

NEWS ANALYSIS (35-45 minutes)

Write a news analysis – no more than 400 words -- on ONE of the following five topics. Aim for a factual, editorial-style piece or an expository essay. Use specific examples to add strength to your piece.

FORMAT: Please indicate which question you have chosen. You are not allowed to use spelling- or grammar-check software on the computer. If you do, your test and application for admission will be voided.

TIME: You should spend a maximum of 45 minutes on this section.

Suggestion: Spend the first five to 10 minutes outlining the analysis. Spend the last five minutes editing it.

1. Over the past year the rallying cry "Black Lives Matter" has sparked an activist movement -- including, recently, at U.S. universities, where student protests have focused on racial injustice or misunderstandings on campus. This movement has been embraced by some and criticized by others. Discuss the factors that have contributed to this debate.
2. Only 40 percent of Americans say they trust mass media to report the news fully, accurately and fairly, according to a recent Gallup Poll. (The survey asked respondents about TV news, Internet news and newspapers.) That compares with 55 percent in 1999. What may be at the root of such mistrust?
3. The terrorist attacks in Paris and elsewhere -- and the news that one perpetrator apparently embedded among refugees coming to Europe -- has fueled an argument over how to respond to the influx of migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and other war-torn nations. In the U.S., some politicians have proposed stringent new vetting procedures for Syrian refugees -- or closing the door to them temporarily. In the quest for security, what would be the weaknesses or strengths of such a policy?
4. In August, Amnesty International passed a resolution supporting the decriminalization of consensual prostitution, on the grounds that it would be safer for sex workers. Some other human rights' groups disagree with this rationale. Explore the issues underlying this debate.
5. Critics say that the televised presidential debates have become mere entertainment -- a spectacle that emphasizes style over substance and contributes only to networks' ratings. Supporters say the debates still provide information about candidates to voters, though the format needs reform. Do TV debates still matter? What changes might improve them?

NEWS WRITING DRILL (45 minutes)

Part 1. (20 to 25 minutes)

Here are some notes gathered from interviews with several sources. Selecting what you need from these notes, write a short news story – about 250 words.

You are not allowed to use spelling- or grammar-check software on your computer. If you do, your test and application for admission will be voided.

The blaze tore through the second and third floors of 442 Hancock St.

The building is near Bedford Ave. in Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn.

A fire broke out in a Brooklyn apartment building yesterday. The building has three floors and 12 apartments.

One tenant died.

The fire started at 9:45 p.m., a Fire Department spokesman said. It was extinguished by 11 p.m.

Firefighters found the body of Henry Lewis in his apartment. He lived on the third floor.

Lewis was 64 years old.

Fire marshals have preliminarily determined that the fire was intentionally set.

Three other tenants were hospitalized -- two women and a man. Taken to Kings County Hospital. Treated for smoke inhalation and released.

The women: Marie Bradford, 70, and Josephine Samuels, 56. The man: unidentified.

Building only half-occupied. Building owner, Rudan Associates, has been buying out tenant leases so residents will vacate. Rudan planning to turn the building into a condominium, according to papers filed with the city's Real Estate Finance Bureau.

Residents from adjacent buildings were evacuated until the fire was extinguished.

“This fire has all the hallmarks of arson,” said Sean Partridge, a fire marshal in the NYFD’s investigation unit. “Traces of an accelerant were found on the second floor, and a witness has told the police that he saw a suspicious-looking individual in the building earlier in the evening.”

Spokesperson for city's medical examiner "We're still determining the cause of Lewis's death."

Police sources said Lewis's death is being investigated as a homicide.

Lewis worked as a parole officer at a state office in downtown Brooklyn.

The Red Cross has relocated residents of the building as the police and fire departments continue their investigation.

According to police spokesman: So far, no arrests and no suspects.

Comment from Ken Sendroff, who lives in adjacent building: "I smelled smoke and called 911. They said they already had been called and told me to leave my apartment if it was smoky."

Part II (10 to 15 minutes)

What further questions might you ask if you were the reporter on this story? How would you go about getting the answers?

CURRENT EVENTS ID (30-35 minutes)

Identify the following and explain, in one or two sentences, why each is significant and/or has been in the news.

1. John Boehner
2. Keystone XL Pipeline Project
3. Trevor Noah
4. Bashar al-Assad
5. Rowan County (Ky.) clerk Kim Davis
6. Caitlyn Jenner
7. Volkswagen
8. Bataclan music hall
9. Ta-nehisi Coates
10. Iran nuclear deal
11. #BlackLivesMatter
12. Angela Merkel
13. Planned Parenthood
14. Transpacific Trade Partnership
15. Cuba
16. "Deflate-gate"
17. House Select Committee on Benghazi
18. Charleston, S.C.
19. "Hamilton"
20. Aung San Suu Kyi

GRAMMAR, USAGE AND STRUCTURE (10-15 MINUTES)

Select the right answer.

1. In the first Democratic debate of the presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton took on Bernie Sanders by **(inferring) (implying)** that his brand of democratic socialism would work only in Denmark.
 - (a) inferring
 - (b) implying

2. A study of millions of Facebook users has found that social networks can have a measurable **(effect) (affect)** on voter turnout in national elections.
 - (a) effect
 - (b) affect

3. An influx of migrants **(is testing) (are testing)** Europe's commitment to erasing old borders.
 - (a) is testing
 - (b) are testing

4. The publisher praised my editor and **(I) (me)** for writing stories that consistently make the "most emailed" list.
 - (a) I
 - (b) me

5. I have to admit that some articles about celebrities **(pique) (peak)** my interest.
 - (a) pique
 - (b) peak

6. **(Who's) (Whose)** testimony did the jury believe?
 - (a) Who's
 - (b) Whose

7. Carla meets the engineering school's two most important **(criterion) (criteria)** for admission: excellent grades in math and an interest in robotics.

- (a) criterion
- (b) criteria

8. The City Council **(censured) (censored)** one of its members for awarding municipal construction contracts to her brother-in-law.

- (a) censured
- (b) censored

9. Karen Horney, an **(imminent) (eminent)** psychoanalyst, acknowledged that analysis could help eliminate neuroses but not "the ills of the world."

- (a) imminent
- (b) eminent

10. The new "Daily Show" is retaining the format used during Jon Stewart's **(reign) (rein)**.

- (a) reign
- (b) rein

Mark each of the following sentences as correct or incorrect.

11. He acted like he had never met me.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

12. Print advertising has declined, so publications are looking for other ways to raise revenues.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

13. Who's going to be the Republican nominee?

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

14. Before he was a journalist; he was an accountant.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

15. Aware of Americans' erratic viewing habits, TV networks have been slower to cancel shows.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

16. The dog, that won best in show, was Janine's bulldog.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

17. As a Girl Scout leader, Mrs. Barrett's car was always full of camping gear.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

18. The lecture was boring, however everyone had a good time at the reception.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

19. Whose book is this?

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

20. I don't know anything about Chinese history, that's why I'm worried about reporting from Beijing.

- (a) correct
- (b) incorrect

ANSWER KEY:

- 1. b
- 2. a
- 3. a
- 4. b
- 5. a
- 6. b
- 7. b
- 8. a
- 9. b
- 10. a
- 11. b
- 12. a
- 13. a
- 14. b
- 15. a
- 16. b

17. b
18. b
19. a
20. b