

Contemporary Topics Introduction -- Honors English

Daniel Pearl Magnet High School (DPMHS) tries with every effort to accommodate students' academic success and path to college. While we have a limited staff, we try not to have limited classes, hence the creation of Honors English courses via blended classrooms. This means honors and non-honors English courses may be concurrently conducted in some classes. DPMHS does this to provide the classes that will lead to college. Honors English students are expected to function with more independence, but with support and guidance. Teachers are available for personal assistance at nutrition, lunch, before and after school. Students just need to ask their teacher for help.

Contemporary Topics is a required assignment for students registered in Honors English. The steps are simple:

1. Select a contemporary topic that is debatable. You may visit the website procon.org to get ideas for topics.
2. Each week, for 4 weeks, find an article from a credible source on the contemporary topic that is debatable. Sources may include newspapers, periodicals and online journals. Source may not include video based sources.
3. For each article, write responses to the *Contemporary Topics Questions* (on the back of this sheet).
4. Print or photocopy 1 page of the article for your *Contemporary Topics* folder.
5. Keep the article and your write up, chronologically collated by date of completion, in a folder.
6. On the fifth week, after four articles, write a *Contemporary Topics Reflection* (on the back of this sheet).
7. Use at least 2 different sources for each topic.
8. Submit your folder to your instructor each _____ .

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel welcome to contact your teacher. Receiving this paper, that indicates you requested and are enrolled as an Honors English student. You are required to complete this assignment as part of your grade.

It is always nice to receive assignments typed. Follow MLA format for the heading, citations and margins.

Save this sheet as a reference.

Contemporary Topics Questions

1. Who or what is the subject of the article?
2. What is the context of the article? (time, location, related recent events)
3. How and/or why is the contemporary topic debatable?
4. Who are the various parties related to the contemporary topic and what are their positions?
5. Does the article contain any implicit biases, if so where and how?
6. How would this article be cited, using MLA format?

Limit the total of your responses to a maximum of 750 words.

Contemporary Topics Reflection

1. Write a statement articulating your position on the contemporary topic about which you have been learning.
2. Support your position using information you learned over the course of four weeks.

Limit your reflection to a total of 500 words.

Contemporary Topics Resources

MLA citation support

Periodicals: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/07>

Electronic sources: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/08/>

Ideas for topics

<http://archives.jsa.org/>

<http://www.procon.org>

<http://www.sac.edu/students/library/nealley/websites/controversial.htm>

Suggested sources for articles

American Public Media at: <http://americanpublicmedia.publicradio.org/>

British Broadcasting Corporation at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

The Los Angeles Times

National Public Radio at: <http://www.npr.org/>

The New York Times

Public Radio International at: <http://www.pri.org/>

Time magazine

The Wall Street Journal