CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

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2016 • INVITATIONAL A

DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO!
1. When citizens in Brussels, Belgium were asked not to tweet information about police activities, for fear of helping terrorists, what did those on social media post instead?
   a. pictures of kittens
   b. terrorism emoticon
   c. #prayforbrussels
   d. no guns emoji

2. When Starbucks started serving the Pumpkin Spice Latte this past fall, it had as one of its ingredients, for the first time, what?
   a. authentic pumpkin spice seasoning
   b. no preservatives
   c. pumpkin
   a. a sugar-free option

3. Houston voters resoundingly rejected an ordinance dubbed “the bathroom ordinance” that some argued would do what?
   a. allow men in women’s bathrooms and locker rooms
   b. allow gay and transgender residents to get married
   c. require public places to have gender-neutral bathrooms
   d. effectively allow private businesses to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity

4. The Dow Jones industrial average fell more than 1,000 points in early training in August amid a global sell-off and related to economic concerns in what country boasting the world’s second-biggest economy?
   a. Japan
   b. North Korea
   c. China
   d. German

5. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton made a court appearance in August on felony charges of what?
   a. election fraud
   b. perjury, obstructing justice
   c. securities fraud
   d. child pornography

6. Hillary Clinton announced, “I love it — those messages disappear all by themselves.” To what was she referring?
   a. her private server with better software
   b. new State Department software for classified emails
   c. Snapchat
   d. use of hide.me for private emails
7. After all of its product was recalled due to Listeria contamination, what brand returned to stores in August, starting with retailers in Austin and Houston?
   a. spinach from California
   b. Blue Bell ice cream
   c. lettuce from California
   d. avocados from South Texas

8. Driven by fears that an aging population could jeopardize economic ascent, the Community Party leadership of what country ended its decades-old “one child” policy announcing that all married couples would be allowed to have two children?
   a. North Korea
   b. India
   c. Russia
   d. China

9. As the U.S. House and Senate were facing a Sept. 30 deadline to fund the government, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) threatened a government shutdown over what?
   a. funding Planned Parenthood
   b. Supreme Court nominees
   c. Iran nuclear deal
   d. Funding Obamacare

10. High-resolution, ground-penetrating radar in an isolated field in southwest England revealed some 90 stones completed about 3,500 years ago resembling what nearby monument?
    a. Great Pyramid
    b. Stonehenge
    c. Great Wall
    d. Druid Bluestones

11. What is the name of the tallest mountain in North America, with a summit elevation of 20,237 feet?
    a. Mt. McKinley in Alaska
    b. Fearweather Mountain in British Columbia
    c. Mt. Whitney in California
    d. Denali in Alaska

12. The Texas State University System, like all Texas schools of higher education, was trying to figure out how to cut costs. Officials told some incoming students not to even show up for their freshman year. How were they suggesting students, particularly “older, busy, driven and disciplined students,” complete their classes?
    a. in free massive open online courses (MOOCs)
    b. at community colleges
    c. by taking college courses in high school
    d. by completing courses using a new app developed by Apple.

13. Noting that it may have used tools and may have figured out how to bury its dead, a geologist in South Africa discovered an entirely new species of what?
    a. dinosaur, *Spinosaurus aegyptiacus*
    b. lettuce, *Lactuca sativa*
    c. humans, *Homo naledi*
    d. giant ape, *Pan troglodytes bili*
14. What was Hungary’s partial solution to stopping Syrian immigrants?
   a. capturing them and putting them in camps then deporting them to Serbia
   b. building a 4-meter high, 110-mile long fence
   c. charging them with crimes and putting them in jail
   d. denying them food and water until they entered Austria

15. The governor of California issued a state of emergency in early September after what destroyed an entire town — Middletown — and left more than 5,000 people without power?
   a. fire
   b. Hurricane Linda
   c. El Niño
   d. earthquake

16. The hashtag #PrayForParis” has been tweeted 4.3 million times as tributes poured in from all over the world in November. What was this hashtag in response to?
   a. an Islamic State attack in Paris at which more than 120 people were killed
   b. assassination of France’s President François Hollande, killed at a soccer game
   c. that country’s declaration of war against Syria after a bombing killed 120 in Paris
   d. the killing of 12 staff members at the satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo

17. Who is “responsible” for the refugee crisis in Europe according to Syria’s President Bashar Assad, while admitting that the exodus is a “great loss” for his country?
   a. the West
   b. Syrian Islamic militants
   c. George W. Bush
   d. the European Union

18. General Motors will pay $900 million to settle criminal charges related to a flawed part that has been tied to at least 124 deaths. What part?
   a. airbags
   b. gas tanks that catch fire
   c. ignition switch
   d. clutch

19. In late September, the Federal Reserve raised interest rates by how much?
   a. None
   b. 1.2 percent
   c. 2 percent, equaling inflation
   d. 6.8 percent

20. While in the United States, Pope Francis did NOT speak to large crowds at which of the following venues?
   a. the United Nations to a General Assembly
   b. Madison Square Garden
   c. the U.S. Capitol to a joint session of Congress
   d. the U.S. State Department to discuss immigration worldwide
21. It occurred Sept. 27 when the full moon was at its closest to the Earth. It was a rare phenomenon. There have only been five since 1900, the last one in 1982. And it won’t happen again until 2033. What?
   a. Mars’ closest approach to Earth
   b. a planetary alignment of all the inner planets, including the moon
   c. a supermoon eclipse
   d. a solar eclipse

22. South African comic Trevor Noah, 31, moved in as host of what TV show, saying that the previous host “was often our voice, our refuge and in my ways or political dad?”
   a. The Daily Show
   b. The Late Show
   c. The View
   d. The Tonight Show

23. At a press conference viewed live by more than 84,000 people online, where did NASA announce it discovered water, making human colonization more feasible?
   a. The moon
   b. Pluto
   c. HD 219134b
   d. Mars

24. Oklahoma’s highest criminal court unanimously agreed Oct. 2 to halt all of the state’s scheduled executions. Why?
   a. No doctor would supervise the execution.
   b. The state received the wrong drug for lethal injection.
   c. The governor kept ignoring the court orders, staying all executions.
   d. The power costs for electrocution exceeded budget allocations.

25. ISIS militants have destroyed another ancient treasure in Syria. Which 1,800-year-old monument did they destroy?
   a. Temple of Hatshepsut
   b. Arch of Triumph in Palmyra
   c. Shrine of Fathi al-Da’en in Syria
   d. Armenian Genocide Memorial Church in Israel

26. Some State Board of Education members are dismissing backlash against a textbook the 15-member elected body approved last year that describes African slaves as what?
   a. illegal workers
   b. pirates
   c. immigrant workers
   d. foreigners

27. For the “decisive contribution to the building of a pluralistic democracy in the country in the wake of the Jasmine Revolution of 2011,” who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015?
   a. the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet
   b. Pope Francis
   c. German Chancellor Angela Merkel
   d. Kailash Satyarthi
28. Bringing immediate objections from the industry, the federal Bureau of Prisons, responsible for 200,000 inmates, in response to a survey of prisoners’ food preferences, removed what food from the menu?
   a. soft drinks
   b. free-range chickens
   c. pork
   d. chocolate

29. It’s just the third time in 40 years that payments will remain flat, no benefit increase next year for millions of recipients of what government program?
   a. Medicare
   b. Social Security
   c. Homestead Exemption
   d. Military retirement

30. Canadians in October elected Justin Trudeau, the son of one of that country’s most dynamic politicians, Gary Trudeau, as prime minister. Why was this significant?
   a. It caused liberal Democrat to surge in the U.S. elections.
   b. It started an era in Canadian politicians compared to “Camelot.”
   c. It ended the term of the longest-serving Western leaders.
   d. It ended nearly a decade of conservative leadership.

31. After a trailer debuted during halftime of ESPN’s National Football League Game Oct. 19, pre-sale of tickets for what movie not being released until Dec. 18 crashed online ticket seller’s website?
   a. The Martian
   b. Alvin and the Chipmunks
   c. Backstreet Boys
   d. Star Wars: The Force Awakens

32. A study by the American Academy of Pediatrics released in October revised findings regarding the amount of alcohol that pregnant women can consume. What was the finding?
   a. None was acceptable.
   b. Consumption of two alcoholic beverages per week would not cause developmental problems.
   c. One glass of beer or wine no more than twice a month was acceptable.
   d. Alcohol had no effect on the developing fetus.

33. Looking for marijuana, police officers in helicopters, heavily armed deputies and a K-9 unit in Georgia successfully sized what?
   a. illegal immigrants
   b. a stash of illegal weapons
   c. moonshine stills
   d. okra

34. Rep. Paul Ryan announced that he would replace Rep. John Boehner as the speaker of the House based on some conditions. Which was NOT one of those conditions?
   a. Each of the major GOP factions, including the right-wing House Freedom Caucus, would have to endorse him.
   b. The procedural motion sued to remove a House speaker had to be removed.
   c. He wants to have to raise less money and spend more time at home.
   d. The final vote has to be unanimous, showing support that Boehner never had.
35. The FAA announced it was going to require mandatory registration for what?
   a. experimental, do-it-yourself aircraft
   b. remote-controlled drones
   c. remote-controlled aircraft flying above 500 feet, in public settings or after dark
   d. any aircraft operated above 400 feet in FAA controlled airspace

36. In the November election, 81 percent of Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment “recognizing the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife....” Why did supporters maintain such an amendment was necessary?
   a. Everything else is in the Constitution that now has almost 500 amendments.
   b. To earmark the $4.1 billion that the 2.7 million people who hunt and fish for land protection.
   c. Animal rights groups like PETA pushing legislation to limit the “coward’s pastime.”
   d. To prevent donors from giving more than $1,500 for gun purchases that could be used for domestic terrorism.

37. Which presidential candidate took two weeks off of campaigning in the fall to promote his October book release of *A More Perfect Union*?
   a. Rand Paul
   b. Ben Carson
   c. Marco Rubio
   d. Mike Huckabee

38. Why did representatives of NATO member Turkey say they shot down a Russian warplane?
   a. Russia was helping Syrian terrorists.
   b. Turkey was helping Syrian terrorists.
   c. NATO had taken charge of the war against the Islamic State and ordered the plane’s destruction.
   d. It violated the country’s airspace near Syria.

39. Thousands of people marched on Chicago’s most prestigious shopping street on Black Friday, disrupting business. What were they protesting?
   a. excessive price increases by retailers
   b. the shooting death of a black teenager
   c. “We are the 99 percent” — income inequality
   d. Baltimore Orioles beat Chicago White Sox in World Series

40. Why was Rowan County (Kentucky) Clerk Kim Davis refusing to grant marriage licenses?
   a. She said they were required, but not funded, by the federal government.
   b. She said marriage was a function of the church, not the county government.
   c. She had been divorced three times and didn’t see why anyone should get married.
   d. She said she was following “God’s word” by not issuing same-sex marriage licenses.
ESSAY PROMPT

Donald Trump held a double-digit lead over Ben Carson in the Republican presidential race and voters continued to say they prefer change over political experience. By late in the year, Trump returned to the lead in Iowa while Ted Cruz surged past Carson into second place. Carson slipped from a first-place tie into third. On the Democratic side, Senator Bernie Sanders (D-Vermont) failed to significantly dent Hillary Rodham Clinton’s lead, support from 52 percent of Democratic primary voters.

Beyond the horse race and incessant polls, when voters are asked what is the most important issue in their choice for president, they consistently give similar results almost regardless of the poll or the timing.

Discuss some of these issues and how they are relevant to American voters today.

NOTE: Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and doesn’t ramble. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.
DO NOT write your name or school on this paper. Write the LETTER indicating your response to each question in the space below. Write clearly in CAPITAL letters. Write your response to the essay on the scratch paper provided. You have 60 minutes. Each objective question is worth 1 point. The essay is worth as much as 10 points.

1. ________ 21. ________
2. ________ 22. ________
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20. ________ 40. ________
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DISCUSSION POINTS

- **Economy** — The economy is the top-ranked issue among Republicans, Democrats and independents, with close to 90 percent of each party group saying the economy will be important to their presidential vote. Interest rates remain low as does the unemployment rate. As a measure of the economy, major indices remain high.
- **Terrorism** — Terrorism, specifically, ranks fairly high on Americans’ list of top election issues, as it typically does. The heightened importance of terrorism and foreign affairs in the post-9/11 era likely helped George W. Bush win re-election in 2004 and may influence the outcome of the 2016 race especially given terrorist attacks in Europe.
- **Health care** — Fifty-three percent of Americans rate the quality of health care in the U.S. as “excellent” or “good,” Gallup polls suggest. Americans rate U.S. health care coverage far less positively than they do health care quality. Americans’ satisfaction with the total cost of health care in the U.S. remains low. Republicans still view health care generally and the Affordable Care Act specifically as an election issue.
- **Immigration** — Immigration – specifically illegal immigration – has been one of the most divisive issues of the 21st century. Donald Trump has brought the issue to the fore as the centerpiece of his presidential campaign. So has Ted Cruz, saying, “It’s not that we don’t know how to solve illegal immigration. What is missing is the political will to get it done.” With unrest in Syria, immigration of Syrian refugees has become an issue more recently.
- **Partisan politics** — Potential voters continue to say “Washington doesn’t work,” allowing outsider candidates to take the lead early in the campaign cycle. What this will ultimately mean is unclear.
- **Environment** — Democrats are seen as much better able to deal with environmental issues than Republicans. The environment is increasingly seen as a partisan political issue. In the 1970s, the environment was a fringe issue of great importance to a small number of people. Today it is a core issue at all levels of governance.
- **Foreign affairs** — International matters have taken on increasing prominence in recent months as the Obama administration has dealt with challenges arising from the growing influence of Islamic terrorists in Iraq and Syria, ongoing conflict in the Middle East and significant policy disagreements with Russia. Republicans are more likely than Democrats and independents to mention foreign affairs. The outsider candidates remain vulnerable for their lack of knowledge on foreign affairs.
1. Major retailers such as Argos, Tesco and John Lewis recalled what popular holiday gift after several caught fire and numerous people reported being injured when using them?
   a. hoverboards
   b. Star Wars action figures
   c. drones
   d. Exploding Kittens

2. Only one female participated in the CNN Republican Party presidential candidate debate Sept. 16 at the Regan Presidential Library. Who?
   a. Hillary Clinton
   b. Kim Davis
   c. Carly Fiorina
   d. Michele Bachmann

3. Why were three friends from Sacramento hailed as international heroes and given France’s highest recognition, the Legion of Honor?
   a. They stopped an assassination attempt on French President François Hollande.
   b. They discovered, and destroyed, an al-Quaida cell in Paris.
   c. They stopped a potential massacre aboard a high-speed train headed to Paris.
   d. They discovered an IED and disarmed it in a crowded shopping mall in Lyon.

4. Roughly 4 million people from what country traveled to European Union countries for shelter since they couldn’t settle in oil-rich countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or the United Arab Emirates?
   a. Israel
   b. Jordan
   c. Syria
   d. Iraq

5. Why couldn’t the clerk in Rowan County, Kentucky who refused to issue marriage certificates to gay couples be removed from office by the courts?
   a. She was an elected official.
   b. Technically, she followed the law.
   c. She had the support of a majority of the Supreme Court.
   d. The Kentucky governor said he wasn’t ready to consider the case.

6. A retired neurosurgeon, Ben Carson, according to political pundits, “it not someone we should laugh at.” However, he made several controversial statements during early campaign weeks. Which of the following is NOT one of his controversial beliefs?
   a. On Advanced Placement history: “When people finish, they’re ready to go sign up for ISIS.”
   b. On the IRS: “We live in a Gestapo age.”
   c. On Obamacare: “It is the best thing to happen to healthcare in the modern age.”
   d. On God: “Life on Earth was created by God about 6,000 years ago.”
7. After Labor Day, Walter Palmer reopened his dental business in Bloomington, Minnesota. He had been sheltered with friends, he said, for the protection of his family because of threats against them. Why?
   a. He said his religious beliefs would not allow him to work with openly gay people.
   b. He also operated a Planned Parenthood clinic.
   c. The health department had closed the clinic down.
   d. He killed the 13-year-old lion Cecil.

8. As of 2015, who was Britain’s longest-reigning monarch having served for more than 63 years, surpassing Queen Victoria?
   a. King William I
   b. King James VI
   c. Queen Mary II
   d. Queen Elizabeth II

9. “That was a mistake. I’m sorry about that,” Hillary Clinton said, in an ABC News exclusive, after saying she would not apologize because she had done nothing wrong. For what was she apologizing in September?
   a. not meeting with reporters more often
   b. her husband’s scandal while in the White House
   c. having a private email server
   d. accepting large payments for speaking engagements

10. The union for 5,000 striking Seattle teachers said negotiations with the district, Seattle Public Schools, would resume even after the start of school had been delayed. Why were teachers on strike?
    a. Class size exceeded state requirements due to area growth.
    b. Teachers hadn’t received a cost-of-living increase in six years.
    c. State funding continued to decline.
    d. Salaries for administrators continue to increase while starting salaries for teachers declined.

11. Even before second Republic debate on CNN, just as Hillary Clinton was dealing with her email controversy, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie was dogged by which controversy from his past?
    a. bridgegate
    b. his email controversy
    c. deflategate
    d. reaction to Tropical Storm Bill

12. President Obama nominated Eric Fanning as secretary of the Army. Why was this significant?
    a. He was the first civilian to serve as a secretary.
    b. He would be the first former openly gay to lead a military branch.
    c. He was the first former acting secretary of the Air Force to move to the Army.
    d. He was the first deputy undersecretary of the Navy to serve the Army.

13. To which presidential candidate was former U.S. President Bill Clinton when he said, in September, “you shouldn’t be able to insult your way to the White House”?
    a. Donald Trump
    b. Ben Carson
    c. Jeb Bush
    d. Chris Christie
14. “What they really want is an ability to express sympathy,” Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, said. How did he propose that Facebook users do that?
   a. like the post
   b. something akin to a “dislike” button
   c. “Write an old-fashioned card. We need to use technology. But sometimes technology isn’t appropriate.”
   d. link Snapchat expressions to Facebook, linking the social media giants

15. While one person was killed at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and nine were killed at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, University of Texas faculty members were protesting what?
   a. senseless violence on college campuses
   b. a new law allowing students to have guns on campus
   c. budget cuts for safety measures on campus, including peepholes in all doors
   d. zero tolerance for weapons on any college campus

16. The U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee launched a probe into DraftKings and Fan Duel, two popular sites for what?
   a. betting on horse races
   b. on-site gambling at baseball playoff games
   c. fantasy football
   d. betting on the football draft picks

17. For more than 80 days, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden kept America guessing about whether he would run for president or not. In the end, he decided not to run. What was NOT one of the reasons?
   a. He was struggling with the loss of his son Beau to brain cancer.
   b. He said, “There was just no way I could expect to beat Hillary Clinton and the Clinton machine.”
   c. Strategists said there wasn’t enough time to get staffers and funds in place.
   d. He couldn’t get the support of major union heads such as a firefighter’s union.

18. The most powerful tropical cyclone ever measured in the Western Hemisphere — Hurricane Patricia — hit Mexico, Oct. 23 near the resort town of Puerto Vallarta. Using what measure did it set the record?
   a. It had 190 mph winds.
   b. It produced 20-foot tsunamis.
   c. It had the lowest pressure, 880 millibars.
   d. It produced more than 20 inches of rain in Texas.

19. In the November election Texas voters overwhelmingly approved seven amendments to the state Constitution. Which was NOT one of them?
   a. raise homestead exemption for school districts
   b. not require top state officials to live in Austin
   c. dedicate some taxes for the State Highway Fund
   d. ban on same-sex marriage

20. In an official Facebook video amid growing debate over education policy and No Child Left Behind Act, what was U.S. President Barack Obama’s solution?
   a. using no more than 2 percent of classroom time to take tests
   b. requiring no more than 100 tests in grades K-12 instead of the 112 now used
   c. no longer requiring standardized tests in grades K-7
   d. allowing students to choose between vocational education and pre-college education
21. More than 40 Chipotle restaurants across Oregon and Washington state closed last fall. Why?
   a. *Listeria* contamination
   b. *E. coli* outbreak
   c. Financial instability of the company
   d. Inability to get farm-grown produce

22. Paul Ryan, newly elected as speaker of the U.S. House, said the “process stinks” and that it won’t be done the way it was done “under new management.” Specifically, he was referring to a deal on what?
   a. raising the debt ceiling and passing a budget
   b. approving rules for presidential debates
   c. rules that require all legislation to be approved by two-thirds votes
   d. retaining his position as chair of the Ways and Means committee

23. Amazon Handmade opened in October and was immediately deemed a killer to what Brooklyn-based startup that had been providing small retailers from 83 countries a way to sell everything from home décor to jewelry?
   a. Craigslist
   b. eBay
   c. Alibaba Group
   d. Etsy

24. A graduate student at the University of Missouri in Columbia went on a hunger strike. Then 32 African-American members of the football team vowed to boycott all practices, games, and team activities until university President Tim Wolfe resigns. Why?
   a. Acts of racism on campus made it “unlivable.”
   b. Planned Parenthood began conducting abortions on campus.
   c. Campus officials allowed a swastika to be painted on a campus residence hall.
   d. The university president tried to stop speech promoting social justice on campus.

25. By the end of the year, which Republican presidential candidate had led the polls for four straight months?
   a. Ben Carson
   b. Donald Trump
   c. Bernie Sanders
   d. Jeb Bush

26. The Empire State Building went dark and the spire of One World Trade Center was lit up in the blue, white and red to show solidarity after deadline attacks in November killed at least 120 people in what country?
   a. Italy
   b. The United States
   c. England
   d. France

27. What two companies announced that they would combine in a $12.2 billion merger to create the world’s largest hotel chain?
   a. Marriott and Hilton
   b. Hilton and Starwood (Sheraton and Ritz-Carlton)
   c. Marriott and Starwood (Sheraton and Ritz-Carlton)
   d. Whydham and Marriott
28. Which of the following individuals did NOT receive a Presidential Medal of Freedom last fall?
   a. J.J. Abrams
   b. James Taylor
   c. Barbara Streisand
   d. Steven Spielberg

29. Developers of a privately funded high-speed rail line planned to connect Dallas (near Interstate 30) and Houston with 90-minute trail riders disclosed that the line will terminate where?
   a. George R. Brown Convention Center
   b. near Houston’s inner highway loop about 10 miles from downtown
   c. William Hobby Airport
   d. George Bush Intercontinental Airport

30. When he retired from his sport last fall, he was known as the person who popularized his sport. Known as the “pretty boy” of the sport, throughout his career, he received hundreds of millions in endorsements, particularly as a spokesperson for Pepsi. What sport?
   a. golf
   b. rugby
   c. professional wrestling
   d. NASCAR

31. With an audience that’s nearly evenly split between men and women and an older-than-average set of viewers, in a male-dominated superhero genre, what new TV series, developed a female superhero in the top-ranked superhero series?
   a. Flash
   b. Supergirl
   c. Agent Carter
   d. Jessica Jones

32. In a landmark decision that would allow female service members to join the country’s most elite military forces, Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said he is opening what types of jobs to women for the first time?
   a. combat
   b. front-line positions in foreign countries
   c. submarine jobs
   d. the Army’s Ranger School

33. The Lower Colorado River Authority announced it was spending $255 million but refused to release the models it used to build what?
   a. upgrades to Austin’s Lake Travis
   b. Lane City Reservoir about 60 miles southwest of Houston
   c. an estuary for wildlife in Matagorda Bay
   d. the Morris Shepard Dam on the Brazos River
34. A larger-than-life bronze statue of Jefferson Davis was taken down at the University of Texas Aug. 30 after standing on the South Mall since 1933. Critics wanted the statue removed because, to them, he was a symbol of what?
   a. the Confederacy
   b. inefficiency as the nation’s 28th president
   c. gang violence given the vandalism of the statue
   d. racism

35. To thunderous applause, Laurent Fabius, the French foreign minister, said, “The Paris accord is accepted.” What was this accord, accepted by 195 nations, about?
   a. oil prices
   b. fighting the Islamic State after terrorist attacks in Paris
   c. climate change
   d. religious freedom

36. A vocal school-choice proponent and “proven education reformer,” according to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, Mike Morath was appointed to be the state’s next education commissioner. He also served on the school board in what city?
   a. Houston
   b. Midland
   c. Arlington
   d. Dallas

37. Texas A&M University now plans to open a $5.5 million ocean research observatory, but is scrapping plans for a major “Peace Campus” where?
   a. Nazareth, Israel
   b. Cairo, Egypt
   c. Berlin, Germany
   d. Seoul, South Korea

38. Even though it had been 36 years, one month and 14 days, what group of people were offered compensation as part of the spending bill signed into law in late December?
   a. public safety workers who worked the 9-11 terrorist attack
   b. families of military men who fought and died in the Vietnam War — now officially a war
   c. the 53 Americans taken hostage at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran
   d. 600 black men working with the working with the Tuskegee Institute to study syphilis

39. Vester Lee Flanagan II unleashed a barrage of 17 shots during what authorities called a “well-planned and premeditated” attack that took the lives of two television journalists near Roanoke, Va. Which of the following was true about this event?
   a. A white police officer killed Flanagan, a black man.
   b. The shooter illegally purchased numerous automatic weapons.
   c. It was a spur-of-the-moment attack after the shooter was passed over for the anchor position.
   d. It happened during a live broadcast.

40. Proposition 7 passed with 83 percent support in the fall election. As a result of this proposal, how will Texas increase funds used to maintain and construct public roadways and bridges?
   a. increase in sales tax
   b. charity raffles
   c. decrease in homestead exemption
   d. dedicate taxes on car sales
ESSAY PROMPT

Even before it opened in China, Disney’s new movie “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” was breaking records.

- Fastest film to gross $1 billion – 12 days.
- Biggest worldwide opening weekend and single weekend gross – $529 million.
- Biggest worldwide December opening weekend – $529 million.

However, the movie, which opened Dec. 18, 2015, was not without controversy. Discuss some of the issues surrounding the production and release of the box office sensation.

NOTE: Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and doesn’t ramble. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.
DO NOT write your name or school on this paper. Write the LETTER indicating your response to each question in the space below. Write clearly in CAPITAL letters. Write your response to the essay on the scratch paper provided. You have 60 minutes. Each objective question is worth 1 point. The essay is worth as much as 10 points.

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TOTAL POINTS

Reminder: Team score is based on the cumulative score of the multiple choice portion of the contest only. Do not count the essay scores toward the team championship.
ESSAY PROMPT
Even before it opened in China, Disney’s new movie “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” was breaking records.
• Fastest film to gross $1 billion – 12 days.
• Biggest worldwide opening weekend and single weekend gross – $529 million.
• Biggest worldwide December opening weekend – $529 million.
However, the movie, which opened Dec. 18, 2015, was not without controversy. Discuss some of the issues surrounding the production and release of the box office sensation.

DISCUSSION POINTS
• “Star Wars” transformed Hollywood economically, by establishing a blockbuster mentality—especially a mentality based on blockbusters made for teens. However, it also developed a loyal following of individuals who were young when the first movie, “Star Wars: A New Hope,” was released in 1977.
• By the end of the year, the movie still had not surpassed “Avatar,” which has reigned supreme since 2009 with a gross of nearly $2.8 billion. However, “The Force Awakens” wasn’t due to open in China until Jan. 9. “Certainly we’re hoping and anticipating that it will play very, very well here,” said Kathleen Kennedy, president of Lucasfilm. “Avatar 2” is due for release in December of 2016.
• “The Force Awakens” was the first “Star Wars” feature produced by the Walt Disney Co. since its $4 billion acquisition of Lucas’ production company, Lucasfilm, in 2012. Many argued that Disney purchased the franchise simply to make money as Universal Studios was doing with the “Jurassic World” franchise. “Jurassic World” was the highest-grossing film of 2015, grossing $1.7 billion worldwide this year. “A Force Awakens” grossed $1.1 billion in the 14 days of 2015 it was open.
• “Star Wars” already was a merchandising bonanza, as Lucas had kept control of the licensing when he sold the first film to 20th Century Fox. Under Disney, at a minimum, there will be more toys, collectibles, theme park rides, video games, TV spin-offs, clothing and promotional tie-ins. Disney announced that it will close 10 attractions and restaurants at Disneyland to build a new “Star Wars” area. “The Force Awakens” is expected to generate up to $5 billion in merchandise sales in 2015 alone. Sales of BB-8 robot droids are “hot” — 22,000 sold on the first day. Clearly it is going to be profitable for Disney.
• While the movie was criticized for its lack of originality. Still, critic after critic said, “It’s way better than any of the prequel films.” And it doesn’t have Jar-Jar relying more on true action and less on computer-generated imagery as Abram’s did when he reinvented the Star Trek franchise in 2009.
• Critics said J.J. Abram’s big advance might have been supplanting the white protagonists of the original “Star Wars” with a young woman and a black male. However, Disney was criticized for doing this simply to bring in more sales of merchandise. Among the publicity features preceding the premiere was one in which Daisy Ridley, who plays the new protagonist Rey, rated eight action figures being sold with her character’s image. And she had her own Lego character. Target, however, came under fire for not including her in the official Hasbro action figure pack.
• The next movie, “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story” will tell a story that exists between “Revenge of the Sith” and “A New Hope” where Rebel Alliance soldiers work to steal the plans to the original Death Star. It’s due for release in December of 2016. Episode VIII, to be directed by Rian Johnson, is scheduled for release in May of 2017.
Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaking with supporters at a “Get Out the Caucus” rally at Valley Southwoods Freshman High School in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Former Governor Jeb Bush speaking with supporters and employees at a Nationwide Insurance town hall in Des Moines, Iowa.
1. The Waggoner Ranch, the largest contiguous ranch in the country with 510,000 acres, was sold in February. The buyer is “really interested in Texas and legacy and lore and history and all things to do with Texas,” according to a real estate adviser who worked on the deal. Who purchased the ranch?
   a. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, oil baron
   b. Stan Kroenke, owner of the Denver Nuggets and Colorado Avalanche
   c. Donald Trump, real estate developer and television personality
   d. Ted Turner, founder of CNN

2. The Texas primary election took place on March 1 — Super Tuesday. Texas has the most delegates at stake. How many?
   a. 38, one for each representative and senator
   b. 26, one per 1 million population
   c. 52
   d. 155

3. Hundreds of protesters stood outside a county jail in Rowan County, Kentucky in support of a county clerk jailed. Why was she held in contempt of court?
   a. She refused to issue payments to Planned Parenthood.
   b. She refused to issue marriage licenses to gay couples.
   c. She returned $1.4 million given to political parties.
   d. She hired her son, a violation of employment laws.

4. The U.S. Justice Department filed a lawsuit against the city of Ferguson, Missouri. Over what?
   a. to require all employees to undergo racial sensitivity training
   b. to dissolve the current police department and hire a more racially diverse police force
   c. to pay a $1 million settlement to the family of Michael Brown Jr., an unarmed teenager killed by a city police officer
   d. to make changes the city previously agreed to voluntarily in police training and in how local courts operate

5. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell, in a Meet the Press interview, refused to comment on what the email controversy plaguing Hillary Clinton. Why?
   a. He has publicly supported Jeb Bush.
   b. He also had two email accounts.
   c. He doesn’t use email. “I never will,” he said.
   d. He’s been called to testify in Congress regarding the situation.

6. After open carry went into effect in Texas on Jan. 1, Wal-mart took what stance?
   a. Customers can bring in visible handguns, but store staff have to verify the customer’s license for the weapon.
   b. No guns in the store, with signs indicating that.
   c. Asked police officers to demand, even without probable cause, to see a permit.
   d. Wal-mart stopped selling liquor and announced, “You’re not welcome here if you have a gun.”
7. When Apple unveiled the iPad Pro in September, a 12.9-inch display with 5.6 million pixels, critics said Steve Jobs would not approve. “Yuck,” Jobs once described pieces of it. “Nobody would want that.” What?
a. the accompanying TV with voice activation through Siri
b. built-in Bose speakers
c. a less expensive iWatch
d. the Apple ‘Pencil’ stylus

8. Soliciting boos from the Las Vegas debate audience, Donald Trump said he advocated doing something that would involve collaboration with Silicon Valley. What?
a. allowing social media to be searched without a warrant
b. blocking any Syrians from working for Internet Service Providers
c. creating filters to block potential threats on social media
d. closing off areas of the Internet

9. In its latest bout of saber rattling, North Korea says it is ready to use weapons, weapons improving “in quality and quantity,” against the United States and other foes if they pursue “their reckless hostile policy” toward Kim Jong Un’s regime. What weapons?
a. biochemical weapons
b. biological weapons
c. nuclear weapons
d. cyber warfare

10. What was unique about Pope Francis’ visit to the United States in September?
a. He was the first pope to visit Cuba.
b. It was the first time a pope gave a speech in a language other than Latin.
c. He was the first reigning pontiff to address a joint session of Congress.
d. He advocated Democratic policy positions and the leading candidate, Hillary Clinton.

11. Because the majority of consumers still haven’t received their new, upgraded credit cards, many retailers aren’t upgrading their terminals to accept the new cards. Hence, businesses missed the Oct. 1 deadline for upgrading to the new cards. What feature?
a. embedded fingerprint recognition
b. random PIN numbers for each customer
c. embedded EMV cards (chips)
d. text-based authentication of each transaction

12. Although it only had 5 percent of the world’s population, what country had 31 percent of all public mass shootings, 90 between 1966 and 2012 and more than any country in the world?
a. Philippines
b. United States
c. Switzerland
d. Russia

13. Why did the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet win the Nobel Peace Prize?
a. creating dialog between disparate elements of Tunisian society
b. making music that brings multiple factions together
c. bringing countries like Syria, Turkey and Tunisia together to explore Middle East peace
d. starting discussions about population control in the world’s most population dense areas
14. He publicly stated he favors overturning *Roe v. Wade* and national health savings accounts instead of Medicaid and traditional insurance. “I have plenty of energy,” he said in a quite, laid back manner. Which Republican political candidate took the lead in late October, beating out Donald Trump with significant support from evangelical Christians?
   a. Joe Biden, U.S. vice president  
   b. Jeb Bush, former Florida governor  
   c. Ted Cruz, Texas senator  
   d. Ben Carson, retired neurosurgeon

15. Among the political signs jammed into the grass outside a polling station in a Houston neighborhood stood one placard bearing an unusual slogan: “No men in women’s bathrooms.” The statement became a rallying cry for opponents of a measure designed to protect what group?
   a. heroes, including military veterans  
   b. women nursing babies  
   c. immigrants who don’t speak English  
   d. transgender people

16. Although it passed, Proposition 3 only passed with 66 percent of voters in the fall election. The least popular of the statewide propositions, it overturned a constitutional requirement that statewide officials do what?
   a. live in Austin  
   b. balance the budget  
   c. pay income taxes in Texas  
   d. disclose contributions to charity raffles

17. Former President George H. W. Bush ignited Republican infighting by alleging in an upcoming biography that former a former official formed his “own empire” within the White House. Who was it that, the 41 president said, evolved into an “iron-ass” on foreign policy while serving in his son’s administration?
   a. Vice President Joe Biden  
   b. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld  
   c. Vice President Dick Cheney  
   d. Secretary of State Colin Powell

18. “Our Pleasure Is It To Announce The Success Of The # WT1190F UAE Airborne Campaign,” the Astronomical Center tweeted Nov. 13. “We saw and captured the reentry.” What was it they were photographing?
   a. no one knows  
   b. remains of a space station  
   c. an alien spacecraft  
   d. a space rock

19. Snapchat released a new version of its app including certain “Lenses,” a special type of photo filter. Users took to Twitter to complain about what aspect of this feature?
   a. They violated copyright laws, making use of the images of individual users for Snapchat’s gain.  
   b. Users couldn’t replay videos that used the filters.  
   c. Investors withdrew one-fourth of their startup capital after problems with the filters.  
   d. It cost $0.99.
20. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott joined several other U.S. governors halting efforts to allow refugees from what country?
   a. Syria
   b. France
   c. Mexico
   d. Iran

21. What country launched massive retaliatory air strikes against the Islamic State in Syria as a manhunt intensified for fugitives linked to the terrorist attacks that left more than 130 dead in Paris, Brussels and Bamako?
   a. Belgium
   b. France
   c. Mali
   d. the United States

22. Robert L. Dear Jr. lived off the grid in a white trailer in the Rocky Mountains. Yet over Thanksgiving weekend, he turned himself in as the shooter who killed three people and shot nine others at what Colorado Springs business?
   a. Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a historically black church
   b. Umpqua Community College
   c. a Sikh temple
   d. a Planned Parenthood center

23. First there was Black Friday. Then Cyber Monday. Now there is...
   a. Panic Week, a week for dads to get discounts on toys
   b. Social Wednesday, a day organized by teachers free from social media
   c. Giving Tuesday, a celebration of generosity
   d. Environmental Awareness Weekend, a weekend dedicated to getting outside in the natural environment

24. “My body knows it’s time to say goodbye” wrote a five-time and 37-year-old NBA champion who has scored 32,683 points and won two Olympic gold medals in his 20-year career. Who?
   a. Joe Johnson, Brooklyn Nets
   b. Kobe Bryant, Los Angeles Lakers
   c. Lebron James, Cleveland Cavaliers
   d. Kevin Durant, Oklahoma City Thunder

25. “There is a 9-11 in the making if we don’t hit them first,” Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) said. “The source of the problem is in Syria. If you don’t go after them over there, they’re going to hit us over here.” To whom was he referring?
   a. the Islamic State — ISIS
   b. the Russian army
   c. Syrian refugees
   d. the Taliban
26. A member of the Los Angeles school board received an anonymous email, as did authorities in New York City. It said, in part, “Every school in Los Angeles school district is being targeted. We have bombs hidden in backpacks in lockers at several schools.” What action did Los Angeles officials take that cost the district about $29 million in state funding?
   a. took legal action on the email service provider
   b. closed schools for a day
   c. paid public safety officials over-time at more than 900 schools
   d. hired police officers to stand at every door at every school

27. Before he was detained in Mexico, 16-year-old Ethan Couch was sentenced to probation only after a drunken driving crash that killed four people. He pleaded “not guilty.” To what did he base his defense?
   a. insanity
   b. what became known as “affluenza,” his privileged upbringing
   c. improper testing and observation by police officers
   d. being forced to drink alcohol as part of a fraternity recruitment event

28. After the release of the new Star Wars movie, Carrie Fisher lashed out at critics saying this was “a stupid conversation.” What were they criticizing?
   a. her appearance
   b. her role as admiral
   c. why she was wearing a bikini, again
   d. why she was paid so much more than Daisy Ridley who played Rey

29. General Motors announced it was adopting an app-based, ride-hailing enterprise in the race to build autonomous cars, investing $500 million in what company?
   a. Uber
   b. Lyft
   c. Google
   d. Amazon

30. An ozone standard shrunk the previous 75 parts per billion limits on ozone to 70 parts per billion putting pressure on some regions in Texas and costing billions. So Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton sued the federal Environmental Protection Agency. In trying to cut back on smog, what did the new standards NOT target?
   a. pollution coming from factories
   b. power plant emissions
   c. individual cars
   d. standards for non-renewable energy such as solar and wind

31. Although the National Rifle Association called it a “political stunt,” the NRA objected to what action U.S. President Barack Obama threatened to take during his last year in office?
   a. pushing legislation on gun control
   b. ordering federal judges to prosecute police officers involved in police shootings
   c. executive action on gun control
   d. not allowing Muslims on the no-fly list to buy any kind of gun
32. In tourism-dependent Antigua, a deadly disease, following a similar disease in Florida and Jamaica, has wiped out almost half of what on the island jeopardizing food, beauty treatments and traditional medicine?
   a. banana berry trees
   b. zaboca (avacado)
   c. coconut palms
   d. zananas (pineapples)

33. Four newly discovered elements were added to the Periodic Table of the Elements in 2015, filling up the table’s seventh row and marking the first additions since 2011. Which of the following was one of the new elements?
   a. ununtrium (113)
   b. uranium (92)
   c. nobelium (102)
   d. livermorium (116)

34. Donald Trump came under fire in January for his first television commercial depicting what appeared to be people running for the border, a border described as the “southern border.” “It’s just a display of what our country’s going to look like,” Trump said. However, it wasn’t the U.S. border. Where was it?
   a. Syria
   b. Morocco
   c. Turkey
   d. Spain

35. Despite that Southwest Airlines claims another airline interferes with Southwest’s operations, a federal judge ruled in January that what airline can continue to fly out of Dallas Love Field?
   a. Delta Air Lines
   b. American Airlines
   c. Virgin America
   d. Spirit Airlines

36. In his last State of the Union, U.S. President Barack Obama said, “I’m putting (Vice President) Joe (Biden) in charge of Mission Control.” In charge of what?
   a. the space program
   b. privatizing the space program and getting a settlement on Mars
   c. the fight against cancer
   d. maintaining Government neutrality in abortion policy and Roe v. Wade

37. Texas-based grocery store chain HEB, looking to advance into new markets, made which announcement?
   a. It would open microbrewery outlets to foster the beer industry in Texas.
   b. It would open upscale restaurants adjacent to megastores with “the freshest of produce.”
   c. It would open smaller convenience stores to compete with 7-Eleven.
   d. It would spin-off a Texas brand store containing “all things Texas” — including Whataburger.
38. Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, facing protests and calls for his resignation, apologized to the residents of Flint and called for the state to spend $28 million. Why?
   a. drinking water contamination
   b. lack of improvement in the Detroit auto industry
   c. teacher sickouts forcing 88 Detroit schools to close
   d. not blocking Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes

39. The CDC added more nations and territories to its warning for travel that already includes Brazil, much of the Caribbean, Latin America, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Samoa. The warning came as health officials investigated a link between birth defects and what mosquito-borne virus?
   a. Ebola
   b. Zika
   c. malaria
   d. yellow fever

40. Last year Mattel introduced 23 new dolls with different skin tones, hairstyles, outfits and flat feet, rather than the perpetually pointy ones meant to fit into sky-high heels. This year, the company introduced dolls available in tall, petite and curvy body types. What doll?
   a. Disney’s Frozen
   b. Barbie
   c. Cabbage Patch Kids
   d. American Girl

ESSAY PROMPT

When the campaigns for the 2016 presidential elections began, pundits said it was all but a coronation, a fait accompli. The Republican nominee would be the son of a former president — Jeb Bush — and the wife of a former president — Hillary Clinton. It would be Bush vs. Clinton once again.

So far, at least, it hasn’t turned out that way.

Nevertheless, several of the candidates, not just Jeb and Hillary, are depending on relatives who have held elected office to lead them to victory. Discuss the candidates who have high-profile relatives campaigning with them and their involvement — or lack of involvement — in the campaign.

NOTE: Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and doesn’t ramble. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.
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Nevertheless, several of the candidates, not just Jeb and Hillary, are depending on relatives who have held high elected office to lead them to victory. Discuss the candidates who have high-profile relatives campaigning with them and their involvement — or lack of involvement — in the campaign.

DISCUSSION POINTS

• **George W. Bush** — Ending years of self-imposed absence from the campaign trail, former President George W. Bush held his first joint rally with his brother Jeb in South Carolina in February. While the 43rd president left office deeply unpopular, weighed down by the war in Iraq and the collapse of the global economy, recent polls show that the former president’s stock has risen with Americans.

• **George W. Bush** — Not only did George W. Bush join the campaign trail, he was the featured speaker in a radio ad. “Jeb has dealt with crises as the governor of Florida, and he did so with steadiness, and a calmness necessary in a good leader,” the former president said in the ad, which aired in South Carolina.

• **Barbara Bush** — Former first lady Barbara Bush urged voters in both a video and a hand-written letter to vote for her second-oldest son in January. She appeared with him in New Hampshire. “Jeb is the nicest, wisest, most caring loyal, disciplined – not by me,” she joked. “He’s not a braggart – we don’t allow that.” Back in 2014, she said, “There’s no question in my mind that Jeb is the best-qualified person to run for president, but I hope he won’t.”

• **George H.W. Bush** — While the 41st president, George H.W. Bush, publicly supported his son and worked to raise money, he was not out on the campaign trail.

• **Bill Clinton** — Bill Clinton made his first public campaign trail appearance for his wife’s 2016 campaign in October. However, it wasn’t until the primaries began that he began making regular appearances. Bill took a larger role in advising Hillary’s presidential campaign as he grew increasingly worried that she wasn’t focusing enough on the dozens of primary states that vote in March. News of Bill’s involvement in Hillary’s camp reflected a real concern: what once seemed an easy path to victory for the former senator and secretary of state has now turned treacherous with the soaring popularity of Bernie Sanders.

DO NOT write your name or school on this paper. Write the LETTER indicating your response to each question in the space below. Write clearly in CAPITAL letters. Write your response to the essay on the scratch paper provided. You have 60 minutes. Each objective question is worth 1 point. The essay is worth as much as 10 points.

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Grading the CI&E Contest

1. Distribute contests to students, who will then have 60 minutes to finish.
2. Grade the objective portions of the test.
3. Enter results of the objective portion of the contest into the UIL online entry system. Do not add essay scores to determine the overall team winner!
4. To determine the overall individual winner, pull the top eight papers. In the event of ties, select enough papers to fill eight slots. For example:

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_Tie for last slot:_ If a tie for the eighth slot exists, then grade all those tied for the eighth slot, as in the example below. Then, add the scores from the essay portion of the contest to the objective scores.

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<tr>
<td>8 (Lina)</td>
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for the CI&E Essay

Judges may award all or no points. This is a working document for as many as three judges. Final points are a compromise among judges, NOT A RUNNING POINT TOTAL or pure point averaging. Return this form to the student with the objective portion of the contest.

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An 8-10 ESSAY opens with a declarative statement that extends the prompt without re-stating it. The thesis is supported by substantial, relevant information that analyzes the prompt from a range of perspectives — for example, political, social, cultural and economic. It does not provide a mere shopping list of facts. It interprets the facts without editorializing. The essay is well written and organized with few spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. The essay is clear, precise and succinct.

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OVERALL ESSAY SCORE
(maximum of 10 points)

OBJECTIVE SCORE
(score from the objective portion of the test)

OVERALL SCORE
(add essay score to objective score)
Calling it a salute to the “genius” of the country’s founding fathers, Gov. Greg Abbott on June 13, 2015 signed legislation allowing Texans with licenses to openly tote their handguns in a hip or shoulder holster.
1. During 2015 the TSA found a record 2,653 firearms in carry-on bags at airport checkpoints. At what airport were the most firearms found?
   a. Atlanta
   b. Houston Intercontinental
   c. Denver
   d. Dallas/Fort Worth

2. To fund salary raises and increases in operating costs, officials at Texas universities said, “The money’s got to come from somewhere.” In February, they released a plan to get that money. From where?
   a. a massive donation, the largest ever by a single donor; Stan Kroenke, owner of the Denver Nuggets
   b. a state income tax
   c. increases in student tuition
   d. the state’s general fund supported by property taxes

3. Barack Obama signed several executive orders to push forward his workplace agenda, working around a Republican-led Congress. Which of the following was one of those orders signed on Labor Day?
   a. He required businesses with 15 or more employees to offer up to seven paid six days/year.
   b. He raised the minimum wage for federally contracted workers to $15.
   c. He required federal contractors to give at least seven days of paid sick leave annually.
   d. He passed a resolution supporting local law enforcement.

4. After the disease killed 2,536 since the outbreak began two years ago, the World Health Organization declared Guinea free of what disease in December?
   a. HIV/AIDS
   b. Tuberculosis
   c. Smallpox
   d. Ebola

5. In a small, Tyler, Texas courtroom, jurors reached a unanimous verdict. The East Texas jury ruled that Apple Inc.’s infringement was “willful” and ordered the mega-company to pay a small security firm, VirnetX Holding Corp, $625 million in damages, one of the largest patent infringement awards in Texas history. What was the software at the center of this case?
   a. FaceTime
   b. Apple Maps
   c. Siri
   d. Fitbit
6. Less than two weeks before Islam’s annual Hajj pilgrimage, at least 107 people died at Mecca’s Grand Mosque according to Saudi Arabia’s Civil Defense Authority. How?
   a. ISIS launched a missile
   b. a construction crane collapsed
   c. a freak thunderstorm and lightning strikes
   d. al-Qaida IEDs exploded in the complex

7. Uber has grown exponentially in cities over Texas. Yet, in February, Uber ended service in Midland and Galveston while still negotiating service in Austin. Why?
   a. There was lack of consumer demand.
   b. “Burdensome regulations” imposed by the city government.
   c. Taxi companies, forced to do security checks on drivers, objected.
   d. City council members in both cities pass resolutions objecting to the company.

8. “That is not true. There was no conversation,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, according to the Russian state-run news agency Sputnik. Still, pop singer Elton John claimed that Russian President Vladimir Putin got it touch with him to discuss what?
   a. Syrian refugees
   b. meeting face-to-face to sing together
   c. use of social media, including Instagram
   d. gay rights

9. In addition to the new center being built in Sugar Land, what company announced in January that it will break ground in February at an 800,000 square foot distribution warehouse in Cypress that will bring 400 jobs to the area?
   a. Amazon
   b. Google
   c. FedEx Ground
   d. Kroger Company

10. Awards went to Queen Latifah, Uzo Aduba, Viola Davis and (twice to) Edris Elba at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. However, the Academy Awards remained enveloped in what crisis?
    a. how much money is behind the top 1 percent of actors
    b. how little money actors get in top-grossing releases
    c. a controversial moderator, Chris Rock
    d. the diversity of its nominees

11. Authorities say Christopher Harper Mercer killed at least nine people and wounded at least seven others at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg before he was killed in an exchange of gunfire with police. What group did he specifically target according to witnesses?
    a. Muslims
    b. Liberals
    c. Christians
    d. Islamists
12. Arne Duncan stepped down, returning to Chicago to live with his family. U.S. President Barack Obama said he doesn’t intend to nominate any candidate to replace Duncan before his presidency ends. From what position did Duncan resign?  
   a. Department of Education secretary  
   b. Supreme Court justice  
   c. U.S. attorney general  
   d. ambassador to Cuba

13. North Korea released Won-moon Joo, a South Korean student at New York University whom it detained in April, the South Korean government said in October. Why did Joo want to go into North Korea?  
   a. to improve relations  
   b. to bring internet service  
   c. to meet Dennis Rodman  
   d. to make a statement about human rights

14. Only one week after the Pope’s visit to the United States, a Polish priest, Krysztof Olaf Charamsa, who served with the Vatican’s doctrinal arm was removed from his duties. Why?  
   a. He scheduled meeting between Pope and Kim Davis.  
   b. He posted a photo on Facebook supporting LGBT group.  
   c. He supported the ordination of women.  
   d. He announced he was gay.

15. The founder of the global News Corp. media empire, Rupert Murdoch, issued an apology in October after he faced social media backlash following his suggestion that U.S. President Barack Obama was not what?  
   a. U.S. citizen  
   b. a “true Democrat”  
   c. a “real black president”  
   d. a Muslim

16. The federal government shut down in February. Why?  
   a. snow  
   b. lack of funding  
   c. so officials could devote time to the political primaries  
   d. terrorism

17. Republicans in the House of Representatives, struggling to govern themselves, stopped Kevin McCarty from running for what position?  
   a. speaker of the house  
   b. majority leader  
   c. president  
   d. chair of the Ways and Means Committee

18. While the proposition passed with almost 87 percent of the vote, Proposition 1 raises the homestead exemption from $15,000 to $25,000, resulting in a loss of funding for local school districts but saving the average homeowner about $126 per year. How will school districts make up the loss of funding in the short term?  
   a. more funding from state coffers  
   b. reallocation of some taxes collected on car sales  
   c. charity raffles  
   d. increase in state income tax
19. After the November attacks in Paris, Facebook offered what feature?
   a. a “Dislike” button
   b. a fast way, using the hashtag “PorteOuverte,” for people to find a place to hide
   c. a “Safety Check” tool
   d. a way to identify the terrorists using facial recognition

20. Russian investigators said definitively that the cause of the plane crash in Egypt that killed 224 people in October was what?
   a. pilot error
   b. a terrorist bomb
   c. mechanical failure
   d. a missile

21. The election was a landslide, five years after the candidate was released from house arrest. “Our hearts beat with the same note. We struggled together and we had hopes together.” As the head of the pro-democracy opposition party, who won election in the country’s first national election in 25 years and in what country?
   a. Ne Win, Myanmar
   b. Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma
   c. U Nu, Mali
   d. Salva Kiir, South Sudan

22. Just as 21 refugees were scheduled to resettle in Dallas and Houston, Texas filed a lawsuit seeking to block the arrival of refugees from what country?
   a. Afghanistan
   b. Somalia
   c. Sudan
   d. Syria

23. “It’s a fraud really, a fake,” said James Hansen, father of climate change and NASA scientist, of the Paris accord passed in December. What was his main criticism?
   a. The U.S. Congress already voted not to accept it.
   b. It included a fee — $15/tonne — that wasn’t fair to developing countries.
   c. It underestimated the sea-level rise resulting from carbon already in the atmosphere.
   d. It was just promises with no tangible action.

24. “While there has been no specific threat of harm to students, schools and school offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 18, 2015,” officials with Augusta County Schools in Virginia said. If it wasn’t a specific threat, what was it?
   a. an anonymous threat submitted by email
   b. backlash against a standard homework assignment on Islam
   c. a student had a gun in his backpack after returning from the Middle East
   d. snow

25. According to Department of Homeland Security statistics, the number of people apprehended by immigration agents while trying to enter Texas — about 210,470 of them — did what?
   a. increased by more than 35 percent
   b. dropped by more than 65 percent, particularly due to fewer immigrants from Central America
   c. dropped by 3.5 percent as officials focused on immigrants from Syria
   d. dropped by more than 35 percent
26. Miss Colombia says it’s no coincidence you haven’t heard her talk much about her experience winning — and losing — the Miss Universe crown, eventually calling it a “great injustice.” What was the controversy?
   a. There was an error by announcer Steve Harvey.
   b. She failed a drug test.
   c. Miss Philippines alleged racial bias among judges and contested the results.
   d. Donald Trump funded Miss Columbia.

27. Ununtrium, ununpentium, ununseptium and ununoctium all have what in common?
   a. They were all discovered by Nobel laureate Ryoji Noyori.
   b. They were all discovered by Russian scientists developing a new atomic weapon in 2015.
   c. They are four new elements added to the Periodic Table in 2015.
   d. They were all discovered by Japanese scientists developing a new atomic weapon in 2015.

28. Where was Republican presidential candidate and Senator Ted Cruz born?
   a. Texas
   b. Cuba
   c. Delaware
   d. Canada

29. The jackpot numbers were 32, 16, 19, 57, 34 and the Powerball was 13. However, no one won the January lottery that had odds of winning at around 1 in 292 million. What made this drawing unique?
   a. No one won in more times than ever before — 36 consecutive weeks.
   b. It tops the previous lottery jackpot of $656 million.
   c. It broke the record for most tickets sold in one day, $277 million in one day.
   d. It provided record funding for education, $900 million in Texas alone.

30. Most of the Marshall Islands rise less than six feet above sea level. For the 70,000 residents, the destructive power of the rising seas is already an inescapable part of daily life. What is the biggest modern-day threat to the islands, home of the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site?
   a. too much fishing
   b. climate change leading to sea-level rise
   c. nuclear bomb tests
   d. emigration of residents to the U.S.

31. The armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge continued as the occupation leader, Ammon Bundy, said he wouldn’t leave until two men were freed from federal prison for doing what?
   a. farming on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management
   b. terrorist acts
   c. setting fires on federal land
   d. being leaders of an organized crime group

32. At a special meeting in Houston, the NFL owners met to consider moving an NFL team to Los Angeles. They considered three teams. Which of the following was NOT one of the three teams they considered for the move?
   a. San Diego Chargers
   b. Oakland Raiders
   c. Houston Texans
   d. St. Louis Rams
33. After years of being accused by animal rights activists of abusing the animals, the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus announced this spring that it would retire what animals early?
   a. elephants
   b. seals
   c. lions
   d. African porcupines

34. Which of the following was NOT one of the conditions of the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement that took effect?
   a. The release of economic sanctions, giving Iran access to $100 billion.
   b. Iran had to release five American hostages.
   c. The International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors have access to materials and sites in Iran.
   d. Reduces Iran’s capacity to enrich uranium by two-thirds.

35. Why was the Federal Emergency Management Agency called “to save lives…and to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe” in Flint, Michigan?
   a. a terrorist attack
   b. lead in the water
   c. a school shooting
   d. massive power outages during a severe cold snap

36. Informally called Phattie, what is Planet Nine?
   a. the name of Star Wars VIII movie due for release in 2017
   b. the first planet outside our solar system NASA says may be suitable for life
   c. a new planet in our own solar system
   d. name of a planet referred to in ancient drawings found in Iran

37. Before he died in December, George “Meadowlark” Lemon was known as the “Clown Prince” of basketball and played more than 16,000 games for what team?
   a. the Vision International University Shooting Stars
   b. Lemon Ministries’ All Stars
   c. Harlem Globetrotters
   d. Smokey Mountain Jam

38. The Massachusetts attorney general warned the nation’s biggest biotech company that the company faces possible legal action unless it lowers the price of Sovaldi, which costs $84,000, and Harvoni, which costs $94,500. Last year, Medicare spent $4.5 billion on the medications that cure what disease?
   a. cervical cancer
   b. anemia
   c. hyperglycemia
   d. hepatitis C
39. Nick Lachey, a Cincinnati native and log-ago leading man of “Newlyweds: Nick and Jessica” became a leader in a movement in Ohio that he said would create jobs, reinvigorate the economy and improve the safety of communities. What were the generally conservative residents of Ohio scheduled to vote on in November?
   a. funding of a professional basketball team
   b. legalization of marijuana
   c. allowing guns on college campuses
   d. gambling in large cities

40. Chinese President Xi Jinping traveled to the White House in October to announce what?
   a. a national carbon emissions trading market
   b. a commitment to end hacking of movies
   c. a commitment to end hacking of computer systems
   d. a multi-billion-dollar plan to provide aid to refugees in Syria

ESSAY PROMPT

On NBC’s Meet the Press, Loretta Lynch said, “Dealing with guns is one way to deal with the violent crime issues that we have in this country.”

In a page 1 editorial, the first since 1920, The New York Times said, “Certain kinds of weapons, like the slightly modified combat rifles used in California, and certain kinds of ammunition must be outlawed for civilian ownership.”

Yet presidential candidate and Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said, “It’s about the God-given right of every single one of us to protect our home, our families and our lives.”

Discuss the major changes in how Texans carry their guns that take effect this year, the controversy surrounding those changes and the basis for that controversy.

NOTE: Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and doesn’t ramble. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.
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DISCUSSION POINTS

• Second Amendment — As passed by the Congress and preserved in the National Archives, with the rest of the original hand-written copy of the Bill of Rights prepared by scribe William Lambert, the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution reads: “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Other versions of the amendment lowercase “militia” and “state” bringing in to question the author’s intentions.

• History — The right to bear arms in English history is believed to have been regarded as an auxiliary to the long-established natural right of self-defense, auxiliary to the natural and legally defensible rights to life. Early American settlers viewed the right as integral to participating in law enforcement, deterring tyrannical government, repelling invasion, suppressing insurrection and facilitating a natural right of self-defense.

• The Texas legislature passed HB910 last year. The Senate, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said, has once again stood up for the Second Amendment to ensure law-abiding licensed Texans have the right to openly carry a handgun. The bill took effect Jan. 1, 2016 and allows people with Concealed Handgun Licenses to openly carry a handgun in a belt or shoulder holster.

• Only five states (New York, South Carolina, Florida, California and Illinois) have laws prohibiting openly carrying a handgun in public. (source: Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence)

• Leading up the effective date, gun sales, federal background checks and the number of people wanting to attend the gun safety classes increased.

• The top reason Americans report for owning firearms is personal protection.

• Federal law prohibits the government from keeping a national registry of all guns and their owners.

• In his first weekly address of 2016, Barack Obama vowed to take executive action to increase background checks on gun buyers.

• In a 98-47 vote, the Texas legislature passed SB11 on May 31 of last year, requiring universities to allow handguns in dorms, classrooms and campus buildings despite the passionate pleas of several Democrats and leaders of the state’s top universities.

• Campus carry legislation does not take effect until Aug. 1, 2016.

• Faculty all over the state — and many students — protested the legislation as hearings took place during the fall and spring semesters. Steven Weinberg, winner in 1979 of the Nobel Prize in physics at the University of Texas — arguably the most famous professor on campus — said he would take matters into his own hands to keep concealed handguns out of his classes, regardless of whatever rules are ultimately established by the university’s president.

• There were 372 mass shootings in the U.S. in 2015, killing 475 people and wounding 1,870, according to the Mass Shooting Tracker. There were 64 school shootings in 2015. Some 13,286 people were killed in the U.S. by firearms in 2015, according to the Gun Violence Archive, and 26,819 people were injured.
DO NOT write your name or school on this paper. Write the LETTER indicating your response to each question in the space below. Write clearly in CAPITAL letters. Write your response to the essay on the scratch paper provided. You have 60 minutes. Each objective question is worth 1 point. The essay is worth as much as 10 points.

1. ______ 21. ______
2. ______ 22. ______
3. ______ 23. ______
4. ______ 24. ______
5. ______ 25. ______
6. ______ 26. ______
7. ______ 27. ______
8. ______ 28. ______
9. ______ 29. ______
10. ______ 30. ______
11. ______ 31. ______
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14. ______ 34. ______
15. ______ 35. ______
16. ______ 36. ______
17. ______ 37. ______
18. ______ 38. ______
19. ______ 39. ______
20. ______ 40. ______
Grading the CI&E Contest

1. Distribute contests to students, who will then have 60 minutes to finish.
2. Grade the objective portions of the test.
3. Enter results of the objective portion of the contest into the UIL online entry system. Do not add essay scores to determine the overall team winner!
4. To determine the overall individual winner, pull the top eight papers. In the event of ties, select enough papers to fill eight slots. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slot</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th># of correct answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Tie for last slot:_ If a tie for the eighth slot exists, then grade all those tied for the eighth slot, as in the example below. Then, add the scores from the essay portion of the contest to the objective scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slot</th>
<th>Obj. only place</th>
<th>Objective score</th>
<th>Essay score</th>
<th>Total score</th>
<th>Final place</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>1st</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Bo)</td>
<td>2nd (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Moe)</td>
<td>2nd (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Sue)</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 (Flo)</td>
<td>5th (tie)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 (Bill)</td>
<td>5th (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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OVERALL ESSAY SCORE
(maximum of 10 points)

OBJECTIVE SCORE
(score from the objective portion of the test)

OVERALL SCORE
(add essay score to objective score)
1. Making it the most-watched finale, with almost 10 million viewers, what PBS television series ended in March after six seasons?
   a. Downton Abbey
   b. Sesame Street
   c. Doctor Who
   d. The Magic School Bus

2. After a deadly airstrike hit a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, with 30 declared dead and 27 injured, the organization condemned the attack as a possible “war crime.” Officials from what country later apologized for the strike?
   a. the Taliban
   b. Afghan forces
   c. the United States
   d. the Islamic State

3. Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova, the highest-earning female athlete in the world in each of the past 11 years, admitted guilt. She was guilty of what?
   a. bribing officials at the Australian Open
   b. taking meldonium, a banned substance
   c. playing with artificial implants that enhanced her performance
   d. accepting money from Nike in violation of tournament rules

4. Caught between conflicting moral arguments, California Gov. Jerry Brown, a former Jesuit seminary student, signed a measure allowing physicians to do what?
   a. assist with executions
   b. prescribe marijuana for “non-medical” uses
   c. provide lethal doses of drugs to terminally ill patients
   d. assist with abortions when the mother’s life is at risk

5. Who released CIA Director John Brennan’s address book, recommendations on Afghanistan and other information from the director’s personal email account?
   a. a young hacker working for North Korea
   b. Wikileaks
   c. a National Security Agency contractor who “made a mistake”
   d. @IncursioSubter, on Twitter

6. After five years of generally secret negotiation, the Trans-Pacific Partnership was drafted as a proposed agreement between 12 Pacific Rim countries about what?
   a. how to fight terrorism
   b. allowing free trade between the U.S. and those countries, removing tariffs
   c. bringing global healthcare to third-world countries
   d. lowering trade barriers
7. “I’ve called this year’s climate ‘Texas’ wild ride,” state climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon told the Houston Chronicle. “We recovered from one drought, then had another one, then recovered from it.” But he announced that 2015 broke what record? 
a. the driest  
b. the windiest  
c. the wettest  
d. the one with the most tornadoes

8. What appeared to be the cause of a fire at a 63-story hotel in Dubai on New Year’s Eve, something officials said couldn’t happen in the United States? 
a. arson 
b. fireworks  
c. lack of sprinklers  
d. use of a flammable external material

9. The Pentagon released a plan outlining the long-stalled effort to close Guantanamo Bay. Lawmakers said it was unlikely they would select a U.S. facility but mentioned several. One facility mentioned is the home of criminals such as Unabomber Ted Kaczynski and Sept. 11 conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui. Which facility? 
a. Alcatraz in San Francisco  
b. the Walls unit of the Texas State Prison in Huntsville, Texas  
c. Big Sandy in Kentucky  
d. the Supermax facility in Florence, Colorado

10. What group did French President Francois Hollande blame for being behind the worst attacks on the country’s soil since World War II? 
a. Renegade French extremists  
b. Syrian refugees  
c. Islamic State  
d. Russians, although Russian President Vladimir Putin denied it

11. He hid his face, but Mohammed Emwazi was the English-speaking voice of ISIS. A drone strike killed everyone in a targeted vehicle, with Emwazi likely among them. Emwazi was also known individually by what name? 
a. Daesh  
b. Jihadi John  
c. The Beatle  
d. Muad’Dib

12. Crude oil prices per barrel reached a five-year low last fall and approached 15-year lows this spring. What was the approximate price of a barrel of oil by mid-March? 
a. $41/barrel  
b. $80/barrel  
c. $125/barrel  
d. $500/barrel

13. After calling for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the U.S. last fall, GOP front-runner Donald Trump canceled plans to visit what country saying he would reschedule “at a later date after I become president of the U.S.”? 
a. Russia  
b. Syria  
c. Mexico  
d. Israel
14. Why did the Democratic National Committee suspend Sen. Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign’s access to the DNC voter database?
   a. Campaign workers took advantage of a software error to access Hillary Clinton’s confidential voter information.
   b. Campaign workers broke into Hillary Clinton’s headquarters to install listening devices.
   c. Campaign workers embedded themselves on Donald Trump’s staff to get inside knowledge.
   d. Campaign workers hacked into it to get confidential data on other candidates.

15. While the Texas open carry legislation became law Jan. 1, it almost didn’t pass due to one amendment by Sen. Donald Huffines (R-Dallas) known as the Dutton Amendment. The amendment was stripped from the bill by Sen. Craig Estes (R-Wichita Falls) but was later added by a 19-12 vote. What did this amendment do?
   a. It prohibited a police officer from stopping a person who was openly carrying to ask if they have a license.
   b. It allowed people to carry guns on college campuses.
   c. It allowed individuals as young as 16 with a background check to buy guns.
   d. It denied anyone on the federal government’s “no-fly” list the ability to buy a gun.

16. Thirteen U.S. states and two U.S. territories use the caucus system to determine which presidential candidates their delegates will support in the nomination process. However, it was the state that held its caucus in January that got so much attention, considered a “must win” for many candidates. Which state?
   a. New Hampshire
   b. Iowa
   c. Nevada
   d. Texas

17. Who gave the Republican response to U.S. President Barack Obama’s State of the Union?
   a. Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa)
   b. South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley
   c. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.)
   d. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.)

18. The militant group al-Shabaab — al-Qaida’s affiliate in Somalia — released a recruitment video in January featuring which presidential candidate?
   a. Hillary Clinton
   b. Ted Cruz
   c. Donald Trump
   d. Bernie Sanders

19. Scientists tell them apart by the pattern of boat propeller scars. Yet the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed them from the list of endangered species, 50 years after they appeared on the first-ever version of the federal list. With their whiskered snouts and paddle tails, their population reportedly now tops 6,000. What animal?
   a. manatee
   b. platypus
   c. elephant
   d. dugong
20. More than 100 Missouri Republican lawmakers called for the firing of a University of Missouri assistant professor, Melissa Click. What did she do to warrant such action?
   a. She had an inappropriate relationship with a student photojournalist.
   b. She made racist statements on social media.
   c. She spoke out publicly against the university president and chancellor.
   d. During a campus demonstration, she called for ‘muscle’ to remove a student journalist.

21. Two days after Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia died suddenly in remote West Texas, conspiracy theories began evolving. Why?
   a. No autopsy was ordered.
   b. Scalia convicted the Mexican drug lord El Chapo.
   c. Abortion rights activists earlier made threats against him.
   d. The county judge pronounced him dead without seeing body, something that is highly unusual.

22. After U.S. President Barack Obama announced his proposals to tighten gun rules, shares of all but one of the following stocks went up. Shares of which of the following stocks did NOT go up?
   a. Sturm, Ruger & Co. (RGR)
   b. Smith and Wesson (SWHC)
   c. Vista Outdoor (VSTO)
   d. Volkswagon (VLKAF)

23. Carrie Underwood, Kelly Clarkson and Chris Daughtry got their big break on what television show, a show in its 15th and final season on Fox?
   a. The Voice
   b. Britain’s Got Talent
   c. X Factor
   d. American Idol

24. During U.S. President Barack Obama’s last State of the Union, officials left an empty chair next to first lady Michelle Obama. Why?
   a. It was crowded and security was an issue.
   b. It was to symbolize the victims of gun violence who no longer have a voice.
   c. It was for a gay rights activist who, just that week, died of HIV/AIDS.
   d. It was for an Air Force staff sergeant who helped tackle a gunman on a train bound for Paris last summer but who was still in the hospital.

25. Wal-mart and several major corporations are banding together to give 6.5 million bottles of water to students in Flint, Michigan. Why?
   a. The pipes were frozen during the coldest winter ever recorded.
   b. Officials found lead in the water.
   c. It was a public relations stunt to show the environmental impact of bottled water.
   d. Politicians pointed out the benefits of clean water to good health starting at a young age.

26. Ethan Couch’s family had a history of run-ins with the law, about 20 incidents, ranging from speeding tickets to financial disputes to reckless driving and assault. Why was Couch extradited from Mexico to Texas in January?
   a. Shown in a video drinking at a party, he might have violated his probation.
   b. He was charged with killing four people while driving under the influence of alcohol.
   c. He was a witness against charges being brought against his mother.
   d. He was part of a group holding hostages on federal land in Oregon.
27. A Brazilian doctor working with 130 infants whose parents were infected with the Zika virus said the disease has been frightening. What is a common outcome of the disease?
   a. arboviral encephalitides — brain inflammation
   b. dengue fever and hemorrhagic fever — brain bleeding
   c. microcephaly — an abnormally small head and brain
   d. Malaria — fever, chills and flu-like symptoms

28. Next year, Frisco ISD's eight varsity programs will play each other in the state's first domed high school venue, a practice facility for the Dallas Cowboys. What other company announced a $1.74 million deal for the football and soccer players in Frisco?
   a. Nike — providing uniforms
   b. Adidas — providing shoes
   c. Under Armour — providing workout clothes
   d. Russell — providing jackets

29. The popular social media Twitter, with 307 million monthly active users, announced a big change in the Twitter feed. What change?
   a. Sponsored tweets will appear at least once per page.
   b. An algorithmic timeline will show tweets out of order.
   c. The real-time, reverse-chronological feed will appear at the top.
   d. Tweets with product names or company names will appear at the top.

30. The new ship will be practically identical to the original luxury liner. However, Australian tycoon Clive Palmer announced that first voyage has been pushed back from 2016 to 2018. What ship?
   a. Queen Elizabeth III
   b. Titanic II
   c. USS Indianapolis II
   d. Lusitania II

31. Privacy vs. security. It's a fight that could go all the way to the Supreme Court. But Apple refused to provide more than “reasonable technical assistance” to the FBI. For what?
   a. to break into an iPhone that belonged to terrorists
   b. to provide wireless access to the Apple network
   c. to disclose methods about how to unerase data from data mobile devices
   d. to upload user information from iPhones on the fly so calls can be monitored

32. The prime minister of what country announced his country will hold a referendum in June to decide whether that country will stay in the European Union?
   a. Greece
   b. Greenland
   c. Ireland
   d. Britain

33. Although presidential candidate Donald Trump had condemned it previously, in an interview with Jake Tapper on CNN, Trump failed to disavow and condemn David Duke and what group?
   a. the Anti-Defamation League
   b. neo-Nazi groups in Montana
   c. al-Quaida
   d. the Ku Klux Klan
34. Where did Scott Kelly spend 340 days, not quite a year, but still a record for an American?
   a. on Mars
   b. on the International Space Station
   c. in a Utah biodome built to simulate life on Mars
   d. underwater, in an isolated habitat built to simulate life in space

35. Bowie Street in Austin is named after the Texas revolution folk hero James Bowie. However, this spring, the sign was altered. Why?
   a. to “David Bowie Street” to honor an influential musician
   b. because, NAACP members alleged, James Bowie was a slave owner
   c. to “South by Southwest Blvd.” in honor of Austin’s music festival
   d. to honor Ted Cruz after he won Texas primary

36. What Texas city earned the nickname, “Stolen Music Gear Capital of the World”? 
   a. Austin
   b. San Antonio
   c. Houston
   d. Lukenbach

37. Payton Manning signed a two-year, $34 million contract. Yet he announced in March he was retiring. For whom did he work?
   a. Oracle Corporation
   b. Denver Broncos
   c. NBC Universal
   d. Google Company, now called Alphabet

38. In December, the first time an editorial appeared on the front page of *The New York Times* since 1920 called for what?
   a. disapproval of Donald Trump as the presumptive nomination as the next Republican presidential candidate
   b. disapproval of Hillary Clinton as the presumptive nomination as the next Democratic presidential candidate
   c. outlawing certain kinds of weapons and ammunition
   d. encouraging military officials to join England and France in “obliterating” the Islamic State group

39. Former first lady Nancy Reagan died in March. She was best known for what campaign?
   a. beautification of highways
   b. equal rights for women
   c. “Just Say No” to drugs
   d. “Let’s Move!” to solve childhood obesity

40. A victory for Bernie Sanders’ campaign, an Ohio county judge ruled that Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, a Republican, erred. Therefore, who could vote in the primary election?
   a. 17-year-olds who would be 18 on election day in November
   b. individuals who do not have photo identification
   c. 17-year-olds who had declared independence and were legal U.S. citizens
   d. individuals with a work visa but who were not U.S. citizens
ESSAY PROMPT

GOP presidential candidate Carly Fiorina said Americans want true outsiders, pushing candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders up in the polls. Americans repeatedly said they were dissatisfied with the way the nation is being governed.

According to a CNN/ORC Poll in December, 75 percent of Americans said they were dissatisfied, about as negative as they were in fall 2014. Republicans were far more angry and dissatisfied with their government than Democrats, with 90 percent of GOP voters expressing dissatisfaction.

A January Gallup survey found similar results. Only four in 10 Americans rate the “current situation” in the U.S. as positive, well below historical averages.

In the last year, Americans cited specific examples of how local, state and national government officials have failed them and why they want an outsider to take care of the “mess” at all levels of government. Discuss some governmental situations at the local, state and national level this year that have led to the dissatisfaction.

NOTE: Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and doesn’t ramble. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.
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DISCUSSION POINTS

could include but should not be limited to...

• Local government in Ferguson, Missouri: The Justice Department slapped the city of Ferguson, Mo., with a civil rights lawsuit in February after the City Council voted to change a proposed settlement agreement to reform the police and courts. When Attorney General Loretta Lynch announced the suit, she said Ferguson police disproportionately targeted black people for traffic stops, use of force and jail sentences. “These violations were not only egregious, they were routine,” Lynch said. “They were encouraged by the city in the interest of raising revenue. They were driven at least in part by racial bias, and they occurred disproportionally against African-American residents of Ferguson. And they were profoundly and fundamentally unconstitutional.”

• Local and state government in Flint, Michigan: Nearly two years ago, Michigan state officials decided to save money by switching Flint’s water supply from Lake Huron (which they were paying the city of Detroit for), to the Flint River, a notorious tributary that runs through town known to locals for its filth. According to a class-action lawsuit, the state Department of Environmental Quality wasn’t treating the Flint River water with an anti-corrosive agent, in violation of federal law. About half of the service lines to homes in Flint are made of lead and, because the water wasn’t properly treated, lead began leaching into the water supply, in toxic levels.

• Congressional infighting: Lawmakers elected Rep. Paul Ryan the 54th Speaker of the House, ending weeks of uncertainty over who would lead the raucous 247-member GOP conference after John Boehner’s surprise resignation. Ryan said, “Let’s be frank: The House is broken. We are not solving problems. We are adding to them,” he said. “And I am not interested in laying blame. We are not settling scores.”

• Supreme court justice appointment: Republican senators responded to the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia by categorically stating they would not follow through with a constitutional mandate to provide advice and consent for presidential nominees to the court. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz wrote in The Wall Street Journal in March, stating that it should be the next president who should choose the next justice.

• Federal government: U.S. President Barack Obama, after attending the Climate Change Summit in Paris, said a legally binding agreement was necessary to hit important targets when it comes to slowing down global warming. It would require congressional approval. However, despite universal agreement from scientists that climate change is real, the Republican-led House of Representatives voted to block the president’s climate change regulations. They passed two resolutions that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from enforcing limits on electric utilities and coal plants.
DO NOT write your name or school on this paper. Write the LETTER indicating your response to each question in the space below. Write clearly in CAPITAL letters. Write your response to the essay on the scratch paper provided. You have 60 minutes. Each objective question is worth 1 point. The essay is worth as much as 10 points.

1. ________ 21. ________
2. ________ 22. ________
3. ________ 23. ________
4. ________ 24. ________
5. ________ 25. ________
6. ________ 26. ________
7. ________ 27. ________
8. ________ 28. ________
9. ________ 29. ________
10. ________ 30. ________
11. ________ 31. ________
12. ________ 32. ________
13. ________ 33. ________
14. ________ 34. ________
15. ________ 35. ________
16. ________ 36. ________
17. ________ 37. ________
18. ________ 38. ________
19. ________ 39. ________
20. ________ 40. ________
1. Distribute contests to students, who will then have 60 minutes to finish.

2. Grade the objective portions of the test.

3. Enter results of the objective portion of the contest into the UIL online entry system. Do not add essay scores to determine the overall team winner!

4. To determine the overall individual winner, pull the top eight papers. In the event of ties, select enough papers to fill eight slots. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slot</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th># of correct answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Tie for last slot:_ If a tie for the eighth slot exists, then grade all those tied for the eighth slot, as in the example below. Then, add the scores from the essay portion of the contest to the objective scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slot</th>
<th>Obj. only place</th>
<th>Objective score</th>
<th>Essay score</th>
<th>Total score</th>
<th>Final place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Joe)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Bo)</td>
<td>2nd (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (Moe)</td>
<td>2nd (tie)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Sue)</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2 (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (Flo)</td>
<td>5th (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (Bill)</td>
<td>5th (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (Mary)</td>
<td>5th (tie)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>did not place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (Lina)</td>
<td>8th (tie)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>did not place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Jim)</td>
<td>8th (tie)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>did not place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Tie for second place:_ To break tie for second place, judge Joe's essay against Sue's essay. Award points accordingly. Break all ties for first through sixth place.

5. In a 3-person judging panel, must every judge grade each essay? Yes. If more than one person judges essays, make certain that judges reach agreement on which essay is the best. Do not rely solely on point totals. One judge may be more stringent than another. It is possible that a weaker essay, graded by a more lenient judge, can be awarded more points than a stronger essay, graded by a more strict judge.

6. Judges should not be excused until verification is completed and results announced as official.
Rubric for the CI&E Essay

Judges may award all or no points. This is a working document for as many as three judges. Final points are a compromise among judges, NOT A RUNNING POINT TOTAL or pure point averaging. Return this form to the student with the objective portion of the contest.

Points AWARDED:

An 8-10 ESSAY opens with a declarative statement that extends the prompt without re-stating it. The thesis is supported by substantial, relevant information that analyzes the prompt from a range of perspectives — for example, political, social, cultural and economic. It does not provide a mere shopping list of facts. It interprets the facts without editorializing. The essay is well written and organized with few spelling, grammar or punctuation errors. The essay is clear, precise and succinct.

A 5-7 ESSAY offers a clear thesis with limited development. It either deals with one aspect in depth or with all aspects more superficially while providing limited analysis. Generally good writing and organization skills displayed. May contain errors of fact that do not seriously detract from the quality of the essay.

A 2-4 ESSAY lacks a thesis or presents a confused or undeveloped thesis. It deals with the prompt in a superficial way and offers no analysis. Instead, it tends to editorialize. May contain major fact errors, display poor writing skills and rely on bloated, pretentious language.

A 0-1 ESSAY displays little or no understanding of the prompt. The response is poorly written and organized and may contain significant fact, grammar, punctuation and/or spelling errors that detract from the clarity of the response.

OVERALL ESSAY SCORE (maximum of 10 points) __________

OBJECTIVE SCORE (score from the objective portion of the test) __________

OVERALL SCORE (add essay score to objective score) __________
Soldiers assigned to 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conduct air assault sling load training on Warrior Base, New Mexico Range, in the Demilitarized Zone, Republic of Korea, March 18, 2015, during joint training exercise Foal Eagle 2015.
1. What is the price of a first-class stamp used to mail a 1-ounce letter?
   a. 49¢ — an all-time high
   b. 47¢
   c. 34¢
   d. 2¢

2. The North Carolina’s attorney general said he would refuse to defend his state’s new law, HB 2, the Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act, that did what?
   a. It prohibited gay marriage.
   b. It prohibited the state from doing business with openly gay people in leadership roles.
   c. It required people to use bathrooms that correspond to the gender on their birth certificate.
   d. It required transgender people to select either male or female on all official state documentation.

3. What new development for gun enthusiasts officially made its debut early this year?
   a. The NRA unveiled marketing toward teenagers on social media — #guncool.
   b. Apple put the handgun emoji on all Apple iPhones.
   c. HTC unveiled a cell phone that looks like a gun, a crime deterrent.
   d. GunTV, the scoop on everything related to guns, launched to meet the demand for gun ownership in the United States.

4. The United States flew a nuclear-capable B-52 long-distance bomber over South Korea in January. Why?
   a. It was part of an air show in Guam. The bomber went off course.
   b. The B-52 is stationed in South Korea.
   c. It was a show of force after North Korea’s fourth nuclear test.
   d. The B-52 contains equipment to measure the aftermath of a nuclear blast.

5. Suggesting terrorist attacks in the area were imminent and placing a military base there under Force Protection Condition Delta, in late March the U.S. military ordered family members to evacuate what country due to security concerns?
   a. Syria
   b. Brussels
   c. Turkey
   d. Italy

6. In a nationwide effort to increase wages and support unions, New York and California lawmakers approved increasing the minimum wage to what?
   a. $15/hour
   b. $10.75/hour
   c. $7.25/hour
   d. $4/hour
7. Three states banned official travel to Mississippi after that state passed sweeping new laws regarding what?
   a. providing abortion services
   b. displaying the Confederate flag
   c. bathroom use by transgender individuals
   d. denying services to same-sex couples

8. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick congratulated the Texas Senate for the passage of HB910 and SB11. Senators, he said, stood up for the Second Amendment to ensure law-abiding licensed Texans have the right to what?
   a. carry a concealed handgun
   b. buy a gun at a gun show without a background check
   c. buy a gun even if they are on the government’s “no-fly” list
   d. openly carry a handgun in a belt or shoulder holster

9. Because the full melting of the ice sheet could increase sea levels by about 20 percent, scientists spent time on the ground studying one of the biggest and fastest-melting chunks of ice on earth. Where?
   a. Iceland
   b. the Arctic
   c. Russia
   d. Greenland

10. Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew announced the most sweeping and historically symbolic makeover of American currency in a century. He proposed replacing former U.S. President Andrew Jackson’s face on the $20 bill with Harriet Tubman. Who was Tubman?
   a. the secret wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis
   b. a published poet who wrote the original “I have a dream” speech
   c. nicknamed “Moses,” an African-American slave and Union spy during the Civil War
   d. a song writer who wrote “John Brown’s Body” hymn that later became known as “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”

11. Given that half are still unsold, the Brazilian government announced it would start giving away tickets for what?
   a. World Cup Soccer
   b. Super Bowl
   c. vaccines for the Zika virus
   d. the Olympics

12. According to the Environmental Integrity Project’s report, “Don’t Drink the Water” released in March, drinking water systems serving 51,000 people in several dozen rural Texas communities exceeded federal drinking water standards for what chemical?
   a. arsenic
   b. lead
   c. fluoride
   d. bromodichloromethane
13. Sean Penn met with Joaquín Guzmán Loera for a controversial Rolling Stone interview. Who is Loera?
   a. orange farmer and soft drink company owner in Mexico
   b. winner of a record three Golden Globe awards
   c. winner of the record Powerball lottery
   d. Mexican drug lord who heads Sinaloa Cartel

14. Time magazine named Angela Merkel, a physical chemist by trade and chancellor of Germany since 2005, as the Person of the Year. Which of the following is one of her significant accomplishments?
   a. building a wall to block thousands of Syrian refugees from entering Germany
   b. leading the European Union through at least two major crises including the changing value of the euro
   c. opposing targets to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions at a conference in Berlin
   d. serving 10 years as chancellor despite losing the popular vote in three elections

15. Pope Francis broke a record when he joined Instagram, gaining 1 million followers in just under 12 hours. What was the message that accompanied the photo?
   a. “Glad to join the Instagram community,” with a selfie with Instagram CEO Kevin Systrom
   c. “Pray for me” in nine languages
   d. “I am pleased to get in touch with you through Twitter. I bless all of you from my heart,” with a portrait of him holding a tablet device

16. “Diversity is the American super-power,” said Will Smith. “That’s why we are great.” The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences did not nominate Smith for an Oscar for his role in Concussion. Why was this significant?
   a. He was going to boycott the Oscars in protest, the first actor to do so.
   b. No minority actors were nominated for a second consecutive year.
   c. He hadn’t voted and lost his voting privileges as did many minority members of the Academy.
   d. His movie ranked sixth, but only five movies made the cut calling for a push to allow more finalists.

17. Trying to provide service for the first time in decades, both American Airlines and Southwest Airlines submitted competitive applications to provide commercial service to where?
   a. Rio de Janeiro, for the Olympics
   b. Havana, Cuba, to open trade
   c. Pyongyang, North Korea, to open trade
   d. Malaysia, after finding crashed Boeing 777

18. Zika is a virus transmitted by mosquitoes. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced in February that a patient in Texas was the first known case of the virus being acquired how?
   a. water droplets (coughing)
   b. sexual transmission
   c. blood (through cuts or other breaks in the skin)
   d. water contamination
19. Harper Lee was known for her story of justice and race in a small Southern town that became a classic of American literature. She died in February. What was the title of the book?
   a. *Gone with the Wind*
   b. *To Kill a Mockingbird*
   c. *Huckleberry Finn*
   d. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

20. For the rest of the year, pre-K – fifth grade students in Dallas ISD schools will get at least 20 minutes of recess. Trustees noted that at 78 percent of schools, students were getting less than 15 minutes of recess. Why did trustees take this action?
   a. Recess improves social and emotional health.
   b. Students were routinely losing recess for discipline purposes meaning they got on average, even less.
   c. It meant teachers got more of a break.
   d. They spent $645 million building playgrounds and wanted them used.

21. For the first time ever, *Sports Illustrated* released three covers for its annual swimsuit issue. Why?
   a. to partner with a swimsuit maker
   b. to display racial diversity
   c. to celebrate different body types
   d. to show older women

22. “It is the most urgent thing facing our species,” Leonardo DiCaprio said. “It is the most urgent crisis facing our civilization.” When DiCaprio accepted his Oscar for *The Revenant*, a film about survival in the uncharted wilderness, what did he talk about in his acceptance speech?
   a. racism
   b. overpopulation
   c. climate change
   d. declining species diversification

23. The Author’s Guild has been in a 10-year battle with Google. However, the Supreme Court, in declining to hear *Authors Guild, Inc. v. Google, Inc.*, basically settled what question of internet law?
   a. Scanning of books is “fair use.”
   b. Google’s Book Club can serve as a digital Library of Congress, a complete repository of all published materials.
   c. The copyright law is unconstitutional.
   d. Google serves the “greater good” by making research texts — but not books such as plays and novels — available.

24. Appearing together in an extraordinary news conference, U.S. President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro hailed the visit as a new step in normalizing relations. However, Castro said relations would never be fully normal until which of the following was accomplished?
   a. The U.S. removes the embargo against Cuba.
   b. The U.S. releases the prisoners illegally held at Guantanamo Bay.
   c. The U.S. Congress make Cuba a territory, like Puerto Rico.
   d. The U.S. removes all Navy ships from Cuban territorial waters.
25. The Supreme Court refused in April to block Texas’ photo ID law, the strictest in the nation. What action did the Supreme Court take?
   a. The justices announced they would consider the case this summer after the spring election season is over and would rule before the primary election.
   b. The high court voted 8-0 to block the photo ID law, overturning the appeals court decision.
   c. The justices refused to hear the emergency motion but said if the appeals court has not ruled by the end of July, the case could return to the Supreme Court.
   d. The court ruled that the law discriminates against black and Hispanic voters and is unconstitutional, leaving it up to the Texas legislature to write a new law.

26. The name Czech Republic was too ungainly. So the Czech foreign ministry came up with a new name for that country. What was it?
   a. Kingdom of Bohemia
   b. Czechoslovakia
   c. Serbia
   d. Czechia

27. While they were being detained, their captors told 10 U.S. Navy sailors to “act happy.” Soldiers from what country detained them and why?
   a. Afghanistan, impersonating soldiers from that country
   b. Iran, crossing territorial waters without permission
   c. Saudi Arabia, escorting tanker illegally exporting oil
   d. Somalia, looking like pirates and failing to display American flag

28. Speaking at the United Nations, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he will, next year, introduce legislation to legalize what?
   a. assisted suicide
   b. Syrian refugees
   c. Keystone Pipeline
   d. marijuana

29. Want to join the University of Northern New Jersey student body? Too late. Why?
   a. It went out of business, forcing current students to begin litigation to get their tuition money back.
   b. It was an online university and announced that paradigm “just didn’t work.”
   c. It was a fake university, created to catch foreign students who illegally extend their visas.
   d. Officials put admissions on hold after being sued for discrimination during the admissions process.

30. Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe signed an executive order restoring the voting rights of 206,000 members of what group?
   a. immigrants who are not yet citizens but who are legally employed
   b. ex-felons no longer on parole
   c. active-duty military serving in Virginia but who were legal residents of other states
   d. students who are paying rent in the state and who have paid rent for at least a year

31. Ending an extraordinary period of government intervention in the financial markets that started at the height of the recession, Janet Yellen announced in the fall that interest rates would do what?
   a. Rates would return to 5.25 percent.
   b. Rates would match inflation, 2.4 percent.
   c. Rates would rise about 0.25 percent.
   d. Rates would match unemployment, 5 percent.
32. Less than two weeks before the Iowa caucus Donald Trump picked up an endorsement from a former vice presidential candidate. Who?
   a. Joe Biden, long-term senator from Delaware
   b. Sarah Palin, a former governor of Alaska who didn’t complete her first term in office
   c. Dan Quayle, senator from Indiana
   d. Geraldine Ferraro, representative from New York

33. A high school cheerleading squad in East Texas will be allowed to continue their lawsuit, the Texas Supreme Court announced earlier this year. Despite objections from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, what have the students in the Kountze Independent School District been fighting for?
   a. the ability to boycott prayers led by coaches before and during games
   b. the ability to wear armbands and T-shirts with religious references
   c. the ability to have a benediction at graduation
   d. the ability to wave religious banners and cite Bible verses at football games

34. The reporter asked said, “Would you ransack his room now?” Sue Klebold responded. “I would. I’d do it as if his very life was depending on it. And I would do it with love.” Klebold broke her 17-year silence saying she has been wracked with pain and guilt since her son, Dylan, did what?
   a. killed 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech University
   b. killed 12 students and a teacher in Columbine
   c. killed 14 people and wounded 32 others at the University of Texas at Austin
   d. fled to Mexico with his mom, a violation of his probation

35. The record profits at U.S. airlines in recent quarters have been largely attributed to what?
   a. lower fuel prices
   b. record number of cancellations
   c. increasing fares
   d. packed flights with few empty seats

36. The Justice Department postponed a court hearing with Apple about the San Bernardino shooter’s iPhone. Why?
   a. The Supreme Court intervened.
   b. The FBI obtained code from Apple that allowed agents into the phone.
   c. Microsoft, Apple and Google all joined together to release open-source hacks into common phones.
   d. Government officials found another way to retrieve the phone’s data.

37. In a step that it said would help ease an epidemic of abuse in the United States, the Food and Drug Administration said in March it was requiring new warning labels for what?
   a. immediate-release opioid painkillers
   b. over-the-counter narcotics
   c. trans-fat processed foods
   d. powdered gloves
38. Which Republican candidate later apologized if he offended anyone for an earlier statement that women “left their kitchens” to support him when he ran for his state’s governor?
   a. Donald Trump
   b. Marco Rubio
   c. Jeb Bush
   d. John Kasich

39. Every inch of Texas highway signs is regulated, including the font. So, it was a big deal in 2004 when Texas switched fonts. Now the Federal Highway Administration is forcing Texas to switch back to the Standard Highway Alphabet. What font was Texas experimenting with?
   a. Clearview
   b. Arial
   c. Helvetica
   d. Interstate

40. After his government was criticized for corruption and graft, and the country’s president was implicated in the Panama Papers leak, what country’s prime minister, nicknamed “Rabbit” resigned?
   a. Sigmundur Gunnlaugsson, Iceland
   b. David Cameron, Britain
   c. Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Ukraine
   d. Silvio Berlusconi, Italy

ESSAY PROMPT

The assassination of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie set off a rapid chain of events leading to World War I and, supposedly, settling the question of Slavic nationalism once and for all. A series of smaller skirmishes led to one of the deadliest conflicts in history with more than 9 million combatants and 7 million civilians killed as a result of the war.

A few decades later the most widespread war in history, World War II, directly involved more than 30 countries. It too began with a series of smaller incidents including the invasion of Poland by Germany and invasion of China by Japan.

Pope Francis said the terrorist attacks in Paris last year were part of a piecemeal World War III. What evidence might support the pope’s idea that the United States is already embroiled in World War III but is a long way from declaring it?

NOTE: Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and doesn’t ramble. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.
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DISCUSSION POINTS

could include but should not be limited to...

• Commemorating the centenary of World War I, Pope Francis described a vision of World War III: “Even today, after the second failure of another world war, perhaps one can speak of a third war, one fought piecemeal, with crimes, massacres, destruction.” The pope has repeatedly called for an end to conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Gaza, Ukraine and parts of Africa.

• In November, Turkish forces shot down a Russian plane near the Turkish-Syrian border, dangerously escalating a conflict that is expanding ever more rapidly and unpredictably. As CNN reported, “If this had occurred during the Cold War, we would be bracing for the possibility of a nuclear war.” Russian President Vladimir Putin called for an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council while NATO summoned its own emergency meeting illustrating the severity of that situation.

• In Paris, also in November, a gunmen and suicide bombers hit a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars, almost simultaneously and left 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. The attacks were described by French President Francois Hollande as an “act of war” organized by the Islamic State group.

• Three suicide bombers killed more than 30 people and injured dozens in attacks at Brussels international airport and a city metro station in March. The bombings were the deadliest act of terrorism in Belgium’s history. The airport remained closed for almost two weeks, showing how such attacks can disrupt everyday life. Brussels airport officials told passengers to arrive three hours before their flights to allow time for increased security checks.

• The Syrian conflict, which turned deadly in 2011 when President Bashar al-Assad responded to calls for democracy by massacring protesters. It continues to rage with the sectarian fury of Shiites against Sunnis and Arabs against Iranians. Similarly, Lebanon’s Hezbollah, backed by Iran, fights against militias backed by Gulf Arabs. Russia wants Assad to stay in power. Turkey wants Assad to fall.

• Russia is working to erode America’s standing in the Middle East, advancing Putin’s agenda of challenging and defying Washington some say as a leftover Cold War power struggle that Putin says brought down Russia as a world power.

• As CNN reporter Timothy Stanley said last fall, “We (the United States) are effectively at war with ISIS right now. A U.S.-led coalition has been bombing targets in Syria and Iraq for over a year; and in recent months Russia has been doing the same.” ISIS seeks to create a geographic space within which to build a caliphate. They train warriors who travel around the world to “create havoc,” obsessed with recreating Islam in its earliest form. ISIS’ own terrorist propaganda has broadcast the murder of Americans, Britons, Egyptians, Japanese, Koreans, Chinese and civilians of other nationalities.

• North Korea warned it would make a “preemptive and offensive nuclear strike” in response to joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises in March, continuing the posturing by Kim Jong-un. In February, Pyongyang said it had successfully launched an Earth satellite into orbit via the long-range Kwangmyongsong carrier rocket. North Korea claimed to have successfully tested a hydrogen bomb in January, its fourth nuclear test.