

# CURRENT ISSUES AND EVENTS

BRADLEY WILSON, PH.D.  
CONTEST DIRECTOR

## WORTH NOTING...

IN NOVEMBER, 2002, THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY REPORTED THAT ONLY 17 PERCENT OF AMERICANS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-24 COULD FIND AFGHANISTAN, ISRAEL, IRAN OR IRAQ ON AN UNLABELED MAP OF THE WORLD. EVEN MORE DISTRESSING, ONE IN 10 COULD FIND NEITHER TEXAS NOR CALIFORNIA ON AN UNLABELED MAP OF THE U.S.

AND NOT MUCH HAS  
CHANGED SINCE THEN.

"I DON'T THINK [STUDENTS TODAY] ARE LESS INFORMED THAN PRECEDING GENERATIONS. THEY ARE JUST LESS INFORMED IN GENERAL."

DAVID HAZINSKI, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

GRADY COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS

COMMUNICATION, 2013

"A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY DEPENDS ON A WELL-INFORMED CITIZENRY. AS THE WORLD GETS SMALLER, AS THE WORLD GETS MORE INTERCONNECTED, THE THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON IN OTHER COUNTRIES WILL AFFECT THEM TOO."

CYNTHIA TUCKER, VISITING PROFESSOR GRADY COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION, 2013

## NEWS SOURCE

	Percent In High Knowledge Group
DAILY SHOW/COLBERT REPORT	54
NEWSPAPER WEBSITES	54
NPR	51
LOCAL DAILY NEWSPAPER	43
CNN	41
LOCAL TV NEWS	35

Source: Public Knowledge Of Current Affairs Little  
Changed By News And Information Revolutions, April 2007

# Pew Survey: 41% Can't ID Biden as Vice President

By Mike Tighe | Wednesday, 29 Sep 2010 01:41 PM

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With some Democrats still whining about Vice President Joe Biden's admonition to them the other day to quit complaining about President Obama, now he's got something to whine about, too: A stunning 41 percent of Americans surveyed couldn't name the vice president, according to the results of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Say it ain't so, Joe might plead.



That stat stands out among the other answers of 3,412 Americans surveyed between May 19 and June 6, especially because some of Biden's gaffes have given him enough notoriety that he can't be viewed as just another VP, working in storied anonymity. Indeed, his gaffes have fueled a veritable cottage industry of YouTube videos, T-shirts, and other souvenir paraphernalia memorializing some of his more outrageous comments.

**Special:** [Could this alarming video cost the Democrats the White House in 2016?](#)

Only **45 percent** of Americans were able to correctly identify what the initials in GOP stood for.

**55 percent** of Americans believe that Christianity was written into the Constitution and that the founding fathers wanted One Nation Under Jesus

When asked on what year 9/11 took place, **30 percent** of Americans were unable to answer the question correctly.

When looking at a map of the world, young Americans had a difficult time correctly identifying Iraq (**14 percent**) and Afghanistan (**17 percent**).



YOUNGER AMERICANS  
(AGES 18 TO 34) ARE NOT  
AS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE NEWS  
AS ARE OLDER AMERICANS.

# ABOUT THE CONTEST



- 40 objective questions
- Essay (10 points)
- 60 minutes
- Top score individual (objective plus essay)
- Top score team (objective only; top three individuals constitute team score)

# WHO MAY ENTER?



- School may enter four students at district.
- Three individuals advance from district to regional to state.
- Four members of winning team advance.

# WHAT AREAS WILL YOU COVER?

- War and conflict
- Politics
- Health
- Science/technology
- Economics (economy, deficit, unemployment)
- Media
- Crime
- Education
- Environment
- Awards /Honors (not entertainment)

# ELEMENTS OF NEWS

- **Timeliness** — when?
- **Conflict** — political, ideological, cultural
- **Consequence** — what? why is it important?
- **Prominence** — who?
- **Proximity** — where? how?
- **Oddity** — unusual events that make the news
- **Human Interest** — newsmakers in a more human role

# WHO QUESTION

## **Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?**

- A. Cardinal and Archbishop in New York City
- B. Obama fund-raiser charged with fraud and violating campaign-finance laws
- C. First Hispanic on the U.S. Supreme Court
- D. Pope Francis of Assisi

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# WHO QUESTION

**Which Rowan County (Kentucky) Clerk was jailed after s/he refused to grant marriage licenses?**

- A. David L. Bunning
- B. Ted Cruz
- C. Josh Earnest
- D. Kim Davis



# WHO QUESTION



**Which Rowan County (Kentucky) Clerk was jailed after s/he refused to grant marriage licenses?**

- A. Melissa Thompson
- B. Ted Cruz
- C. Josh Earnest
- D. Kim Davis**



Clerk Rejects Proposal to Let Deputies Issue Marriage Licenses



Kentucky Clerk Who Said 'No' to Gay Couples Won't Be Alone in Court

Health Care Rules Proposed to Shield Transgender Patients From Bias

PAID POST: CARTIER Could You Climb This Norwegian Cave?

Cartier



3 Corrections Deputies in California Charged With Murder in Death of Mentally Ill Inmate

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SAVE UP TO over Allstate

SAVE UP TO over Farmers

**AAA Insurance**

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\*Reported savings from a 2014 multi-state survey

U.S.

3585 COMMENTS

# Clerk in Kentucky Chooses Jail Over Deal on Same-Sex Marriage

By ALAN BLINDER and TAMAR LEWIN SEPT. 3, 2015



Kim Davis, the clerk of Rowan County in Kentucky, after refusing to grant a marriage certificate to Robbie Blankenship and Jesse Cruz on Wednesday. Ty Wright/Getty Images

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ASHLAND, Ky. — A county clerk who, through her defiance of a federal court order to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, became a national symbol of religious opposition to [same-sex marriage](#) was jailed Thursday after a federal judge here declared her in contempt of court.

MULTIPLIES. AMPLIFIES. MESMERIZES. INTRODUCING AUDACIOUS MASCARA

SHOP NOW

NARS

# WHERE QUESTION

**Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, defending Hungary's handling of the crisis, said the situation was a "German problem" and argued that Europe had a duty to tell migrants from what country not to come?**

- A. Syria
- B. Belarus
- C. Poland
- D. Iraq

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- B. a virus, possibly imported from china or Australia
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- B. nuclear weapons housed in Midwest silos
- C. ammunition, including bullets and missiles
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- B. Thomas Jefferson
- C. James K. Polk
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# NO CELEBRITY QUESTIONS

**What was Justin Bieber's excuse for being arrested for cocaine possession and DWI?**

- A. No one is perfect.
- B. I was overtired and working myself to death.
- C. The drugs weren't mine.
- D. all of the above

# NO CELEBRITY QUESTIONS



Who cares?

# NO IMPOSSIBLE STUFF

**Argentina's ruling left-leaning coalition has chosen its candidate for the October presidential elections. Who is it?**

- A. First lady Christina Fernandez de Kirchner
- B. Gen. Javier Lozano Alarcon
- C. Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo
- D. Buenos Aires Governor Carlos Ruckauf

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# NO NUMBER QUESTIONS

**Iran announced that it had reached its goal of running \_\_\_\_\_ centrifuges for uranium enrichment, a much higher number than recently estimated by the United Nations' atomic agency.**

- A. 50
- B. 400
- C. 3,000
- D. 12,000

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HOWEVER, I MIGHT ASK...

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- A. North Korea
- B. Iran
- C. South Africa
- D. Israel

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# NOTHING TOO EASY

**Which American president was responsible for the construction of the Affordable Healthcare Act, popularly known as Obamacare?**

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# NO SPORTS QUESTIONS

**What horse won the Triple Crown in 2015?**

- A. Secretarian
- B. Seattle Slew
- C. Affirmed
- D. American Pharoah

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HOWEVER, I MIGHT ASK...

**American Pharaoh won \$800,000 in what sporting competition, the first time anyone had won it since 1978?**

A. Super Bowl

**B. Triple Crown**

C. Cricket World Cup

D. Formula One Racing

# IMPORTANT TOPICS

- United States presidency
- National and state elections
- Texas politics
- International conflict
- Iranian nuclear ambitions
- U.S. Supreme Court decisions
- The economy and significant economic events
- Global climate change
- Major scientific and technological developments



# ANY RATIOS?

- No. I play it by ear depending on news flow. In an election year, you can expect a lot of national news. And, you might expect to see questions regarding Texas implications to a national story or event.

# THE ESSAY

The essay matters.

# THE ESSAY

World War I, also known as the First World War or the Great War, was a global war mostly centered in Europe that began formally in 1914 and ended in 1918. World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It was the most widespread war in history, and directly involved more than 100 million people from more than 30 countries. Both global conflicts began as a series of regional conflicts that grew to encompass economic, industrial and scientific capabilities worldwide.

Given the number of conflicts in which the United States is involved in now, some people believe we are leading up to World War III. Discuss the conflicts in which the United States is involved now and their relevance to American citizens.

# THE ESSAY

An article on making small talk in the Huffington Post discussed how and why people resort to talking about the weather. Lindsay Holmes wrote that research has some possible insight: "We're directly affected by our environment. Studies have shown that our moods and overall well-being are influenced by the weather. So when the rising temperature or the bitter cold is the first thing on your mind, it might be hard to discuss anything else." Certainly, the weather has been front and center in the news during the last six months. So, discuss the weather and the implications of some of the recent newsworthy weather events.

# FROM THE CONSTITUTION

## REPRESENTATION.

(1) **Individual Competition.** Each participant high school may enter as many as four individuals in the district meet, all of whom may place. In districts with more than eight schools, district executive committees may elect to limit entries to three.

(2) **Team Competition.** The individuals entered at district constitute the team. A team shall have a minimum of three contestants compete in order to participate in the team competition.

The **team score** is determined by adding the highest three individual scores in the objective portion of the contest. All four members of the winning team will advance to the next higher level of competition.

# ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SCORING



- Objective + essay score.
- Only top eight objective scorers advance to essay round.

# ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SCORING OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS

- Britney — 32
- Lindsay — 30
- Tara — 28
- Juan — 27
- Jayden — 26
- Sophia — 26
- Nicole — 25
- Hilary — 24
- Noah — 23
- Jacob — 22
- Mary-Kate — 21

All other contestants  
answered fewer than 21  
correctly.

Top eight advance to the essay round.

# ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SCORING

## ADD THE ESSAY QUESTIONS

NAME	OBJECTIVE	ESSAY	TOTAL
BRITNEY	32	5	37
LINDSEY	30	7	37
TARA	28	9	37
JUAN	27	10	38
JAYDEN	26	8	34
SOPHIA	26	5	31
NICOLE	25	3	28
HILARY	24	9	33



# ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SCORING

## FINAL PLACES

NAME	OBJECTIVE	ESSAY	TOTAL	PLACE
BRITNEY	32	5	37	4th
LINDSEY	30	7	37	3rd
TARA	28	9	37	2nd
JUAN	27	10	38	1st
JAYDEN	26	8	34	5th
SOPHIA	26	5	31	
NICOLE	25	3	28	
HILARY	24	9	33	6th

# ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SCORING

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# ABOUT TEAM SCORING

- Top three-member team determined **by objective scores only**.
- For example, TEAM A:
  - Kevin — 29
  - Brad — 26
  - Jake — 25
  - Matt — 21 (lowest score doesn't count)
  - Team score: 80

# WHAT ABOUT THE WILD CARD?

- Best **second place** team among the eight districts in a region goes to region.
- Best **second place** team among the four regions in the state qualifies to the State Meet.

# 8 DISTRICTS PER REGION 4 REGIONS IN THE STATE

- District 1 — 78
- District 2 — 72
- District 3 — 69
- District 4 — 83
- District 5 — 66
- District 6 — 81
- District 7 — 70
- District 8 — 68
- Region 1 — 81
- Region 2 — 77
- Region 3 — 72
- Region 4 — 83

# WHAT IF THERE'S A TIE? FOURTH TEAM MEMBER'S SCORE WILL BREAK TIE.

- District 1 — 78
- District 2 — 72
- District 3 — 69
- District 4 — 83
- District 5 — 66
- District 6 — 83
- District 7 — 70
- District 8 — 68

## District 4 (83)

Jennifer - 30

Courtney - 27

David - 26

Matthew - 25

## District 6 (83)

Tony - 32

Carmela - 28

Meadow - 23

A.J. - 19

# BUT WHAT IF...

- Can a member of a team who did not place first, second or third at district but who advanced with the team then places first, second or third as an individual at region advance as an individual?
- Yes.

# THE NUMBERS: DISTRICT





# THE NUMBERS: REGION & STATE

Region participation in 2015 — 1,088  
with addition of conference 6A

Region participation in 2014 — 909

State participation in 2015 — 217  
(odds of making it to State: 1:5)

# THE NUMBERS: STATE

Objective score average | 32.3

High | 38 (n=1)

37 (n=1)

36 (n=6)

Low | 13

Essay score average | 5.6

High | 9 (n=4)

Low | 1

# NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



- USA Today
- Wall Street Journal
- Christian Science Monitor
- The New York Times
- The Washington Post

# TEXAS METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPERS



- Dallas Morning News
- Houston Chronicle
- San Antonio Express News
- Fort Worth Star Telegram
- Austin American-Statesman

# NEWS MAGAZINES



- Time
- Newsweek
- Texas Monthly
- US News & World Report
- The Economist

# RADIO, TELEVISION, INTERNET



- Texas Tribune
- National Public Radio
- PBS
- The Daily Show
- ABC, CBS, NBC
- CNN.com, MSNBC.com, foxnews.com
- huffingtonpost.com

# CUT-OFF DATES 2015-2016

The contest will focus on a basic knowledge of current state, national and world events and issues. "Current events" are defined as those that have occurred during the current school year so any material after Aug. 24, 2015 is fair game for any exam. However, the following cut-off dates will assist in studying for multiple-choice questions.

- Invitational — Aug. 24 - Jan. 1
- District — Sept. 1 - March 1
- Region — Oct. 1 - April 1
- State — Nov. 1 - May 1

# CONTEST DATES 2015-2016

- Invitational A — Jan. 8 - Feb. 6
- Invitational B — Feb. 12 - March 12
- District 1 — March 21-26
- District 2 — April 1-6
- Region — April 21-23
- State — May 23-25



# Q & A

Will the State competition test follow the May 1 deadline, or should students study beyond that date? If they need to study beyond the date, do you have a deadline on which they can focus? | **Chad Smith, MacArthur High School, Irving**

State — Nov. 1 - May 1

# Q & A

From competing in current issues, I have grown to enjoy reading national newspapers and listening to NPR. The questions on the district and regional current issues tests were well-worded and reflective of major news headlines. I am considering subscribing to either the *Economist* or *Newsweek* in preparation for next year's competition in addition to listening to NPR, watching NBC news and reading *USA Today*. Which of the two covers the news more accurately and extensively? | **Eric Garcia, junior, Franklin High School, El Paso**

I'm really most happy that you have learned to become an informed member of society and an educated consumer of mass media. Being informed and knowing how to consume mass media are skills that will benefit you no matter your career choices.

# Q & A

I carry a fifth place person and she practices with us. She was listed as an alternate at district. I would like for her to take the CI&E test at Austin. Her scores are better and she has earned the testing spot. My question is how to go about this at the State meet? | **Larry Franks, Hartley ISD**

Alternates for teams do not advance in the online system. The students you had participate at Region are the four students who have qualified to State. You are allowed one substitution on your team only if one of those qualifying students are unable to participate at State. If you have two students unable to attend, then you may still sub only one student and compete as a team of three. That process includes turning in the substitution form with with an administrator's signature certifying that the substituting student is eligible to compete.

# Q & A

There was one complaint by some of the students about a question specifically about an event at Highland Park High School. This gave an unfair advantage to the students who participated from Highland Park High School. With a tight margin on whose essays were graded, the point earned by the HPHS students could have been a game changer? | **Linda Smith, Rockwall High School**

This was a big deal not only for those students at Highland Park but in the Dallas area and all over Texas. It has implications for schools over. And it made the regional and national news repeatedly including in the *Texas Tribune* and the *New Yorker*.

## Q & A

You use too much stuff from your Twitter feed you sacrifice depth in favor of breadth. It's just not the same as reading an article or listening to NPR. It almost comes off as CE Lite or a quiz from *USA Today*. | **Chris Smith**

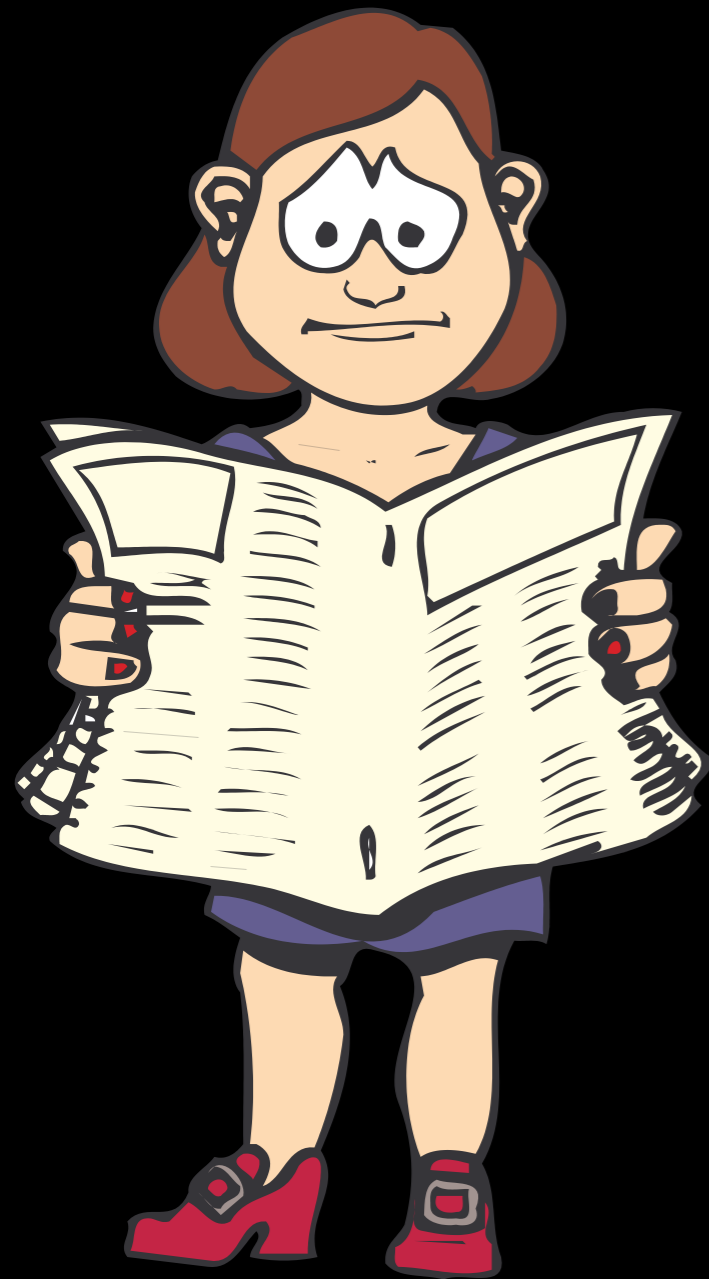
This is a breadth vs. depth question for sure. It is possible to achieve depth over time.

# Q & A

Using websites is tricky because, as you know, stories get pushed down as the news cycle continues. Let's say you look at a site when you get to your office 8 a.m., maybe. But let's say my conference period isn't until 2 p.m. that afternoon. What I'm looking at is literally not the same as what you looked at, and I have no way of knowing what was on the screen that morning. | **Chris Smith**

True. Remember, the goal of the contest is to engage in current events over time. A single story on a single website will almost never make the test. It wouldn't pass the 'consequence' test.

# GET STARTED NOW

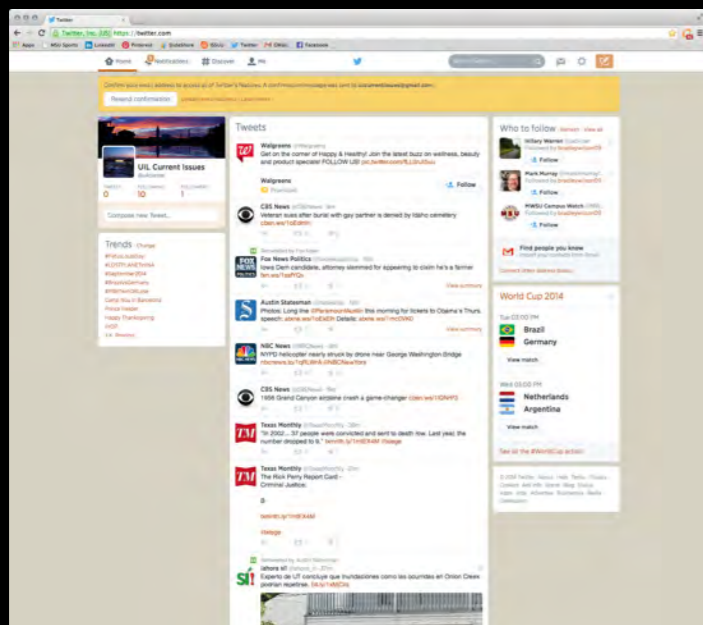


- Organize your team
- Read *CI&E Contest Manual*
- Engage in social media
- Collect and store data
- Practice regularly
- Attend an invitational meet
- Practice writing and evaluating essays
- Have fun

# FOLLOW CI&E



Texas UIL Current  
Issues and Events



@uilciande  
#uilciande



# CONTACT ME



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