sources such as [U.S. Civitas @ GSU](http://uscivitas.com/) A site promoting knowledgeable and informed citizenship and the US Congressional Budget office. However, a list of references is not available leaving the reader to take on faith many of the statistics Klein offers.

7. The apparent audience the author is writing for

It appears largely that liberals would find this to be an engaging and accurate article. I checked a few of the statistics and found them to be credible, that is if you can believe what you read on the internet. Conservatives might want to challenge the veracity of the data provided and the spirit of the article. This was seen when reading the comments attached to the article, it was easy to determine the political perspective shared by those who commented. For example, Susan Gate wrote "*The rising power of autocratic governments is a real concern. But we have even greater cause to be thrilled that billions of people will be better able to develop and use their talents as economic demand increases and technology advances." So support the Dem rise of an all powerful, Big Brother approach of the Dem party.. whooeee.. but enjoy your lousy future in the job market.. and play with your phone...what an idjit!!! No wonder Wash Post, the dredge of false news reporting dumped this loser.”* And conversely, liberals seem to wholly support and share Klein’s perspective.

8. Add a few final comments to each column that summarizes your general response to the piece—do not summarize the column!

This article struck me as a truthful understanding of a changing America and a changing world. In the study of world history we learn that empires rise and fall. Perhaps we are beginning to see the decline of America and the ascendance of China and other emerging economies to new leadership positions in the world. China, as all world history students know has risen and fallen many times, perhaps this is America’s fate. The gridlock in Washington leaves the US Federal Government incapable of resolving its problems and unfortunately no end to this intransigence seems to be in sight. The states seem to be willing to take over where Washington is failing Americans, unfortunately these decisions have little influence upon America’s role in the world. Perhaps the mid-term elections might help to resolve this impasse. The article would be abetted if Klien would provide a list of the sources for his statistical evidence. Finally, as Klein writes “History might be shifting its grip a bit. But it’s still tight” these changes will not appear rapidly and America will not likely allow this shift to occur without a fight.