

Article-of-the-Week

The world is an interesting place, with a lot of stuff happening in it. That stuff happens whether we know about it or not. The thing is, if we can collectively be more aware of what is happening, then we stand a better chance of shaping the world in ways that we like. Otherwise, we allow the world to shape us in ways that we sometimes won't like-or-worse-simply because we don't know what's going on. The trick is in developing a personal habit of wanting to know what's happening, the good and the bad. The habit should start early and be built upon layers of experience.

1. **Close Read (50%):** Read with a pencil/highlighter in hand, and annotate the text.
 - a. Annotating *means* underlining or highlighting key words and phrases-anything that strikes you as surprising or important, or that raises questions or confusions.
 - b. Annotating *includes* writing your thoughts and reactions in the margins next to what you have highlighted or underlined. Random underlining or highlighting by itself is coloring, not close reading.
 - c. Highlight or circle words you don't know, then look'em up! Write down the definition in the margin next to the word. A wider vocabulary offers you greater access to the world.

Suggestion: Read the article through first, then annotate the second time around. At a glance, your copy of the article should look heavily marked. Up close, your comments and questions should seem sincere and thoughtful. This is the look of "active reading."

2. **Purpose and Audience Statement:** 1 sentence that describes what the author's purpose is for writing the article and who the intended audience is.

Sample: The author's purpose is to inform the general public of the upcoming graphic warnings that are going to be placed on cigarette cartons.

3. **Summary Statement:** 25 words or less. You must be sure to include the author, title of article, and where it was published. Then choose a summary verb that best conveys what the article's purpose is.

Sample: "New, More Graphic Warnings Unveiled" by Rob Stein from The Washington Post provides information about the proposed graphic images that will be placed on cigarette cartons (16 words).

4. **Activity (Option List):** You will be required to complete **ONE** of the activities on the list provided. For some articles, I will pick a particular Option that I want you to take on. For other articles, you will be able to choose an Option from the list. Refer to the option choice for specific directions.

Article-of-the-Week Options

1. Choose three interesting quotes or passages from the article and write a 3-5 sentence reflection for *each* in which you explain their meaning and/or importance.
2. Write down five things you learned by reading this week's article. Which of these five do you think is the *most important* to know? Explain.
3. After reading an interesting article, create a T-chart. On the left side, bullet the key points of the article. On the right side, list what the article doesn't say or leaves out.
4. An article may contain bias (an opinion or prejudice). If that is the case here, identify the bias and explain the "other side."
5. Choose five of the following sentence starters and write a brief 2-3 sentence reflection for each:
 - a. I noticed...
 - b. I wonder why...
 - c. I was reminded of...
 - d. I think...
 - e. I am surprised that...
 - f. I'd like to know...
 - g. I realized...
 - h. If I were...
 - i. The central issue(s) is (are)...
 - j. I still don't understand...
 - k. Although it seems...
 - l. What interested me most was...
 - m. The author wants the reader to think...
 - n. I can relate to this because...
 - o. This idea/article is similar to...
6. In 3-5 sentences, explain *in your own words* the author's point of view.
7. Free response. Respond to the article any way you see fit.
8. T-Chart—Pro/Cons to an issue. Then take a position and support it with at least three reasons from the text.
9. (1) Three important points/ideas in this article are... (2) because...
10. Sometimes an article is a call to action. If that is the case here, describe this call and then what specific actions you believe need to be taken, and by who.

Summary Verbs

Strong verbs make all the difference. "I went to the store" works, but "I sped to the store" is better because the verb "sped" implies haste and tension while the verb "went" implies nothing. The same idea holds for the verbs that we use to describe what another writer is doing with a piece of writing. For example, "In this article, Joe Reporter says..." works, but the verb "says" is weak. Look at the two lists below. Take the sample sentence starter, "In this article, Joe Reporter..." and replace "says" with any of the stronger verbs below, and you will go much further in revealing the author's purpose without adding extra words or sentences. All you've done is swapped a weak verb for a stronger one; but to do this, you have to think about the words you choose. A student who chooses "says" isn't thinking much about word choice, but a student who chooses words like those below is.

For Beginners:

compares	explains	presents
defines	gives	shows
describes	lists	tells

For More Proficient Writers:

acknowledges	confuses	enumerates	persuades
adds	considers	evaluates	praises
advises	contrasts	explores	predicts
answers	critiques	expresses	proposes
argues	defends	features	provides
asks	demonstrates	furnishes	recognizes
asserts	denounces	identifies	recommends
assures	depicts	illustrates	simplifies
blames	discourages	implies	solves
captures	discusses	informs	states
clarifies	emphasizes	invites	suggests
classifies	encourages	judges	supports
concludes	endorses	mentions	teaches
confirms	entertains	offends	traces
confronts	entices		