CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Primaries and Caucuses

**TOPIC:** Republican presidential candidates Ted Cruz and John Kasich have decided to work together in an effort to stop Donald Trump from getting enough delegates to be his party’s candidate. What is their plan for stopping Donald Trump and how is it working? What is Bernie Sanders political strategy now that Hillary Clinton has gained a significant lead in the Democratic Party presidential primaries? Why did Ted Cruz select a running mate and who is it?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Trump AND Cruz AND Kasich AND delegates

ECONOMICS: Puerto Rico Debt Crisis

**TOPIC:** The U.S. territory of Puerto Rico is unable to make its bond payment deadline, creating a default that will escalate the severity of its debt crisis. What created Puerto Rico’s debt problems and how is it trying to resolve them? What will be some likely impacts of their default on bond payments? What are some other impacts of their debt crisis?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Puerto Rico AND debt AND (bond OR bonds)

SOCIAL ISSUES: Refugee Crisis

**TOPIC:** The refugee crisis persists in Europe. Norway is beginning an experiment in giving refugees money if they’ll voluntary leave the Scandinavian country. What are other countries doing to deal with the refugees? Will the advent of summer mean that the flow of refugees will increase? Do you think Norway’s experiment will succeed?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Europe AND refugees AND (Syrians OR Somalis OR Afghans)

SPORTS: Olympics in Sight

**TOPIC:** The Olympics flame is on the way to Brazil in advance of this summer’s games in Rio de Janeiro. How are the Brazilians doing in their preparations for hosting the games? What health threat worries some of the athletes? What route will the flame take through the large country of Brazil?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Rio de Janeiro AND Olympics

BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS RESEARCH TOPICS

BUSINESS: Apple iPhone

**TOPIC:** The Apple iPhone, the most popular product of the high-tech era has seen sales declines for the second quarter. What are some factors seen as contributing to the decline? What can be factors that determine the arc of popularity of a good product?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Apple AND iPhone AND sales

BUSINESS: Credit Card Chips

**TOPIC:** Many people now have credit cards with chips that are designed to be more secure and more efficient in functionality. Roughly what percentage of retail stores and online shopping sites can accommodate the use of chips and for those that do what have been some issues customers have struggled with? What are the ways in which these chips are supposed to improve functionality and security?

**SEARCH TERMS:** credit cards AND (chip OR EMV OR smart card)
BUSINESS: Fuel Consumption Rates
TOPIC: Mitsubishi Motors has been falsifying its fuel consumption rates for several of its smaller vehicles for a quarter of a century. These numbers were submitted to the Japanese government. Why did they do this? What vehicles were involved? From where did they get the false numbers?
SEARCH TERMS: Mitsubishi Motors AND mileage

BUSINESS: Mall Opens
TOPIC: Even though the South African economy is in trouble, the Mall of Africa was very crowded on its opening day. Located outside of Johannesburg, it is the largest mall in Africa. The crowds may have been prompted by opening day sales. Who developed this mall and what are their expectations for it? What international retail brands are in it?
SEARCH TERMS: Mall of Africa

ECONOMICS: Diversification Plans
TOPIC: The Saudi Arabian government unveiled ambitious plans to diminish the Kingdom’s reliance on its oil and to diversify its economy. It will sell part of the state-owned oil company Aramco and set up a fund for the development of its cities. It also hopes to deal with unemployment. What are some of the specifics of this plan? Who will be in charge of it? What do outside analysts think about its chance of success?
SEARCH TERMS: Saudi Arabia AND reform AND economy

ECONOMICS: Federal Reserve Rates
TOPIC: The U.S. economy has slowed down in the first quarter and likewise the Federal Reserve is planning to keep interest rates low. What are some of the factors that contributed to this? How do interest rates impact the economy?
SEARCH TERMS: Federal Reserve AND rates AND quarter

SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Panama Papers
TOPIC: A huge number of files from a law firm Mossack Fonseca in Panama that helped facilitate the opening of accounts in banking havens and the creation of dummy companies as fronts for those accounts has revealed the vast worldwide use of these accounts. The files were leaked to a German newspaper and involved wealthy individuals and politicians from around the world. What was Mossack Fonseca’s response to the leaks? Who were some of the individuals named and what was their response to their finances becoming public? What are abuses that can be associated with these accounts?
SEARCH TERMS: Mossack Fonseca AND banks

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: One Person, One Vote
TOPIC: The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the One Person One Vote principal in the case of Evenwel vs. Abbott. What were the specifics of this case and how did a clause in the Fourteenth Amendment influence the court’s decision? What impact does this decision have on redistricting efforts in Texas and other states?
SEARCH TERMS: Supreme Court AND (Evenwel OR redistrict*) AND Texas

CRIME AND LAW: Gang Arrest
TOPIC: New York City made its largest arrest of gang members in city history with the arrest of 120 members of rival gangs. How was this massive arrest set up and conducted? What were the crimes that gang members were arrested for and how was the evidence gathered? What are some general patterns of how gangs operate, make money and maintain power and control? What areas of New York City were these arrests made and what is the significance of those areas to the gangs that had members arrested?
SEARCH TERMS: gangs AND Bronx AND (arrested OR arrests OR arrest)
CRIME AND LAW: Tax Scams
TOPIC: There are a number of ways scammers use the April tax deadline to steal from tax payers, either by identity theft or by impersonating the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). What are some of the specific tactics used? What measures have been taken to try to catch them? What action can you take if you find out you have been scammed by either a scammer fraudulently posing as the IRS or attempting to get your tax refund by stealing your identity?
SEARCH TERMS: (tax OR taxes) AND (scam OR scammers OR scams)

CRIME AND LAW: Execution Trends
TOPIC: The number of executions worldwide has spiked up last year. It is thought that 1,634 people were put to death. This figure does not include executions in China. What countries were most active in executing people? What offenses led to death in these countries? What countries have outlawed the death penalty?
SEARCH TERMS: executions AND rates

EDUCATION: Vocational Education
TOPIC: Vocational education is becoming more popular in public high schools and many students want to graduate with job skills if college turns out to be out of reach. What are some states that are looking at increasing career pathways into the curriculum of the public high school system? What are states doing to increase vocational school options?
SEARCH TERMS: vocational AND (school OR schools OR education)

EDUCATION: Dress Tips from a Politician
TOPIC: French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has expressed support for banning the Muslim headscarf from universities. What were the arguments in favor of the ban? What are the arguments against it? What are the chances of the ban happening? In what other areas has France regulated religious dress?
SEARCH TERMS: France AND Muslims AND headscarves

HISTORY: Dating the Scripture
TOPIC: Recent research on the writings on shards of pottery found in Israel support the idea of somewhat widespread literacy in the region. These mundane texts date to around 600 BCE. How were the texts translated? How could knowledge of this literacy at that date reframe arguments about when the Bible was written? What were the texts about and how do they support the idea of literate population?
SEARCH TERMS: Israel AND literacy AND Bible

HISTORY: Harriet Tubman
TOPIC: Harriet Tubman will become the first woman and first African-American on printed money when she replaces Andrew Jackson on the $20 bill. Who was she and what did she do to advance the cause of civil rights for African Americans? What role did she play in the U.S. Civil War?
SEARCH TERMS: Harriet Tubman AND Andrew Jackson AND bill

SOCIAL ISSUES: Transgender and Bathroom Facilities
TOPIC: A few states and companies are dealing with the issues of how to decide on bathroom facilities to transgender people. What are some of the bills and laws that different states have tried and what has been the reaction? What are the policies of these companies and what has been the reaction to those policies?
SEARCH TERMS: transgender AND bathroom
SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS

ENVIRONMENT: Houston Floods
TOPIC: Houston, Texas has suffered the worst flooding in 15 years after being hit by a brutal storm. How do urban areas handle heavy flooding? What is some of the worst damage suffered in Houston and what are some of the key processes of recovery after the storm?
SEARCH TERMS: Houston AND (flood OR flooding)

ENVIRONMENT: A Long Hot Spell
TOPIC: Southern Africa is in the midst of a drought. In addition to its impact on water supplies, it is thought that the drought is increasing food insecurity throughout the region. What is the role played by El Nino in this weather event? How are people surviving this?
SEARCH TERMS: Southern Africa AND drought

ENVIRONMENT: Tiger Population
TOPIC: The number of tigers in the world has risen for the first time in a century. It is thought there are 3,890 of them in the wild. Where do tigers live? How were they counted? Does this rise in numbers mean their long-term survival is assured?
SEARCH TERMS: tigers AND (census OR population)

HEALTH: Assisted Suicide
TOPIC: Canada has passed a law allowing physician assisted suicide, though with some restrictions around eligibility. One of them is a residency requirement. What other requirements are in the law? How does this law compare with the way other countries, and those U.S. states where it is legal, deal with those seeking termination of their lives?
SEARCH TERMS: Canada AND assisted suicide

HEALTH: Vaccination Campaign
TOPIC: Public health authorities in the Philippines are looking to vaccinate 1 million school children against the dengue fever. This disease is spread by the same mosquito that spreads zika. What are the symptoms of dengue and which symptom has contributed to a common name for it? How effective is the vaccines being used in this campaign? How widespread is this disease and how many people are estimated to be affected annually?
SEARCH TERMS: Philippines AND dengue AND vaccinations

HEALTH: Unacceptable Air Quality
TOPIC: A new report by the American Lung Association has found that over half of the U.S. population is living in potentially dangerous air pollution. How was the study done and what did the report say about the quality of U.S. air in the future and why? What places were the most dangerous and what were the least and why?
SEARCH TERMS: American Lung AND population AND air AND pollution

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Solar Impulse 2
TOPIC: Solar Impulse 2, the Swiss-made solar-powered aircraft has successfully flown from Hawaii to California making a leg of its journey around the globe. What was the largest leg of its journey and how did it fare? How does the solar power work in this particular airplane? What have been some of the challenges the Solar Impulse 2 has faced in its many pieces of flight to circle the globe?
SEARCH TERMS: Solar Impulse 2
**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Aging**

**TOPIC:** A Netherlands study reports that people who look old for their age seem to have a variation in gene MC1R. The MC1R gene is also responsible for red hair and pale skin. How was this study done? What are some arguments against the way the research was done?

**SEARCH TERMS:** aging AND MC1R gene

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**SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS**

**SPORTS: Masters Tournament**

**TOPIC:** Danny Willett has won professional golf’s famous Master’s Tournament. What were some of the most impressive shots he made in the tournament? What were some of the surprising disappointments in the performance of Jordan Spieth? What are some of the previous high points in the careers of these two golfers and what are the strengths of each man’s style of playing?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Masters Tournament AND Danny Willett

**SPORTS: NFL Draft**

**TOPIC:** Quarterback for University of California, Jared Goff, was the first draft pick this year and was taken by the Los Angeles Rams. How does the National Football League (NFL) draft work and how is their process intended to improve parity between the teams that should make for more interesting games? When did the NFL draft start and what refinements to the process have been made through its history?

**SEARCH TERMS:** NFL AND draft

**SPORTS: Boston Marathon**

**TOPIC:** Two Ethiopians won this year’s Boston Marathon, with Lemi Berhanu Hayle winning the men’s race and Atsede Baysa winning the women’s race in the first Ethiopian sweep in the history of the race. What are some of the key features of the Boston Marathon that make it a favorite race of runners? What kind of running program does Ethiopia have and how do they train?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Boston Marathon AND Ethiopian AND Atsede Baysa

**SPORTS: Truth and Justice**

**TOPIC:** The jury at the Hillsborough Stadium disaster inquest returned a verdict stating that the deaths of the 96 Liverpool football fans were unlawful and that the police services were to blame. The Crown Prosecution Service must now decide if any individual members should be brought to trial. Who was in charge of the police that day and what did his testimony reveal? Who was initially blamed for the disaster and what were the real facts of the case? How vindicated were the families of the victims who have been struggling to determine the truth for 27 years?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Hillsborough Stadium disaster AND inquest AND verdict

**SPORTS: Lawsuit Threatened**

**TOPIC:** Rafael Nadal is going to sue a former French minister who accused him of using performance enhancing drugs. Roselyne Bachelot surmised that his absence from the tour was probably due to a failed drug test. What type of suit is he filing? Do French laws favor one side or the other in these types of suits? What is Nadal’s explanation for his lengthy absence from competing?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Rafael Nadal AND Roselyne Bachelot

**SPORTS: Golden State Warriors**

**TOPIC:** California’s Golden State Warriors professional basketball team has broken the Chicago Bulls record for best season record. What is the Golden State record and what was the Chicago Bulls record? When did the Chicago Bulls set the previous record and with who on the team? Who are the stars of this season’s Golden State Warriors and what are the key strengths of these players and the strengths of the team in general?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Golden State Warriors AND record AND season
SPORTS: Kobe Bryant
TOPIC: Kobe Bryant has announced he is retiring from his highly successful 20-year career as shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team. What have been the high points of his career? What are the primary strengths and weaknesses of his playing?
SEARCH TERMS: Kobe Bryant

FILM AND TELEVISION: The Good Wife
TOPIC: Popular television drama The Good Wife is ending after seven years. What are the qualities of the drama that has most impressed the critics and the fans? What awards and nominations have been won by this drama?
SEARCH TERMS: The Good Wife

FILM AND TELEVISION: Marketing Man
TOPIC: Philip Kives created K-Tel International, which used TV commercials to sell such items as the Veg-o-matic and the Miracle Brush. The company also sold compilation albums. He might arguably be called the father of the infomercial. What was his career before he got into TV sales? How did he get into the TV marketing business? What was notable about the records the company sold?
SEARCH TERMS: Philip Kives AND K-Tel

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Lost Masterpiece
TOPIC: A painting that may possibly be a lost work by Caravaggio has been discovered in France. It depicts a scene from the Old Testament. Who is Caravaggio and what is notable about his work? What Biblical scene does it depict? How common are Biblical scenes in Caravaggio’s work?
SEARCH TERMS: Caravaggio

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Cindy Sherman
TOPIC: After taking five years off from her famous self-portraits, photographer Cindy Sherman is having an exhibition at the Metro Pictures gallery in New York City. What is the theme of this latest exhibition and what are some of the qualities in her work that are consistent or different from her past work? What are the qualities of her work that have been praised by the critics?
SEARCH TERMS: Cindy Sherman AND photography

LITERATURE: The Sympathizer
TOPIC: English Professor at the University of Southern California Viet Thanh Nguyen has won the Pulitzer Prize for his first novel The Sympathizer. What is the novel about and what are the qualities that impressed the critics? What are some of the experiences that he has had growing up that influenced the story of The Sympathizer?
SEARCH TERMS: Viet Thanh Nguyen

LITERATURE: Prize Winner
TOPIC: Author Meg Rosoff has won the Astrid Lindgren prize for youth literature. The prize is named for the creator of Pippi Longstocking. Who administers this prize and how are winners decided? What books has Rosoff written and how interesting do they sound? What other prizes and awards has she won?
SEARCH TERMS: Meg Rosoff AND Astrid Lindgren prize
PERFORMING ARTS: The Cat Moves On  
TOPIC: Leandro Gato Barbieri was an Argentinian jazz saxophonist. What does his nickname mean and how did he acquire it? What type of jazz and other jazz musicians was he associated with? What film score did he contribute to?  
SEARCH TERMS: Gato Barbieri

PERFORMING ARTS: Hamilton  
TOPIC: The Broadway musical Hamilton by Lin-Manuel Miranda has won a Pulitzer Prize. What book is the musical based on and what are some ways in which it was cleverly adapted into a musical? What are the qualities that most impressed the critics? What is another musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda and what qualities of that musical most impressed the critics?  
SEARCH TERMS: Hamilton AND Lin-Manuel Miranda

PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE: Prince  
TOPIC: The musician Prince invented a highly compelling blend of popular music styles to create a form music that fit his talents and developed a large devoted following of fans. What styles of music did he blend to create his sound? What were some of his biggest hits and what were the qualities that most impressed the critics? What were some recurring themes in this songs? What movie helped widen his audience?  
SEARCH TERMS: Prince AND Purple Rain

PEOPLE: Doris Roberts  
TOPIC: Actress Doris Roberts was most famous for her portrayal of Marie Barone in the television comedy Everyone Loves Raymond. What were some of the comic aspects of her character Marie that were recognized by fans of the show as amusing aspects of human nature and family dynamics?  
SEARCH TERMS: Doris Roberts AND Everybody Loves Raymond

PEOPLE: Fidel Castro  
TOPIC: Fidel Castro made a speech at the Cuban Communist Party meeting that recently concluded in which he contemplated his own death. He had not been seen in public for a very long time. What was the main theme of his speech? What meeting was he addressing? If he dies soon, how do you think the world will remember him?  
SEARCH TERMS: Fidel Castro

PEOPLE: Malick Sidibe  
TOPIC: Malick Sidibé was an internationally known African photographer. He photographed the shifting fashions of Malian youth from the 1950s to the 1970s as well as the nightlife of Bamako. What was striking about the portraits of youth that he took? What awards did he win for his work during his lifetime?  
SEARCH TERMS: Malick Sidibe

PEOPLE: Merle Haggard  
TOPIC: Merle Haggard helped create a style of western country music that came to be known as the Bakersfield Sound after Bakersfield, California where the music developed in the local bars and music clubs. What are some of the prominent qualities of the Bakersfield Sound and who are some of the most famous players of the Bakersfield country music? What are some of his most famous songs? What is the Outlaw Country movement and what was his contribution to that music?  
SEARCH TERMS: Merle Haggard