Westbrook High School Social Studies Current Events Experience

Overview: “Why are we doing this?”

Historical knowledge is an important tool for understanding the world around us as it exists today. A good knowledge of history allows us to make more informed decisions and choices, and gives us a window into our future. Part of what makes history relevant for anyone who studies it is making connections between history and current events.

Knowing just about the past is not good enough. Today, it is more and more important for us to have knowledge and understanding about other people, cultures, places and events. To this end, we will be undertaking an examination of current events throughout the school year. With a solid knowledge of past and present, you will be better prepared for the future.

All students are strongly encouraged to regularly watch nightly news broadcasts (including local news, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, News Hour as preferred) and to read periodicals (Time, Newsweek, US News and World Report) and newspapers (Portland Press Herald, Boston Globe, New York Times, etc.). All of these resources (if not experienced live) can be easily accessed on any computer. Some of the services restrict information to subscribers, but the vast majority of it can be seen on the web for free.

Current Event Requirements: Presenter

Meeting with your teacher: You are required to meet early in the process with your teacher to discuss your current event project. You will be given any additional rubrics and directions at that time. Necessary follow-ups can be in person or on email. This experience is student centered which means you need to take the onus for completing this assignment. Do not expect class time to get this done. If at any time throughout this process you are unsure or have questions, you need to take the initiative and talk with your teacher. This will be considered a substantial part of your quarter grade. Consequently, your teacher expects high quality, on-time work from you.

Your Power Point presentation must include these elements:

1. **Two news stories.** One must be a major international story. The second could be a major U.S. or international story. You are strongly encouraged to read more than one news source to gain a solid knowledge base about the story. Your teacher can help you with your story selection and with locating sources during your initial meeting with him or her.

2. For each story, you must have two informational slides:
   1. **1st slide:** summary of the basic elements of the story (what happened, where, who is involved, etc.)
   2. **2nd slide:** What is the significance of this story? What impact does it have on the world or the people in the country or region?

3. **Visual Image:** Each of your slides must have a visual related to the story (map, photograph, illustration etc.).
4. **Point of Persuasion:** Pick one of your stories and take a stance on it. Present this information in at least one slide (more than likely you will need more than this). You need to persuade your classmates that your stance on the issue is informed, well thought out and correct. That means you should have some background on the issue. Remember, all stories have more than one point of view. Each event impacts people differently. Your task on this slide is to show you understand the story as well as its implications in our society or the world.

5. **Political Cartoon.** One slide with the cartoon and your analysis. This does not have to relate to either of your stories, but it could be a good way to segue into your persuasion portion of the presentation ([www.cagle.com/politicalcartoons/](http://www.cagle.com/politicalcartoons/) is a good source for a variety of cartoons). Your analysis must address these questions:
   1. What issue, event or idea does the cartoon address?
   2. What cartoonist devices are used to tell the story?
   3. What is the cartoonist’s viewpoint (what is the message of the cartoon)?

6. **Citing Sources:** Use [www.blueblazeslibrary.com](http://www.blueblazeslibrary.com) to access citation maker. Follow the directions to cite your sources.
   1. For images - Cite using standard MLA format
   2. For news sources - Cite using standard MLA format

7. **Quiz:** You will make a 5-question quiz that covers the news stories and cartoon. This will be emailed (only) to your teacher prior to your presentation.

8. **Moodle/Wiki:** Your entire presentation must be uploaded to the teacher directed resource prior to your presentation to your classmates (do not include the quiz questions in this part).

**Current Event Requirements: Audience/Critic**

As an audience member you will be required to respond to every presentation during the year using the rubric that guides your analysis of the topic and the presenter's power of persuasion. Thus, it is incumbent upon you to pay close attention to the story and how the presenter tries to persuade the class. This is an exercise in dissecting an argument and either accepting it or rejecting it. However, it is not a place to air unsubstantiated opinions or launch personal attacks on your classmates.