

Writing assignment – Magazine/literary journal submission
Points: outline (10 pts); rough draft (15 pts); final product (195 pts)
Due date: March 9 OR May 8

Instructions:

For this assignment you will choose **one historical person/event** from the many Drunk History episodes presented in class **OR** one from any episode you have viewed on your own, and thoroughly research the event chosen and the impact of the historical event in today's society. The overall goal is to explore how seemingly significant/insignificant acts can change society as a whole and create long lasting effects either for the worse or for the better.

For this assignment, you will:

- Choose an event featured in any of the Drunk History episodes shown in class (pay close attention!)
- Research the event thoroughly, including previous events that led to the main event
- Write a **non-fiction article** that discusses the impact of that historical event on society, either nationally or worldwide, such as:
 - ✚ Laws that were enacted
 - ✚ Procedures that were changed/ended
 - ✚ A death that sparked a course of events
- Write a cover letter to your chosen magazine or literary journal currently in circulation to accompany your non-fiction article.

For example:

“Even though there was no evidence to support claims that marijuana had a Jekyll-and-Hyde effect, 29 states outlawed marijuana between 1916 and 1931. The Marihuana Tax Act of 1937 essentially banned it nation-wide despite objections from the American Medical Association related to medical usage”¹

Discussion: How can the effects of the above historical event be seen today?

1. Little, Becky. “Why the U.S. Made Marijuana Illegal.” History.com . 04 Aug 2017. para 7.

Point of view: Your point of view will be determined by the magazine or literary journal you have chosen to submit your non-fiction article to (first or third).

Audience: Thoroughly investigate the targeted audience for the magazine you have chosen for your article by reading a few issues of the publication. Pay attention how the language is used (e.g., simple or complex words, tone, transitions, structure). Below is a list of websites you can use to help you find a magazine that best fits your non-fiction article and write a cover letter:

- [The Write Life](#)
- [The Balance Careers](#)

You need to consider the following before writing your article:

- Who is your target audience? (demographics)
- What does your audience already know about the topic?
- What does your audience value? What is most important to them?
- What do you have to say that might surprise your audience?
- What kind of publication would best help your audience to understand and appreciate your argument?
- What impression do you want your writing or your research to convey?

(source: *The Writing Center, Univ of NC at Chapel Hill*)

Content of your article (organization)

Below is an example of an outline to use as a guide to organize your information.

I. Introduction (1 – 2 paragraphs)

- a. Catch the readers' attention (called "the hook" in writing). You can do this with a fact (statistic) or an anecdote (a brief story related to the main topic).
- b. Provide BRIEF background on the historical event. NOTE: Do not mention Drunk History in your introduction; focus on the event only and cite any sources used.
- c. Forecast the main parts of the speech (thesis statement). Your thesis will present **ways in which the historical event have changed society for the worse or for the better and why the event has made a negative or positive impact since it occurred.**

II. Background (1-2 paragraph(s))

Provide full background on the historical event chosen. Cite your sources! This section should summarize:

- a. What is the event?
 1. If a person is responsible for the event, provide background on the person and their role in the historical event.
 2. Was a specific segment of the population affected by the event? If so, how were they affected?
- b. What are the series of events that led to the main event?
- c. What was the aftermath of the event?

WARNING: Avoid storytelling (e.g., she did this, and then they did that). ***Treat this background as though you are writing an extended version of a precis on this event.***

III. Discuss a way the historical event has changed society (1-2 paragraphs)

- a. Introduce the way the event changed society – TOPIC SENTENCE
Fully discuss how the event changed society and how that change affects us today (e.g., laws that were enacted or procedures that were changed/ended. Present credible source(s) to support your explanation).
- b. Discuss whether the change(s) was/were a positive or negative for society.

- i. In what way(s) was/were the change(s) positive or negative?
 - ii. How did the event progress society if at all? (is society better or worse since that pivotal event?)
- c. Present examples (from a credible source) to ILLUSTRATE the positive/negative change(s) on today's society.
 - d. Explain HOW and WHY the example(s) relate to the way the event changed society.
 - e. Provide OPPOSING VIEWPOINT(S) to the positive/negative change(s) presented.
 - f. REFUTE the opposition (discuss the limitations/weaknesses of the opposition. What doesn't the opposition take into account as it pertains to this particular situation?)
 - g. Wrap up your discussion

IV. CONCLUSION (1 paragraph)

- a. Use key words or phrases from the thesis statement to help “boomerang” the reader back to the introduction. ***Do not restate the thesis!***
- b. Present a call to action
- c. Leave the reader with something to think about.

NOTE: do not introduce anything in the conclusion that has not been discussed within the body of the paper. It throws the reader off balance.

Requirements:

For the cover letter to magazine or journal:

- 1 page, single spaced, Times New Roman font

For the article:

- **1,200 word minimum; 1,500 maximum**, double-spaced, **plus** Works Cited page (not included in overall word count). **NOTE: include word count on first page of paper. Points will be deducted if this word count is not met.**
- Citations: For outside, credible sources used, use FOOTNOTE or ENDNOTE citations, and provide a list of sources at the end of your article **formatted in MLA**. (for guidance on how to do this, [click here](#))
- Font: **Courier or Courier New**, double-spaced, 1” margins on all four sides
- Sources: two (2) minimum, five (5) maximum