

Explore the Issues: Editorials & Columns

In order to become a “global citizen,” you must actually become aware of local, national, and global issues. Your task will be to explore topics via opinion pieces. Within each topic you must identify an issue of interest and find a column or editorial.

You have been provided a list of columnists, publications, and categories from which to choose. This is not an exhaustive list. Please ask if you search all of the options below and are still struggling.

Please type your précis paragraph and attach the annotated column. Label the topic and issue you’ve chosen at the top of your précis paragraph. **Example:** Sports–Doping

Possible Columnists or Opinion Pages

[David Ignatius](#), *The Washington Post*
[George F. Will](#), *The Washington Post*
[Charles Krauthammer](#), *The Washington Post*
[David Brooks](#), *The New York Times*
[Maureen Dowd](#), *The New York Times*
[Thomas Boswell](#), *The Washington Post*
[Frank Deford](#), *Sports Illustrated*, *NPR*

[Gene Weingarten](#), *The Washington Post*
[Dave Barry](#), *The Miami Herald*
[Paul Krugman](#), *The New York Times*
[Robert J. Samuelson](#), *The Washington Post*
[The Boston Globe Opinion Page](#)
[Wired Magazine Opinion Page](#)
[The Week’s Opinion Page](#)

Possible Topic Categories

- Issues of War
- Education
- Popular Culture
- Science and Technology
- Politics and Partisanship
- Sports
- Science and Environment
- Social Issues

Due Dates

Column #1—Annotations & Précis _____

Column #2—Annotations & Précis _____

Column #3—Annotations & Précis _____

Annotations

Annotate the following elements directly on the column.

Speaker—Remember it is not enough to simply name the speaker. What can you say about the speaker based on the evidence, the writing style, the topic etc.? What does the speaker value?

Occasion—Be certain to discuss and record both the larger occasion, that is, those issues or ideas that must have made the speaker think about this incident, as well as the immediate occasion, whatever made the author decided to focus on it in his/her writing.

Audience—To whom is this writing directed? It is not enough to say: “Anyone who reads it.” You will want to identify a certain audience by describing some of its characteristics. Be specific. The audience will rarely be “working adults.” Consider party affiliation, societal values, religious beliefs, etc.

Purpose—The purpose could be purely a personal one (i.e. to assuage guilt, to boast, etc.), but it also could be directed towards the audience, in which case you will have to decide what the message is and how the author wants this audience to respond.

Subject—What is the topic of the author’s writing? You should be able to identify this easily based on the writing’s focus.

Tone—Try to choose a description of the tone that fits the piece as a whole. You must also include specific words or phrases from the text and explain how they support your statement. Instead of using vague generalities like “realistic” and “happy,” consider specific adjectives like “pragmatic” and “complacent.”

Précis Paragraph Format

After you have completed these annotations, construct a précis paragraph for each editorial.

1. The first sentence includes the name of the writer (usually including a descriptive phrase); the work’s genre, title, and date of publication; a rhetorically accurate verb (“asserts,” “argues,” “implies,” “posits,” etc., but not “writes” or “states”); and a *that clause* containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
2. The second sentence provides an explanation of how the writer develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
3. The third sentence includes a statement of the writer’s apparent purpose followed by an *in order to* phrase. It should assess what the writer wanted the audience to do or to feel as a result of reading the work.
4. The fourth sentence describes the intended audience and/or the relationship the writer establishes with the audience. This sentence should consider how the language of the work excludes or appeals to certain audiences. It may also report the writer’s tone.

Sample Précis

In 2005’s “Cheating is a National Problem,” the editorial staff of *USA Today* implies that the epidemic of cheating among students directly correlates to those examples set on a national level by business executives. Corrupt business practices are specifically highlighted via statistics from the Pew Research Center. *USA Today*’s piece suggests that cheating is a reflection of widespread deceitfulness in order to convince the audience that dishonesty is something learned in a larger setting than just the classroom. The audience consists of Americans worried about the moral decline of this country; the tone towards “cheaters” is one of warning and disdain.

