

A photograph of Bradley Wilson, Ph.D., speaking at a blue and wood podium in a formal room. He is smiling and looking towards the left. In the foreground, several photographers are crouched, holding cameras and lenses, capturing the event. The room features a patterned carpet, a wooden cabinet with a lamp, and framed portraits on the wall. An American flag is partially visible on the right.

CURRENT ISSUES AND EVENTS

BRADLEY WILSON, PH.D. | CONTEST DIRECTOR
2023-2024

Who I Am: John Pierce, Current Events Coach, Mason High School



Why We Need This Contest: A Knowledge Crisis

US history, civics scores drop for nation's 8th graders. What experts say is to blame.



Kayla Jimenez
USA TODAY

Published 12:01 a.m. ET May 3, 2023 | Updated 12:14 p.m. ET May 3, 2023



Schools race to catch up kids' reading

Third grade is the last chance for students to master reading with help from teachers before they face more rigorous expectations. If third graders don't read fluently by the time the school year ends, research shows they're less likely to complete high school. (April 20) AP

Another set of test results shows the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on American students: National history scores dropped yet again, and eighth graders lost significant ground in civics for the first time.

Nearly all of the nation's eighth graders fell behind in U.S. history and civics in 2022 compared with 2018 on the [National Assessment for Education Progress](#), also called the Nation's Report Card, according to scores released Wednesday. Declines were expected because of the shift to remote teaching and the loss of instruction time when the pandemic hit. But for these subjects, experts also worry [friction over what students are taught in American history classes](#), especially about race and slavery, are a factor.

Our Knowledge Gap

WOODROW WILSON NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION, 2019

Americans have an abysmal knowledge of the nation's history and a majority of residents in only one state, Vermont, could pass a citizenship test.

Only 27% of those under the age of 45 across the country demonstrate a basic knowledge of American history. And only four in 10 Americans passed the exam.

Our Knowledge Gap

AMERICA'S KNOWLEDGE GAP

Do immigrants who are here illegally have any **rights** under the U.S. Constitution?

Name the five **freedoms** guaranteed under the First Amendment.

Name the three **branches** of government.

Which amendment to the U.S. Constitution resulted in **freedom** for slaves?

Who is the **chief justice** of the U.S. Supreme Court?

Our Knowledge Gap

ANNENBERG PUBLIC POLICY CENTER

Only **47%** of U.S. adults could **name all three branches of government**, down from 56% in 2021 and the first decline on this question since 2016.

Less than **24%** could name **freedom of religion** as a freedom guaranteed in the First Amendment, down from 56% in 2021.

51% continue to assert incorrectly that **Facebook is required** to let all Americans express themselves freely on its platform under the First Amendment.

SEPT. 13, 2022

Our Knowledge Crisis

AMERICA'S KNOWLEDGE CRISIS

26% of respondents believe Brett Kavanaugh is the chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and 14% of respondents selected Antonin Scalia, who died in 2016.

18% of respondents identified Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), elected to Congress in 2019, as the author of The New Deal, a suite of public programs enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s.

Our Knowledge Crisis

AMERICA'S KNOWLEDGE CRISIS

12% of respondents understand the relationship between the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment, and correctly answered that the 13th Amendment freed all the slaves in the United States.






SEPT. 6, 2019

Our Knowledge Gap

Pakistan




Our Knowledge Gap









Americans prefer Miley to Syria stories by huge number

Maria Puente, USA TODAY Published 5:35 p.m. ET Sept. 9, 2013 | Updated 5:46 p.m. ET Sept. 9, 2013

Americans would rather read about the latest transgressions by Miley Cyrus than the latest horrors in Syria. Are we surprised?



(Photo: Kevin Mazur WireImage for MTV)



CONNECT TWEET LINKEDIN COMMENT EMAIL MORE

You probably already sensed that media coverage of Miley Cyrus' shenanigans would be more popular with Americans than stories about mass murder in Syria and the possible U.S. intervention there.


But someone has actually calculated exactly how much more popular Miley is than Syria: 12 times more popular. It's another one of those signs that suggests...well, something about the state of our culture.

A new survey by [Outbrain](#), a leading "content discovery platform" on the Web, tracked traffic data from its network of 100,000 publishers and major news organizations and found that Americans viewed 12 times as many pages about Miley-the-twerker as they did about Syria-the-damned. *New York* magazine's popular fashion blog, [The Cut](#), summed it up.

The disparity is in spite of the fact that hundreds of Syrians, including more than 400 kids, were recently gassed to death, apparently by their own government, and despite the fact that more than twice as many news stories about Syria have been published for every one about Miley in recent days.


STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- What does this say about American culture and media?
- Is a twerking twentysomething more interesting than bombing Syria?



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FOR FIRST-TIME
HOMEBUYING

[Learn More](#)



STORY FROM HOONUIT

Customer Spotlight: Riverland Community College

Share your feedback to help

Our Knowledge Gap

AMERICA'S KNOWLEDGE CRISIS

More than half (54%) of teenagers say they find news at least a few times a week from social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

Common Sense Media and Survey Monkey, 2019

Our Knowledge Gap

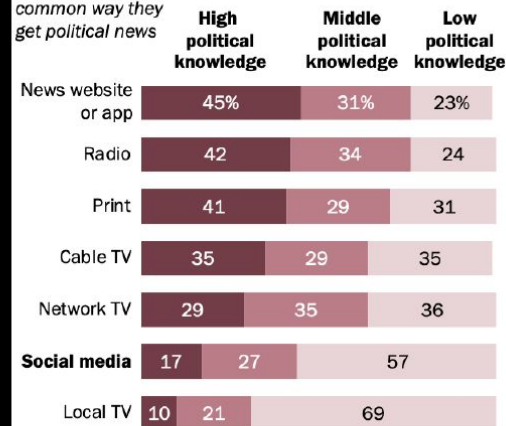
AMERICA'S KNOWLEDGE CRISIS

Those who relied on social media for news were less likely than most others to be knowledgeable about current events.

Americans who primarily get political news from social media are among least knowledgeable about politics

% of U.S. adults who have ____, according to an index of nine knowledge questions

Among those who say ____ is the most common way they get political news



Note: Knowledge index created from nine political knowledge questions. Respondents with high political knowledge are those who answered eight or nine questions correctly, middle knowledge are those who answered six or seven questions correctly and low knowledge are those who answered five or fewer questions correctly.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 29-Nov. 11, 2019. "How Americans Navigated the News in 2020: A Tumultuous Year in Review"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

FROM TRAVIS RINK, MIMIO EDUCATOR

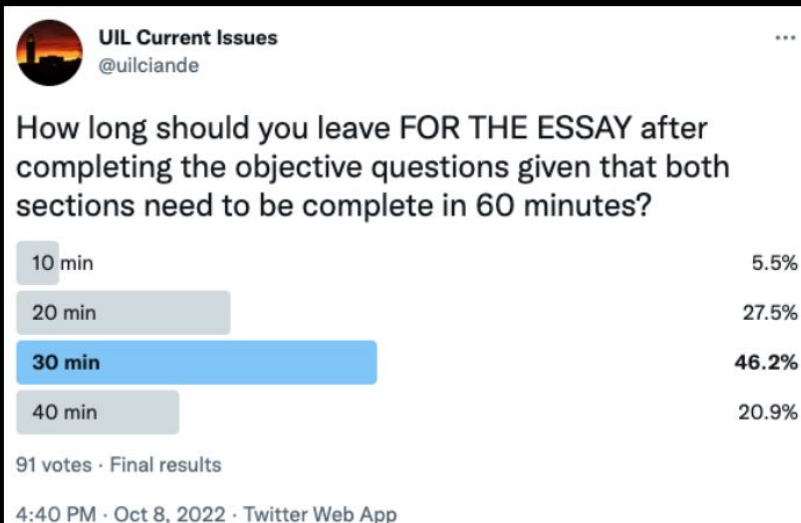
As educators, it's our job to make sure that students are armed with the tools necessary to distinguish between fact, fiction, and plain old opinion; between research or evidence-based statements and empty rhetoric; between exaggeration and reputable journalism – not just “factoids” from Facebook, Twitter, or other information feeds.

ABOUT THE CONTEST



- 40 objective questions (2 pts. each)
- Essay (20 points)
- 60 minutes
- Top score individual (objective plus essay)
- Top score team (objective only; top three individuals constitute team score)

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION



TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION



- **60 minutes total**
 - 2 minutes, read prompt for essay
 - 30 minutes objective
 - 25 minutes essay
 - 1 minutes, read prompt
 - 2 minutes, outline
 - 18 minutes, write
 - 4 minutes, edit and rewrite
 - 3 minutes review entire test and ensure that your number is on all pages

Who May Enter:

- A school may enter 6 students at district.
- Three individuals advance from district to regionals.
- Four members of the winning team advance.

The Questions

1. Which Texas political leader was impeached over allegations of misconduct that included bribery and abuse of office, removed from office but ultimately acquitted on all charges?
 - a. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott
 - b. Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick
 - c. Texas Speaker of the House Dade Phalen
 - d. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton

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2. Why was whiskey maker Jack Daniels allowed, according to the U.S. Supreme Court, allowed to sue the maker of Bad Spaniels, a dog toy?

- a. Dogs were dying from alcohol poisoning.
- b. The dog toys were a trademark infringement.
- c. The dog treats made use of illegally obtained recipe components.
- d. Dogs mistook the toy for the real bottle of whiskey.

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3. Which of the following is true of former President Donald Trump?

- a. He was found guilty and ordered to pay millions in an alleged hush-money payment to a porn star.
- b. He faces 91 felony counts in four different states.
- c. He admitted to interfering in an election by asking for votes in Georgia.
- d. He was handcuffed, fingerprinted and sent to jail for financial crimes in New York.

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4. Eagle Pass Mayor Rolando Salinas declared a state of emergency in his city of 30,000 people. Why?

- a. A sudden outbreak of a new strain of COVID-19
- b. Congress failed to pass a funding stop-gap measure
- c. The drought and record heat, the hottest on record
- d. 5,000 migrants crossed over the border into the city from Mexico

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5. After requesting that G-20 leaders refer to this country by its ancient name Hindu name, many speculated that India was on the verge of changing its official name to...

- A. Bharat
- B. Indus
- C. Pradesh
- D. Gujaret

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6. Who was the former leader of Russia's Wagner Group who died when his personal jet crashed (likely after being shot down)?

- A. Sergei Shoigu
- B. Valery Gerasimov
- C. Yevgeny Prigozhin
- D. Alexander Solzhenitsyn

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7. Scientists measured the global surface temperature during September 2023 at _____ above pre-industrial levels, just below the level the Paris Climate Accord seeks to prevent.

- A. .53°C
- B. 1.44°C
- C. 2.1°C
- D. 5.13°C

7. Scientists measured the global surface temperature during September 2023 at _____ above pre-industrial levels, just below the level the Paris Climate Accord seeks to prevent.

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What To Look For:

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



Although the move didn't fit the state's flag protocol, Florida's governor in February ordered flags in the state flown at half-staff for who, a person the governor called "an absolute legend" and "a great person"?

- a. Eugene Goodman
- b. Larry Flynt
- c. Chuck Corea
- d. **Rush Limbaugh**

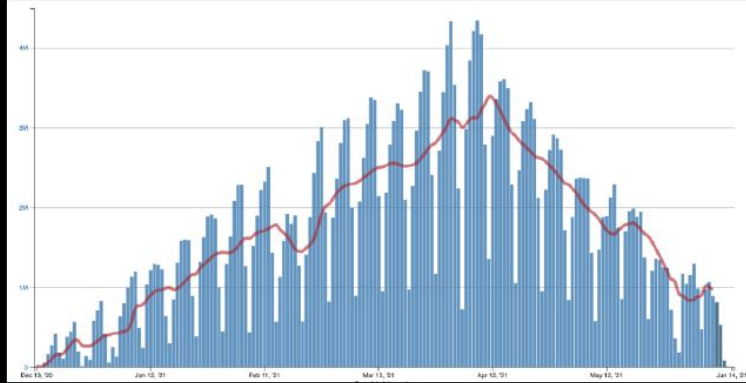
WHO QUESTION



Who was the world's second-longest serving monarch, having served 70 years and 214 days?

- a. Louis XIV (France)
- b. Elizabeth II (United Kingdom)
- c. Rama IX (Thailand)
- d. Victoria (United Kingdom)

CHART QUESTION



Using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, what does the chart above represent?

- a. the number of people in the United States who have died of COVID-19 per day
- b. the number of people in the world who have died of COVID-19 per day
- c. the number of people in the U.S. hospitalized with COVID-19 per day
- d. the number of COVID-19 vaccines administered in the U.S. per day

WHAT QUESTION



According to scientists, there's a 99.9999 percent chance that what is the cause of climate change?

- a. the natural cycle of the planet
- b. cows
- c. humans
- d. expansion of the sun

WHICH QUESTION



As authorized by D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser which slogan was printed on the street in front of the White House?

- a. AllAloneTogether
- b. Make America Great Again
- c. MeToo
- d. Black Lives Matter

BUSINESS QUESTIONS



A new energy-friendly fleet of delivery vehicles and shorter office hours were just part of a massive 10-year plan Louis DeJoy had to make so that which business would be more competitive and more modern?

- a. the United State Postal Service (USPS)
- b. United Parcel Service (UPS)
- c. Amazon Home Delivery
- d. AT&T home service

NUMBER QUESTIONS

The midterm elections gave Democrats a majority of the total voting seats in the House of Representatives when the new Congress convened Jan. 3. How many votes do the Democrats now have in the House?

- a. 196
- b. 235**
- c. 278
- d. 239

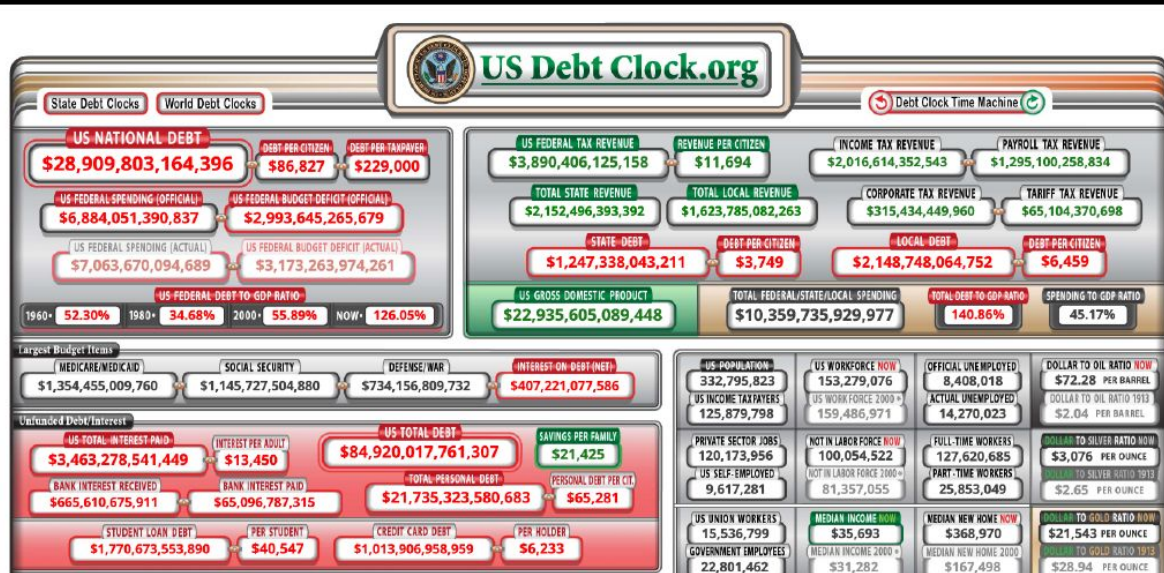
The Labor Department released its monthly hiring and unemployment figures in December, providing one of the better snapshots of the American economy. What was the unemployment rate at the end of the year?

- a. 10.1%
- b. 7.8%
- c. 4.7%
- d. 3.7%**

NUMBER QUESTIONS

The U.S. government's public debt is the highest it has ever been. Given that the U.S. population is about 330 million, how much debt is there for each person?

- a. about \$67,000
- b. about \$6,700
- c. about \$67 million
- d. about \$6.70



ENVIRONMENT



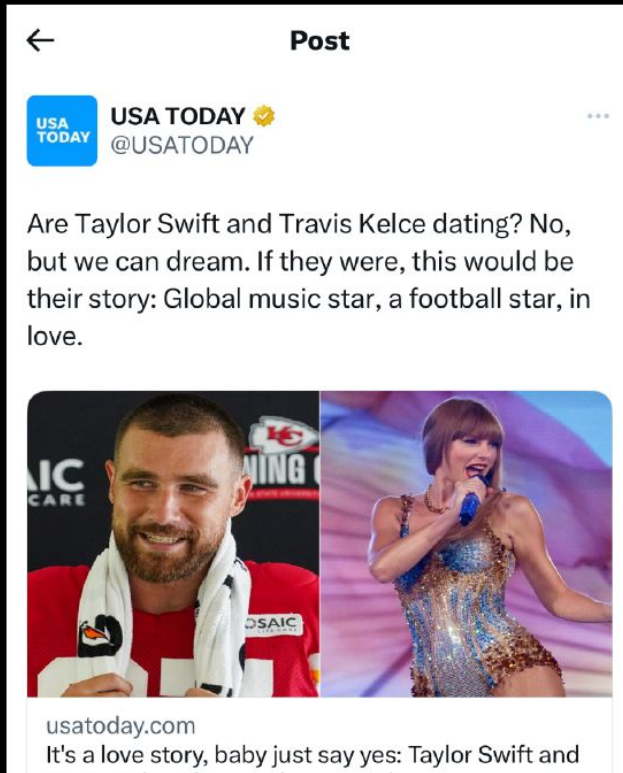
In 2005, there were 27 named storms and one unnamed storm. In 2020, there were 30 named storms, a new record. The last named storm, a Category 5 storm, was?

- a. Vicky
- b. Zeke
- c. Iota
- d. Lambda

TRIVIA VS. NEWS



NO CELEBRITY QUESTIONS



WHO CARES?
Remember criteria
for news

Timeliness

Conflict

Consequence

Prominence

Proximity

Oddity

Human Interest

NO IMPOSSIBLE STUFF



Who was U.S. President Donald Trump's personal secretary before she was fired after making comments about Ivanka Trump?

- a. John Kelly
- b. Madeleine Weterhout
- c. Mick Mulvaney
- d. Sarah Sanders

NOTHING TOO EASY



Hindering delivery of basic supplies to bakeries, hospitals, communication centers and other vital institutions nearby as well as worldwide oil supplies, a giant cargo ship, Ever Given, blocked what critical waterway in March?

- a. the Panama Canal
- b. Houston Ship Channel
- c. the Suez Canal
- d. Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal

.06% GOT IT WRONG (ONE PERSON)
STATE 2021

NO SPORTS GAME QUESTIONS

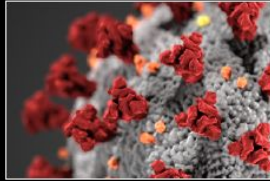


Who won the Stanley Cup in June of 2023?

- a. **Vegas Golden Knights**
- b. Colorado Avalanche
- c. Florida Panthers
- d. Tampa Bay Lightning

ANY RATIOS?

Business • International • National • Science • Texas



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.

ANY RATIOS?

Business • International • National • Science • Texas

	Number Of Questions		
	2021	2022	2023
T=Texas	5	1	3
N=National	21	17	14
I=International	9	8	7
B=Business	2	7	10
S=Science	3	7	6

ANYTHING OFF LIMITS? NO!

Bids to ban critical race theory have come in every state except one, database shows

Kelly Powers USA TODAY NETWORK

Published 5:05 a.m. ET April 17, 2023 | Updated 7:53 a.m. ET April 17, 2023

 [Subscribe](#) to hear this story



From the military to classrooms: Find out why critical race theory is causing a divide

From Donald Trump to Barack Obama, critical race theory has become a talking point. Find out why it's getting banned in classrooms across dozens of states. *Just the FAQs*, USA TODAY

IMPORTANT TOPICS

Affirmative Action
Affordable Care Act
Alt-right
Alternative medicine
America's global influence
Antifa
Artificial intelligence
Assisted suicide
Atheism
Bilingual education
Biofuels
Black Lives Matter
Border security
Capital punishment
Censorship
Charter schools
Childhood obesity
Civil rights
Climate change
Coronavirus
Critical race theory
Cryptocurrency
Cyber bullying
Cybersecurity
DACA

Drug legalization
Early voting
Eating disorders
Education policy
Election
Equal Rights Amendment
Executive orders
Extremism
Factory farming
Foreign aid
Fracking
Freedom of speech
General Data Protection
Regulation
Genetic engineering
Gerrymandering
Green New Deal
Hacking
Hate speech
Health insurance
Human trafficking
Immigration
International violence
Israel Palestine relations
Labor unions

Me Too movement
Middle East relations
Minimum wage
Misinformation
Net neutrality
Nuclear energy
Offshore drilling
Oil supply
Organic food
Outsourcing
Pandemic
Paying college athletes
Police reform
Political activism
Prescription drug addiction
Racial profiling
Ransomware
Reparations
Russian hacking
Sanctuary city
Screen addiction
Self-driving cars
Sex education
Smart speakers
Social security

Socialism
Solar power
Standardized testing
Stem cells
Stimulus packages
Supreme Court confirmation
Sweatshops
Syrian civil war
Texas budget
Title IX
Trade deficit
Trade tariffs
Transgender rights
Urban agriculture
Vaccines
Vaping
Violence in the media
Voter fraud
Voting laws
War
White nationalism
Wildfires
Wind power
Women's rights
Zero tolerance policies

THE ESSAY



The essay matters.

THE ESSAY



University
Interscholastic
League

CURRENT
ISSUES
&
EVENTS

@UILCIANDE

SOCIAL
STUDIES

@MRACADEMICS

RUBRIC

for Social Studies and CI&E essays

Judges may award all or no points. This is a working document for as many as three judges. Final points are a compromise among judges, NOT A RUNNING POINT TOTAL or pure point averaging. Return this form to the student with the objective portion of the contest.

POINTS AWARDED:

An 16-20 ESSAY opens with a declarative statement that extends the prompt without re-stating it. The thesis is supported by substantial, relevant information that analyzes the prompt from a range of perspectives — for example, social, political, economic, cultural and scientific. It does not provide a mere shopping list of facts. It interprets the facts without editorializing. The essay is well written and organized with few spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. The essay is clear, precise and succinct.

A 11-15 ESSAY offers a clear thesis with limited development. It either deals with one aspect in depth or with all aspects more superficially while providing limited analysis. Generally good writing and organization skills displayed. May contain errors of fact that do not seriously detract from the quality of the essay.

A 6-10 ESSAY lacks a thesis or presents a confused or undeveloped thesis. It deals with the prompt in a superficial way and offers no analysis. Instead, it tends to editorialize. May contain major fact errors, display poor writing skills and rely on bloated, pretentious language.

A 0-5 ESSAY displays little or no understanding of the prompt. The response is poorly written and organized and may contain significant fact, grammar, punctuation and/or spelling errors that detract from the clarity of the response.

Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Consensus
_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments:

OVERALL ESSAY SCORE _____
(maximum of 20 points)

OBJECTIVE SCORE _____
(score from the objective
portion of the test)

OVERALL SCORE _____
(add essay score
to objective score)

THE ESSAY

As Robert Glazer said in an April 1, 2020 *Forbes* article, "With little warning, COVID-19 is changing everything about our lives – changes that are universal across generation. Although each generation will be affected differently, all will be forced to acclimate to a new normal."

And a Pew Research poll released March 30, 2020 showed that nearly 44% of U.S. adults say their life has changed in a major way.

COVID-19 has changed our way of life. First, **discuss** how the novel coronavirus has changed the way we work, play and learn. Second, include some of the major individuals and companies involved in this new, but temporary, normal. Finally, what steps do officials say will be required to get us back to work, play and school?

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 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.

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

Advice for Preparation

SLATE QUIZ

June 22, 2021

Question 2 of 12

Who presented the Bush administration's case for war in an address to the United Nations Security Council?

Condoleezza Rice

Dick Cheney

George Tenet

Colin Powell

Answer quickly to earn more points!

46 coins

Quiz Template by Chris Kirk and Andrew Morgan. Report a bug.

FOLLOW CI&E



Texas UIL Current Issues and Events



@uilciande #uilciande

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA



- USA Today
- Wall Street Journal
- 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



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

RADIO, TELEVISION, INTERNET



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

ad fontes media

Most
Extreme

Hyper-Partisan Left

Skews Left

Middle

Skews Right

Hyper-Partisan Right

Most
Extreme

Fact Reporting

Mostly Analysis
OR Mix of Fact
Reporting and
Analysis

Analysis OR
High Variation
in Reliability

Opinion OR
High Variation in
Reliability

Selective,
Incomplete, Unfair
Persuasion,
Propaganda, or
Other Issues

Contains
Misleading Info

Contains
Inaccurate/
Fabricated Info

MORE

News Value and Reliability

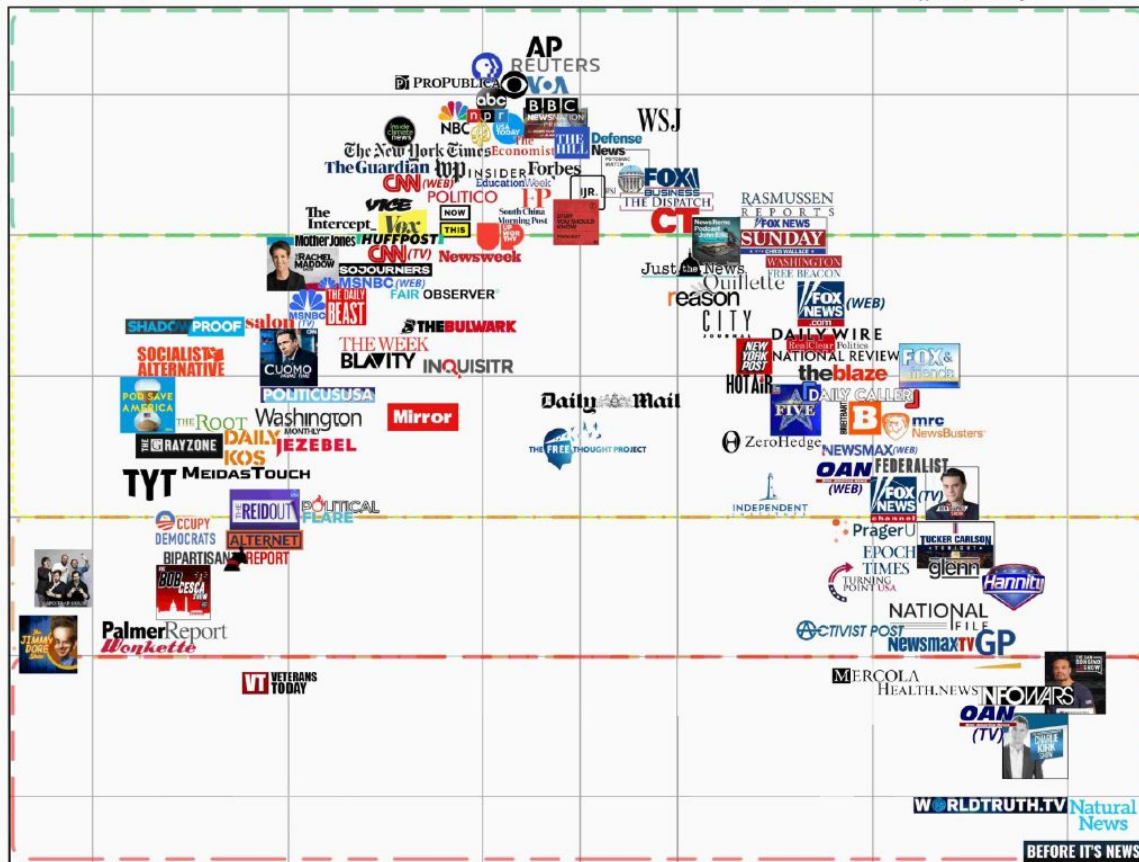
SES

LEFT

Bias

RIGHT

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CUT-OFF DATES 2023-2024

The contest will focus on a basic knowledge of current state, national and world events and issues. "Current events" are those that have occurred during the current school year so **any material after Aug. 14, 2023, is fair game for any exam.** However, the following cut-off dates may assist in studying for multiple-choice questions.

Invitational A	Aug. 14, 2023 - Dec. 6, 2023
Invitational B	Aug. 14, 2023 - Jan. 1, 2024
District	Sept. 18, 2023 - Feb. 14, 2024
Region	Oct. 16, 2023 - March 26, 2024
State	Jan. 2, 2023 - May 13, 2024

Extra Tips:

- Read the news every day in some way, 10 minutes a day.
- Don't just read one source! Seek out a variety of sources.
- Read some things in hard copy.
- Actually read full articles, not just headlines.
- Filter out some topics by evaluating relevance.
- Memorize people in key positions.
- Study with other teams!
- Source recommendations: Time, NY Times, Texas Tribune, CS Monitor, NPR, Politico, The Week