

## Sample Assignment Sheet for Evaluating Controversies Unit: Option 1

### **The Rhetorical Context**

You write a newspaper column for your town titled “The Critic’s Eye,” in which you take up controversial events or issues, examine popular sources about the events and then make an argument in which you answer ONE of three questions:

- What caused this event? (For example, the Parkland School Shooting)
- What really happened? (For example, the Trayvon Martin killing)
- What is currently happening? (For example, climate change)

Your readers depend on your “critic’s eye” to give a thoughtful argument about the topic you choose. They come from varied backgrounds and tend to have very different (and strong) opinions, so you want to be as persuasive as possible in your writing.

### **The Process**

For this assignment, you will choose a topic from the list below and decide on the question you’ll answer in your paper.

My topic: \_\_\_\_\_

My question: \_\_\_\_\_

You’ll research your topic using popular sources: newspaper, blogs, magazines, podcasts, etc.. You’ll evaluate your sources using the CRAP criteria: currency, reliability, authority, point of view/purpose. (No worries - we’ll develop strategies to for that evaluation) and you’ll construct an argument using those sources. Your ability to evaluate the sources will help you write a persuasive argument. You’ll develop a draft, engage in peer review, and meet one-on-one with your instructor in order to revise effectively.

### **The Topics**

Virginia Tech Shootings

Columbine

The Murder of Matthew Shepard

Kent State

The murder of Trayvon Martin

Unite the Right Rally (Charlottesville)

Ruby Ridge

Waco

Pulse Nightclub shootings

Parkland shootings

Sandy Hook shootings

Dakota Access Pipeline Protests  
Ferguson Unrest  
Hurricane Katrina deaths  
Jonestown Mass Murder/Suicide  
Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill  
Exxon Valdez Reef Collision and Oil Spill  
Flint Water Crisis  
Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster  
Bhopal Disaster  
Charleston Church Massacre  
Central Park Jogger case

### **The Deets**

Length: 1000 to 1250 words PLUS Works Cited page.

Format: Double-spaced, MLA format

Minimum number of sources: 3

Due Date for draft: \_\_\_\_\_

Due Date for final paper: \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Assessment**

In order to receive a “B” on this assignment, students should

- Engage with the process described above in order to research and write their persuasive arguments as demonstrated by reflective writing throughout the unit
- Meet the minimum requirements as described above as demonstrated in the final paper
- Demonstrate thoughtful analysis and evaluation of sources as demonstrated in classroom written activities and in the final paper
- Synthesize sources with attention to rhetorical context as demonstrated in the final paper
- Develop a nuanced argument and conclusion as demonstrated in the final paper
- Engage in deep revision as demonstrated in changes from the first draft to the final paper

In order to receive an “A” on this assignment, students should meet the criteria described for the “B” and go above and beyond through

- Synthesis of four or more sources
- Adept and quality revision from first to last drafts

Students and instructor will together develop a weighted rubric after completion of the first draft.

### **The Outcomes**

These represent what we expect students will be able to do by the end of the unit.

- Students will be able to analyze a range of sources and evaluate for currency, relevance, authoritativeness, and point of view/purpose

- Students will be able to explain a range of research approaches and to assess according to rhetorical contexts
- Students will be able to construct an argument with thorough and nuanced support that acknowledges the concerns of audience and synthesizes sources appropriately
- Students will be able to develop a nuanced and thoughtful conclusion based on their evaluation of relevant sources
- Students will be able to support their conclusion with ample and appropriate evidence