

Friday Current Issues 10 points+ Optional discussion Pts.

US GOVERNMENT

Each Friday for the next few months, you will be turning in a current event about something that interests you in our field of study that happened recently in the news. Please follow the guidelines in the front and back of this paper for full credit. Then we will discuss articles each Friday and you will have the opportunity for participation points.

Guidelines for Current Events

1. Articles must be current (within the **past week** or so)
2. Article link must be **sourced** for credit -3pts off the bat for no link, no exceptions.
3. Articles must be from **reputable news agency**. For example- “CNN.com or BBC” are excellent sources. “The Onion or cracked.com” while funny at times, are not reputable news sources. I will have a list of good sources on my website.
4. Articles must be of a political or social issue in **your assigned sub-area***. See the current event spreadsheet on the class website calendar page

Subtopic* categories include...

- A. Local News (Greater Portland area)
- B. State News
- C. National News
- D. US International news (has to have some kind of US connection though)
- E. Economic News

* Social Issues (things dealing with social issues- poverty, war, drugs, laws, criminal justice issues, race and ethnicity, gender, human rights, etc...) will probably be the most “interesting” stories you can report on. Don’t report on celebrity gossip, advice columns, sports, weather, etc.

5. See back side for formatting of the summary.
6. + 2pts extra credit for discussing your current event. If we do 5, that is +10 bonus pts (could be the difference between a B+ and an A- for example)

Current Issues Analysis Model

Issue : _____
Source _____ Date of Article _____

Please follow the current event analysis model below in a few well-written **paragraphs. (about 3/4-1 page)** DO not just “list” the answers or copy the article word for word, but write these out in your own words. **SINGLE SPACED and EMAILED TO MY BOX (INCLUDE HOUR)**

I. Describe the Problem or Social Issue in the Article

List facts to prove that there is a problem. Organize your facts in a logical sequence.

WRITE THESE IN PARAGRAPH FORM

II. Causes

List and briefly explain the causes (or theories of causes) of the problem if they are mentioned in the article.

WRITE THESE IN PARAGRAPH FORM

III. Perspectives

How do different groups or people view the issue?

WRITE THESE IN PARAGRAPH FORM

IV. Your Opinion

What is your opinion on the issue discussed in the article?

WRITE THESE IN PARAGRAPH FORM

V. Class Connection

How does this connect with anything we discussed/ learned in class this year? Explain!

WRITE THESE IN PARAGRAPH FORM

Sample article
Current Event #1

Topic: International Political Economics/Trade

Source: CNN

Date of Article: Tuesday, September 28th, 2021

Link: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/28/business/natural-gas-inflation/index.html>

I. Define the Problem, Event, or Social Issue.

Prices for natural gas have risen 180% over the past twelve months. It has risen to \$5.90 per million British thermal units. (A Btu is a measure of the heat content of fuels or energy sources. It is the quantity of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of liquid water by 1 degree Fahrenheit at its greatest density). Natural gas has not been this expensive since February of 2014. Cold fall temperatures or an early winter will force households to increase the heat. This has the potential to further shrink the nation's below-average stockpiles of natural gas (This could increase prices even higher). This is far worse overseas. Europe and Asia are also grappling with increases in natural gas prices and shortages that have forced blackouts and shutdowns of factories.

II. Causes

Demand for gas is coming back faster than the supply can keep up. This is forcing natural gas prices to go higher. Natural gas producers have been cautious about ramping up production, after many years of losing money. According to the US Energy Information Administration, storage levels in the continental United States are slightly below normal. Demand was also increased due to heat waves across the country over the summer. This drove up air conditioning usage and electricity demand. This situation has also been exacerbated by unplanned production outages in Norway and Russia, as well as Hurricane Ida. The latter of which knocked offline the vast majority of the Gulf of Mexico's oil and gas production.

United States supplies have been whittled down further by strong demand overseas amidst high internal prices. Exports of liquefied natural gas from the US are expected to average 9.6 billion cubic feet per day this year. This is up 48% from a year ago, according to the EIA (See above). As well as this, hedge fund owners and big money traders on Wall Street have jumped in to bid natural gas prices higher when they realized storage levels were unusually low. There might be hope, because Bank of America expects natural gas prices to drop during the final quarter of the year, and lower in the next.

III. Perspectives

While this article outlines many plans for the next few decades, it has very little about what is going on to fix the problem right now. It mentions how the natural gas price increase situation has been amplified with each new issue (Hurricane Ida, economic downturn, low supply, high demand, hesitant natural gas producers, hot summer, unplanned power outages etc.). It cites the United State's future target, as well as European plans to end domestic fossil fuel production. It is clear that there are no "good" (Referring to environmentally-friendly) short-term solutions. Despite various nations prospective goals for solving climate change, it is clear that more people would benefit from a short-term solution that lowers natural gas prices.

IV. Programs/Ideas to Deal with the Issue

This natural gas price spike has occurred at a difficult time for governments around the world. They are dealing with elevated inflation and working to transition away from fossil fuels. Long term, environmental groups want to ban oil and gas fracking to prevent emissions from

warming the planet. According to IHS Markit, at least four countries in the European Union have enacted plans to end domestic fossil fuel production by 2050. President Joe Biden has also set a target of carbon-free electricity generation by 2035. This ambitious goal would require a dramatic shift away from natural and coal to solar and wind energy.

V. Your Opinion

I think it will be very difficult for countries to transition away from fossil fuels. 2050 and 2035 are more than 10 years away. It's ironic, because the reason for the excessive heat over the summer was global warming. It is a negative feedback loop that is pushing the Earth away from its target. I'm the kind of person who lives week to week-- so hopefully the price issue will be resolved so I don't have to pay a large amount of money for gas. It may be difficult to stay positive, as the winter is approaching and people are going to rely on heating more and more. Realistically, I don't think this issue will be fixed in the next three months.