International Current Event Journal for Modern World History

Dear Incoming Freshmen:

In Modern World History, you will study the modern world -- defined as the period from 1500 to the present -- from a political, economic, and social point-of-view. Your summer assignment will require you to begin examining current events in terms of these three distinct historical lenses (some historians would call them perspectives). You may be wondering: how will I know if an issue or event concerns primarily political, economic, or social history? Here’s a simple guide to help you distinguish between the topics relevant to each historical lens:

- **Political** history concerns government institutions, political parties, elections, and laws; diplomatic and military interactions between states; and the evolution of political ideas. Many historians would associate political history with the study of power.
- **Economic** history concerns the ways human beings produce, distribute, and consume goods and services; how they conduct trade; and large-scale trends such as inflation, deflation, recession, and depression. Many historians would associate economic history with the study of money and capital.
- **Social** history concerns human society and the interaction between the world’s peoples. It encompasses topics as varied as religion, gender, race, class, and ethnicity. Many historians would associate social history with the study of daily life.

Assignment Directions

1. **Choose a total of THREE (3) current event articles that portray THREE (3) different regions of the world outside of the United States.**

   - Go to the library Pathfinder at [http://library.menloschool.org/mwhsummer](http://library.menloschool.org/mwhsummer) and browse through some of the linked news sites.

   - Once you’ve landed on a reputable website, select an article related to one of these regions:
     - **Latin America** (Nicaragua, Mexico, Venezuela, etc.)
     - **Africa** (South Africa, Nigeria, Sudan, Egypt, etc.)
     - **East Asia** (China, North Korea, Japan etc.)
     - **South Asia** (India, Pakistan, Afghanistan etc.)
     - **Southeast Asia** (Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, etc.)
     - **Middle East** (Israel, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, etc.)
     - **Western Europe** (Germany, France, Britain, etc.)
     - **Eastern Europe** (Yugoslavia, Russia, Poland, etc.)

   - Make sure the article you read tells a story that is IMPORTANT/SIGNIFICANT to the region in question. Then, as you read through the article of your choice, decide if the story is primarily Political, Economic, or Social. To be clear, each of the three articles you collect must represent a unique historical lens (i.e., one story must be primarily political, another primarily economic, the third primarily social).
2. Type an Analysis Template for each of the three stories using 12-point Times New Roman font.

**ANALYSIS TEMPLATE**

Your Name:

Source Information: Article’s title, name of news source, date published.

Summary (2-3 sentences):

Is this story primarily political, economic or social? Why is this a significant current event issue? (5-7 sentences, include a direct quote from the story to prove your point)

**SAMPLE WRITE-UP**

Your Name: Zheng He


Summary (2-3 sentences): Civil war in Syria is entering its 3rd year. What started as peaceful protests has become a military conflict supported on one side by Iran and Russia, and by the other side by Saudi and Qatari jihadists. Europe and America are debating whether to allow Syrian rebels to buy arms from Europe: on the one hand, they want the rebels to have a chance, but on the other hand, they’re worried about the Islamic fundamentalists in the rebel army.

Is this story primarily political, economic or social? Why is this a significant current event issue? (5-7 sentences, include a direct quote from the story to prove your point): This story represents primarily political history. It depicts an important global issue because what happens in Syria directly affects the governments of neighboring states and political decisions outside the Middle East. Firstly, the civil war in Syria has led to millions of Syrians seeking refuge in neighboring countries. According to Bowen, the BBC’s Middle East editor, “the strain of absorbing [refugees], and periodic border clashes, risk destabilizing Syria's neighbors. Worst case scenarios include a regional war.” In addition, many European states have had to develop new immigration laws related to receiving refugees. Therefore, Syria’s civil war has become much more than a regional political issue.

Your finished analysis write-ups are due on the first day of class. If you have any questions about this assignment, please email Mr. Villicaña at rvillicana@menloschool.org