

**Subject area/course:** English/Language Arts

**Grade level/band:** 10-11

**Task source:** Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS)

## **Watchdog Reporter**

### **STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **A. Task context:**

You are an investigative reporter for a watchdog group. As an investigative reporter you are asked to review a variety of print and non-print sources on a specific topic in order to determine if the reported information is accurate and being reported fairly. From this information, you will report on the topic and the information you found. This can be in the form of a podcast, article, blog post, videocast or another presentation method.

#### **Part 1. Media Watchdog**

- First, you will take a closer look at the role of an investigative reporter for a watchdog group and identify a topic in which to research and report on. The first step is to research the role of an investigative journalist. A good place to begin is by reading over the following information about investigative journalism:
  - Investigative journalist:  
<http://www2.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/Courses/ResourcesForCourses/Journalism/TheInvestigativeJournalist.html>
  - Investigative Reporter: <http://www.mymajors.com/career/investigative-reporter/>
  - How to do Watchdog Journalism:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sxf90TXThY8>
- Now, you will take a look at some examples of watchdog groups and the types of things they report on. Begin taking a look at these sites about watchdog journalism:
  - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watchdog\\_journalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watchdog_journalism)
  - <http://www.slideshare.net/jonesapollo/watchdog-journalism>
- Then take a look at some watchdog websites. Here are two sites that provide you with a list of watchdog sites to get you started:
  - Media studies: Media Watchers and Activists:  
<http://clas.uiowa.edu/commstudies/media-studies-media-watchers-activists>
  - Government Watchdog sites:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Government\\_watchdog\\_groups\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Government_watchdog_groups_in_the_United_States)
- While reading the different examples of articles located on the watchdog groups websites, take notes about the characteristics of a watchdog article.
- Brainstorm a list of topics that you would like to write a watchdog article about. From this list decide on one topic. Be prepared to explain why this would be an appropriate choice to write your article on during your progress review meeting. You



will be comparing your topic to topics you have read about during your research.

### **Part 2. Compare, Contrast, Analyze and Critique Information**

- As you have learned, an investigative reporter for a watchdog group reads over information from a variety of sources and looks to evaluate the information for accuracy and determine how it is reported by mainstream media. In order to develop a story for a watchdog group, you need to compare, contrast, analyze and critique information on a topic, but where do you start?
- You will begin by taking a look at how to compare and contrast information as well as ways of organizing information. You can choose to organize your information using a specific method for taking notes, a graphic organizer, or another type of organizational method.
- The next step is to analyze and critique the information. During the analysis and critique stage, you will examine the details located in the text and note areas of emphasis as well as items you have questions about. You will also examine the information for accuracy. This may require additional research in order to verify the accuracy and point of view of the information located in the text.
- From the information you have read, you will decide on an organizational strategy that will help you compare, contrast, critique and analyze the articles you will be reading for your report. This can include a specific method for taking notes, a graphic organizer, or another type of organizational method. This will help you to prepare your final project. For the final project, you will have the option of preparing a podcast, videocast, blog post, article or some other presentation method.

### **Part 3. Compare, Contrast, Analyze and Evaluate**

- Next, you will locate and organize information on your topic in order to compare, contrast, analyze and evaluate the information for your watchdog article.
- Locate information on your topic from a variety of print and non-print sources. It is beneficial to look for sources of opposing or points of view.
- After you find information on your topic compare, contrast, evaluate and critique each of your sources in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the different resources. Use the strategy you identified in part 2 to organize your information.

### **B. Final product:**

For your final task, you will be creating your watchdog report using the information you researched during the previous tasks. You may want to refer back to your task one notes on the characteristics of a watchdog report before you begin writing your final paper and review <http://watchdogwire.com/watchdog-wire-style-guide/>

Your final project can be formatted as a blog post, written article, podcast, videocast or some other presentation method used by watchdog Journalists.



## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **C. Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

- Find, assess, and use non-print informational texts.
- Compare and contrast increasingly complex print and non-print informational texts.
- Analyze increasingly complex print and non-print informational texts.
- Critique increasingly complex print and non-print informational texts.
- Organize and present information using correct citation format.

### **D. Materials needed:**

- Access to the Internet for research

### **E. Time requirements:**

This task will take approximately 1-2 weeks to complete. Your teacher will provide details regarding the timeline and due dates.

### **F. Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the NTN Knowledge and Thinking Rubric for ELA Research or Argumentation, Grade 12. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.