AP Language and Composition Following a Columnist Project

Some of the most prominent practitioners of stylish written rhetoric in our culture are newspaper columnists. Sometimes they are called *pundits* – that is, sources of opinion, or critics. On the following pages find a list of well-known newspaper columnists. Select one and complete the tasks below. Please start a new page and label as **TASK #** each time you start a new task.

TASK 1 – Brief Biography. (10 pts x2 = 20)
Write a brief (100-200 word) biography of the columnist's journalism career. Be sure to include their primary political leanings, any topics they focus on and events from their personal life that may impact their writing. Properly cite **three** source(s) at the bottom of the page. (MLA- use Easy bib-author, title, publication, date, URL) Include a **recent picture** of the author (text wrap and no bigger than 2"x2"; place in upper right hand corner).

TASK 2 – Four Annotated Columns. (20 pts x2= 40 pts)
All columns should be dated no earlier than 2019, and each should be on a different topic. Copy and paste the columns into Microsoft word, change the font to Garamond 12 and double-space them to facilitate annotations. Be sure to include the Title, Author, Date and Publication at the top and organize them chronologically, oldest first. Your annotations should emphasize such things as:

- the central idea of the column
- identify appeals to logos, pathos, or ethos
  (by what means does the columnist seek to convince readers of the truth of his central idea?)
- the chief rhetorical and stylistic devices at work in the column (imagery, metaphor, hyperbole, etc.)
- the tone (or tones) of the column
- errors of logic or fallacies (if any) that appear in the column
- the type of sources the author uses and how they are used (**Be sure to pay attention to this one**!)
- the audience the author is writing for (who cares about the topic? is invested? can make change?
- Add final **comments** (3-4 sentences) to each column that summarizes **your personal response** to the piece – do **not** summarize the column! (Please clearly mark them; you may choose to word process these, or you may hand write them legibly IN INK.)

TASK 3 – Précis for each column. More on this (and practice) in the coming days . . . (40 pts x2 = 80)

TASK 4 – In Depth Analysis of One Column and Two Extras. (20pts x2 =40)
Choose a favorite column from Task 2 and find two other treatments of the same topic: 1 straight news article and one opinion piece from an opposing view. Write a comparison of the three in which you look at credibility, evidence, position and persuasiveness. Write a thorough explanation of the differences and how they affect the message/ purpose; include a brief assessment or evaluation of the original column. Is it sound? Is it convincing? Is there bias? Do you agree with the author?
-BE SURE TO PRINT OUT AND INCLUDE THE FIRST PAGES OF YOUR TWO ADDITIONAL SOURCES



TASK 5 – Final Remarks (10pts x2 = 20)
Add a section entitled "Final Remarks." In this task, write a thorough personal reflection on what you learned going through this process, what value this project had in skills that transfer to other classes or other areas, what you think of the writer you chose and their ethos with special focus on level of bias and their use of evidence, etc. (1st person is acceptable in this task.)

*Organize your documents into the order they are listed on the grade sheet and attach the grade sheet before turn in.

Student: _____ Following a Columnist Project

Columnist: _____ Grade Sheet

Task #1	10 pts – Biography w 3 total sources & pic	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Tasks #2 & #3	5 pts – Article #1 Annotation	0 1 2 3 4 5
	10 pts – Article #1 Précis	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
	5 pts – Article #2 Annotation	0 1 2 3 4 5
	10 pts – Article #2 Précis	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
	5 pts – Article #3 Annotation	0 1 2 3 4 5
	10 pts – Article #3 Précis	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
	5 pts – Article #4 Annotation	0 1 2 3 4 5
	10 pts – Article #4 Précis	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Task #4	10 pts – In-depth issue analysis	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
	10 pts - Other treatment articles	Present: 1=5 2= 10
Task #5	10 pts – Final Remarks (double check directions)	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
	Total:	**/100 x2**

Total of 100 points – Entered in gradebook weighted x2 (200 pts total).

Annotations score:
5= extensive items found and accurately labeled for all required elements; thorough comments reflect thoughtful opinion
4= extensive items found and labeled for most of the required elements; comments incomplete or not opinion
3= adequate items underlined, labels mostly accurate; comments missing
2= few items underlined, labels present but with some errors or little connection to required elements
1= items underlined, no labels
0= no items underlined or labeled, article not present

Biography/ Reflection Score:
10=
9=
8=
7=
6=

Precis/ Analysis score:
10= Above standard. Purpose and evidence details accurate, syntax especially fluent and correctly punctuated, diction exceptionally precise and thoughtful. (no errors)
9= Above standard. Purpose and evidence details accurate, clear syntax with correct punctuation, diction thoughtful, some sophistication.
8= Meets standard. Purpose related, some evidence details included, mostly clear syntax, minor punctuation errors and careful diction.
7= Meets minimum standard. All components attempted, purpose may have errors, evidence details lacking or insufficient in scope, syntax understandable, formal diction, punctuation may create confusion
6= Approaching standard. Purpose does not match article, evidence insufficient or not present, syntax rough or confusing, punctuation interferes with comprehension, diction does not fit purpose.
5= Does not meet standard. Missing any one element, purpose does not match article, evidence not present, syntax and/ or punctuation interfere with comprehension, diction not thoughtful or fitting.

	**Abraham, Yvonne** Boston Globe Columnist https://www.bostonglobe.com/staff/abrahamy		**Kamin, Blair** *Chicago Tribune* columnist. http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/columnists/kamin/chinews-blair-kamin-20130507-staff.html
	**Alexander, Rachel** Conservative columnist and editor of the Intellectual Conservative https://townhall.com/columnists/rachelalexander/		**Friedman, Thomas L** *New York Times* columnist. ttps://www.nytimes.com/column/thomas-l-friedman
	**Applebaum, Anne** Washington Post Columnist http://www.washingtonpost.com/anne-applebaum/2011/02/24/ABLE5vI_page.html		**Kristof, Nicholas M** *New York Times* columnist. ttps://www.nytimes.com/column/nicholas-kristof
	**Blow, Charles M.** *New York Times* columnist. ttp://www.nytimes.com/column/charles-m-blow		**Krugman, Paul M** *New York Times* columnist. ttps://www.nytimes.com/column/paul-krugman
	**Bruni, Frank.** *New York Times* columnist. ttps://www.nytimes.com/column/frank-bruni		**Lane, Charles** Washington Post Columnist ttp://www.washingtonpost.com/charles-lane/2011/02/28/ABeqisM_page.html
	**Pat Buchanan** Townhall Nationally syndicated columnist ttps://townhall.com/columnists/patbuchanan/		**Marcus, Ruth** Washington Post Columnist http://www.washingtonpost.com/ruth-marcus/2011/02/24/ABjkDzI_page.html
	**Cepeda, Esther J.** Columnist Washington Post ttps://www.washingtonpost.com/syndication/columnists/esther-j-cepeda/?utm_term=.6c9f39568720		**Millbank, Dana** Washington Post columnist https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/dana-milbank
	**Charen, Mona C.** yndicated columnist. ttps://www.unionleader.com/opinion/columnists/mona-charen-a-columnist-lists-why-she-is-thankful/article_ce220534-c356-5b1c-bdf3-f4e3751ce210.html		**Murchison, Bill** Townhall Nationally syndicated columnist https://townhall.com/columnists/billmurchison/
	**Cohen, Roger** *New York Times* columnist. ttps://www.nytimes.com/column/roger-cohen		**Nocera, Joe** Bloomberg columnist https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-01-15/congressman-david-cicilline-is-out-to-change-tech-and-antitrust
	**Collins, Gail** *New York Times* columnist. ttps://www.nytimes.com/column/gail-collins		**Parket, Kathleen** *Washington Post* columnist. https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/kathleen-parker
	**Coulter, Ann C.** *Universal Press* columnist. ttp://www.anncoulter.com/		**Schlichter, Kurt** Conservative columnist; Lawyer, former stand up comedian https://townhall.com/columnists/kurtschlichter/

	**Dowd, Maureen L** *New York Times* columnist. https://www.nytimes.com/column/maureen-dowd		**Stockman, Farah** New York Times Columnist https://www.nytimes.com/by/farah-stockman

Writing a Rhetorical Précis

A rhetorical précis analyzes both the content (the *what*) and the delivery (the *how*) of a unit of spoken or written discourse. It is a highly structured four-sentence paragraph blending summary and analysis. Each of the four sentences requires specific information; students are expected to use brief quotations (to convey a sense of the author's style and tone) and to include a terminal bibliographic reference. Practicing this sort of writing fosters precision in both reading and writing, forcing a writer to employ a variety of sentence structures and to develop a discerning eye for connotative shades of meaning.

Take a look at the overall format

- Name of author, [optional: a phrase describing author], genre and title of work date in parentheses (additional publishing information in parentheses or note); a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," "suggest," "imply," "claim," etc.); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
- An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
- A statement of the author's apparent purpose followed by an "in order to" phrase.
- A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Now take a closer look:

1. **THE FIRST SENTENCE identifies** the essay's *author and title*, **provides** the article's *date* in parenthesis, **uses** some form of the verb *says* (*claims*, *asserts*, *suggests*, *argues*—) followed by *that*, and the *essay's thesis* (paraphrased or quoted).

   EXAMPLE: In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry argues **that** "...women generally do not think of their looks in the same way that men do" (4).

   EXAMPLE: In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry satirizes the unnecessary ways **that** women obsess about their physical appearance.

2. **THE SECOND SENTENCE conveys** the *author's support* for the thesis (how the author develops the essay); the trick is to convey a good sense of the breadth of the author's

support/examples, usually in chronological order.

> **EXAMPLE**: Barry illuminates this discrepancy by juxtaposing men's perceptions of their looks ("average-looking") with women's ("not good enough"), by contrasting female role models (Barbie, Cindy Crawford) with male role models (He-Man, Buzz-Off), and by comparing men's interests (the Super Bowl, lawn care) with women's (manicures).

3. THE THIRD SENTENCE analyzes the *author's purpose* using an *in order to* statement:

> **EXAMPLE**: He exaggerates and stereotypes these differences **in order to** prevent women from so eagerly accepting society's expectation of them; to this end, Barry claims that men who want women to "look like Cindy Crawford" are "idiots"(10), implying that women who adhere to the Crawford standard are fools as well.

4. THE FOURTH SENTENCE describes the essay's *target audience* and **characterizes** the author's relationship with that audience—or the essay's *tone*:

> **EXAMPLE**: Barry ostensibly addresses men in this essay because he opens and closes the essay directly addressing men (as in "If you're a man...") and offering to give them advice in a mockingly conspiratorial fashion; however, by using humor to poke fun at both men and women's perceptions of themselves, Barry makes his essay palatable to women as well, hoping to convince them to stop obsessively "thinking they need to look like Barbie" (8).

Put it all together and it looks darn smart:

In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry argues **that** ". . . women generally do not think of their looks in the same way that men do"(4). Barry illuminates this discrepancy by juxtaposing men's perceptions of their looks ("average-looking") with women's ("not good enough"), by contrasting female role models (Barbie, Cindy Crawford) with male role models (He-Man, Buzz-Off), and by comparing men's interests (the Super Bowl, lawn care) with women's (manicures). He exaggerates and stereotypes these differences **in order to** prevent women from so eagerly accepting society's expectation of them; in fact, Barry claims that men who want women to "look like Cindy Crawford" are "idiots" (10). Barry ostensibly addresses men in this essay because he opens and closes the essay directly addressing men (as in "If you're a man...") and offering to give them advice in a mockingly conspiratorial fashion; however, by using humor to poke fun at both men and women's perceptions of themselves, Barry makes his essay palatable to both genders and hopes to convince women to stop obsessively "thinking they need to look like Barbie" (8).

Barry, Dave. "The Ugly Truth about Beauty." *Mirror on America: Short Essays and Images from Popular Culture*. 2nd ed. Eds. Joan T. Mims and Elizabeth M. Nollen. NY: Bedford, 2003. 109-12

Verb Bank

Here is a list of verbs you might find helpful. It is by no means a required or exhaustive list. Remember that you must always strive to employ the most connotatively precise words you can.

adjures advances advises asks asserts begs beseeches cajoles cheers chimes commands complains confides conveys counsels crows declares decrees decries demands describes dictates directs discloses divulges elucidates employs encourages entreats espouses exclaims exhorts explains gripes groans grouses grumbles hails hints illustrates implies implores inquires insinuates instructs intimates invokes

justifies laments mandates mocks muses orders pleads ponders pontificates proclaims pronounces proposes queries rationalizes recommends recounts relates reports requests reveals sighs sings snarls sneers states submits suggests summons wails whimpers whines wields wonders