Current Event Assignment – AP Lang.

*To prepare you for the AP Language and Composition exam in May, you will familiarize yourself with current events and with how opinion columnists make their arguments with a current event assignment.*

* I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with credible news sources. For this assignment, you must find an opinion article from one of the sources listed below. You can access many of these sources online.
  + *NPR* : [http://www.npr.org/](http://www.npr.org/sections/opinion/)
  + *The New York Times*: <http://www.nytimes.com/>
  + *Time:* <http://time.com/>
  + *The Week:* <http://theweek.com/>
* Procedure:
  + Find a reliable opinion article from a credible source on a current event topic that interests you.
  + Print or copy the article (make sure you include the author and source).
  + Read and annotate the article.
    - Have a conversation with the author while you read.
    - Identify rhetorical strategies.
    - Identify the main points.
    - Identify the author’s purpose.
    - Ask questions.
    - Note any agreements or disagreements you have with the author.
  + Write:
    - 1st Paragraph: Write a four sentence summary of the issue (topic), the author’s purpose (solution, call to action, new perspective, critique etc.), and the main evidence provided by the author.
    - 2nd Paragraph: Identify and explain the rhetorical strategies used by the author. Use direct quotations from the article. Consider speaker/subject/audience, tone, diction, syntax, E/P/L, shifts in voice, metaphor, simile, schemes/tropes, etc.
    - 3rd Paragraph: Analyze and evaluate the author’s argument and the effect of the rhetorical strategies he or she uses. Answer: does the author achieve his or her purpose? Why or why not?
  + Length: No more than two typed and double-spaced pages.
  + Turn In: 1. Your typed current event analysis.

2. The annotated article OR a copy of the article and the notes you took.

EXAMPLE:

Blow, Charles M. "Frustration in Ferguson." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 17 Aug. 2014. Web. 17 Aug. 2014.

Student Name

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AP Lang. & Comp.

8/18/14

In Response to “Frustration in Ferguson,” by Charles Blow, 8/17/14

Charles Blow, a black op-ed columnist for the *Times* reflects on the recent clashes between police and the disenfranchised black population in Ferguson, Missouri. Last week an unarmed teen, Michael Brown, was shot by a local policeman. Initially, there was no information as to why the teen- who allegedly had his hands in the air- was being held at gunpoint. Afterwards, details emerged that Brown had been involved in robbing a convenience store, which might have led police to him. The violence that has erupted as a result of tensions between the militarized police and the people of Ferguson has prompted Blow to again implore the readers to take another look at why the effects of systemic racism are not addressed, and how they are often over-simplified or ignored by those in power.

Blow starts by descriptions of both the shooting officer and the teen as “gentle” to those around them, initially setting a similarity among the actors set directly at odds by most media. He then criticizes the hyper-militarization of the local Ferguson police, pointing out the absurdity of their armor and tanks, calling them “outlandish” and “more befitting Baghdad than suburban Missouri.” He ends with an allusion to Langston Hughes’ *Harlem* and a rhetorical question, asking if a dream stays deferred, if the powers that be continue to dispossess the misunderstood and powerless, does it explode? Will violence like this continue to erupt until the issues of systemic racism are addressed in a serious way?

It’s difficult to measure a national call for conversation, especially one that has been uninterrupted for decades. Minorities continue to face tougher odds, neighborhoods remain violent, and those in charge still seem to turn a blind eye. It seems every time there is a national issue on racial tension a slew of op-ed columnists take to the internet and shout, “It’s time to begin a conversation on race!” as if it is a new topic. I’d like to see a paper like the *Times* take a chance on a columnist with some specific recommendations or some biting criticisms. Should we fire the entire police force? Host a recall on the local officials who do nothing? Write letters to our representatives expressing our disgust? How has the local response made the situation more dangerous, or is the blame exclusively the white’s? All of these issues go unaddressed, and the piece falls as yet another onto the pile of empty criticism without any real impact on the national conversation on racial tensions in America.