

Worksheet for Analysis of a Newspaper Article

Prepare a written report on your assigned article by answering these questions about it.

FIRST READING: COLLECTING THE FACTS

- List the newspaper this article appeared in, as well as its title, author, and date of publication. If the clipping includes the section number and page, add that information as well.
- News articles are supposed to answer the following questions: who, what, where, when, how, and why. After studying this article, provide brief answers to all these questions. Does the article answer all of them?
- For many years news style required the use of the “inverted pyramid,” presenting the most important information in the early paragraphs. In that way an editor, needing more space, could cut an article from the bottom. Does this article follow the “inverted pyramid” style?
- Does this article reflect the writer’s opinion on its topic, or is it purely objective?
- What is the purpose of this article? What does the author intend to convey?
- Does the way the article is written encourage you to take sides on the issue? Explain.

READING THE ARTICLE AS AN ARTIFACT OF ITS HISTORICAL PERIOD:

- Is it important to know the historical context in order to understand this article fully?
- Did the historical context of the article affect its content?
- Does the author’s word choice or spelling reflect the historical period? Give specific examples.
- Are there aspects of the writing that confused you when you read it?
- What information, if you had it, would make this article easier to understand?
- What bias did you bring to your reading of this article?
- What bias did the author bring to the writing of this article?
- What did you learn about the topic or the time period from reading the article?
- What does this article teach you about the time in which the article was written?
- What mistaken impression of the period might the article give an outsider?

PROJECT AND DISCUSSION IDEAS:

- Find an article on the same subject from another news source of the period. How do the two accounts differ? On what important points are they the same?
- Rewrite the same article as it might appear in a newspaper or magazine of today.
- Locate another primary source from the same period and compare the two.