

Example 12:

### Pregnant man is expecting baby in July

March 27, 2009  
The ADVOCATE

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Example 17: Deconstruct this story, using the Guide

### College Costs Keep Rising, Report Says

By TAMAR

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Patrick Calla  
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Example 13:

### Bronx Zoo Cobra Found Alive

By ELISSA GOETTMAN and CORIE ALBERGONE



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The cobra was found in a cage at the  
Zoo on Thursday. It was the first time  
since 1979 that a cobra has been found  
alive in the Bronx Zoo's Reptile House.  
The cobra was found in a cage at the  
Zoo on Thursday. It was the first time  
since 1979 that a cobra has been found  
alive in the Bronx Zoo's Reptile House.

by all of the light-heartedness" amid  
Asked what sort of danger the snake  
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investigated how the snake escaped a  
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conducted sweeping searches.  
News of the Egyptian cobra's captur  
became a trending topic, and many s  
@BronxZooCobra — who has rem  
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Breheny... Maybe we'll do some s

Are the key questions answered? Why?

Example 4:

### Radiation level falls at Japan Fukushima plant: agency



(Reuters) - The level of radiation detected at the Tokyo Electric Power Co Fukushima plant has fallen steadily over the past 12 hours, an official at Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency said on Thursday.  
A level of 152 microsieverts per hour was recorded at the plant's main gate at 5 p.m. (2000 GMT) on Thursday, down from 170 at 11 a.m. The reading was 338 microsieverts per hour. That level was still much higher than it should be, but was not dangerous, and that by comparison the top of a level of 400 was normal from being outside over the course of a year, Ohmura said.  
(Reporting by Terril Jones)

CENTER  
FOR NEWS  
LITERACY

# DECONSTRUCTION WORKBOOK

Find an example of direct evidence and circle it.  
Characterize Tetsuo Ohmura as a source using T.M.Y.A.N.  
How reliable is this report? Why?

Over the coming weeks, you'll use this workbook - stocked with examples from actual news reports- to practice "Deconstruction," which is a methodical series of steps by which you apply News Literacy concepts to the analysis of component parts of a news report. This means you have to read all these stories ahead of time.

The Deconstruction steps are in a chart on the back page of this workbook.

*Reminder: Examples in this workbook are drawn from actual news reports, but some have been shortened or altered from the original to suit the purposes of News Literacy exercises.*

**Example 1: Is the headline supported by the story?**

**Assaults Plague Campus**

On October 17, 2006, Peter Baigent, the Vice President of Student Affairs sent an e-mail to the entire university informing students, staff and faculty of the recent sexual assault of two female students.

According to Douglas Little, Assistant Chief of the Stony Brook Police Department, the two men allegedly involved with the assault are known to the police. Little commented, "Both the Suffolk County police and Stony Brook Police departments are working on the case together."

When asked about the safety of the campus community with respect to this recent incident, Little mentioned, "There is no threat to the campus community." However, upon further questioning, Little did continue on to say that the campus community should remain vigilant when considering these types of crimes.

Little reported, "Sexual assault is a very underreported crime." He continued, "The [two] women were very courageous, and the university has given them 100% support." Little was unable to provide any information about the location of the attack on campus because of possible violations of the privacy of the two female students.

Aside from this recent incident, students also have the ability to become involved with the pro-active measures set in place by the university to minimize the occurrence of such attacks.

*- Is this headline adequately supported in this story? Point to specifics in the story*

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**Example 2: Is the opening anecdote the main point? Where's the "Lead"**

## The Washington Post

### Win or lose, Paul Ryan is likely to have a big role in GOP's future

By **Felicia Sonmez** and **Karen Tumulty**, Published: October 13

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio — As GOP vice-presidential nominee Paul Ryan stumps across battleground states, conservatives flock to see him — and not just because they believe that he and his running mate are on the verge of booting Barack Obama out of the White House.

For people such as Joy Chickonoski, it is also because they believe that, win or lose, the 42-year-old Wisconsin congressman offers a glimpse of the Republican future.

Whether next January finds Ryan moving into the vice president's residence at the Naval Observatory or back sleeping in his office on Capitol Hill, "he needs to continue to do what he does best and just trust that his gifts will make room for him, where he needs to be," said Chickonoski, a pastor from the nearby town of Poland who came to see Ryan on Saturday at Youngstown State University.

Lately, Mitt Romney's campaign has decided that Ryan needs to be at center stage. That is partly to take advantage of the buzz around [Thursday's vice-presidential debate](#) and partly to [quiet the grumbling](#) among Republicans that Ryan had all but disappeared from the national conversation after the GOP convention.

In doing so, the campaign is also drawing attention to the unique role that Ryan plays in the modern conservative movement. He is a signpost to its future, many believe, regardless of what happens on Election Day.

Although it may not have altered the course of the presidential race, Ryan's steady, stumble-free debate performance against an incumbent vice president 27 years his senior enhanced his stature. (story is cut off here)

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*Find the headline and the "lead." Do they support the main point of the story?*

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**Example 3:**

Link to the audio: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/21/nyregion/21immigrant.html>

## **An Agent, a Green Card, and a Demand for Sex**

By NINA BERNSTEIN (New York Times)

No problems so far, the immigration agent told the American citizen and his 22-year-old Colombian wife at her green card interview in December. After he stapled one of their wedding photos to her application for legal permanent residency, he had just one more question: What was her cellphone number?

The calls from the agent started three days later. He hinted, she said, at his power to derail her life and deport her relatives, alluding to a brush she had with the law before her marriage. He summoned her to a private meeting. And at noon on Dec. 21, in a parked car on Queens Boulevard, he named his price — not realizing that she was recording everything on the cellphone in her purse.

“I want sex,” he said on the recording. “One or two times. That’s all. You get your green card. You won’t have to see me anymore.”

She reluctantly agreed to a future meeting. But when she tried to leave his car, he demanded oral sex “now,” to “know that you’re serious.” And despite her protests, she said, he got his way.

The 16-minute recording, which the woman first took to The New York Times and then to the Queens district attorney, suggests the vast power of low-level immigration law enforcers, and a growing desperation on the part of immigrants seeking legal status. The aftermath, which included the arrest of an immigration agent last week, underscores the difficulty and danger of making a complaint, even in the rare case when abuse of power may have been caught on tape.

No one knows how widespread sexual blackmail is, but the case echoes other instances of sexual coercion that have surfaced in recent years, including agents criminally charged in Atlanta, Miami and Santa Ana, Calif. And it raises broader questions about the system’s vulnerability to corruption at a time when millions of noncitizens live in a kind of legal no-man’s land, increasingly fearful of seeking the law’s protection.

*A lead (pronounced “leed”) is a sentence or two near the top of a news article. An effective lead catches the reader’s attention honestly and makes them want to keep reading. It doesn’t need to summarize the entire story, but it should convey the main point. Usually it’s the first sentence. Occasionall, a reporter will not lead with the main point and instead starts with some scene-setting or an anecdote as in this case. When that happens, the “lead” may come later in the stoy, but it still tells you what the main point is.*

*- Find the lead and circle it.*

*-In this story, circle examples of direct and indirect evidence*

*-Find an example of context. Circle it.*

*-How close does the reporter come to opening the freezer? Explain*

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**Example 4: Examine the evidence, the conclusions**NYDailyNews.com  
**DAILY NEWS**

## Gillibrand on short list for 2016 presidential contenders

By **KENNETH LOVETT** Sunday, October 14, 2012

ALBANY — She doesn't get the same buzz as fellow New Yorkers Hillary Clinton and Gov. Cuomo, but Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand suddenly has turned up on the short list of potential presidential candidates from New York.

She set tongues wagging about her future at last month's Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., with an address to delegates from Iowa, an early proving ground in every presidential race.

Gillibrand also has been quietly helping Democratic candidates across America by raising money for them and donating to their campaigns through two political action committees she created.

Taken together, the moves are raising her profile nationally — and generating IOUs that she could cash in to support her own political ambitions one day.

But just what are those ambitions?

National and state Democrats acknowledge murmurs that Gillibrand might be interested in a 2016 presidential run — though many note she wouldn't even be the first choice in her own state, where insiders obsess about the potential candidacies of Clinton and Cuomo.

"I've heard her name come up from time to time," said Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia.

"But I think she's dead third on a list of Democratic New Yorkers for a presidential nomination. If the other two don't run, maybe that's how she gets her shot."

At a minimum, Gillibrand's higher profile and expanded influence could make her a more powerful player in the Senate.

Gillibrand insists she will not run for President in 2016 and hopes Clinton gets in the race. She has vowed to serve her full six-year term if she beats heavy underdog GOP challenger Wendy Long next month.

Gillibrand was a telegenic but little-known congresswoman from upstate when she was picked by then-Gov. David Paterson to fill the seat left vacant when Clinton — one of her mentors — resigned to become secretary of state.

*Find an example of direct evidence and circle it.*

*Find any inference(s) and circle.*

*Characterize Larry Sabato as a source using I'M*

*VAIN* \_\_\_\_\_

*What weight do you give his statements? Why?*



**Example 5: Correlation is Causation?****Crime Blotter Has a Regular: Yankees Caps**

By MANNY FERNANDEZ

Published: September 15, 2010

...A curious phenomenon has emerged at the intersection of fashion, sports and crime: dozens of men and women who have robbed, beaten, stabbed and shot at their fellow New Yorkers have done so while wearing Yankees caps or clothing.

Yankees caps and clothing have dominated the crime blotter for so long, in so many parts of the city and in so many types of offenses, that it defies an easy explanation.

Criminologists, sports marketing analysts, consumer psychologists and Yankees fans have developed their own theories, with some attributing the trend to the popularity of the caps among gangsta rappers and others wondering whether criminals are identifying with the team's aura of money, power and success.

Since 2000, more than 100 people who have been suspects or persons of interest in connection with serious crimes in New York City wore Yankees apparel at the time of the crimes or at the time of their arrest or arraignment. The tally is based on a review of New York Police Department news releases, surveillance video and images of robberies and other crimes, as well as police sketches and newspaper articles that described suspects' clothing. No other sports team comes close.

One criminologist said the trend might be a result of what could be called the Jay-Z effect.

The rapper Jay-Z has worn a Yankees cap for years — on his album covers and in his videos — and has helped turn the cap into a ubiquitous fashion accessory for urban youths (“I made the Yankee hat more famous than a Yankee can,” he boasts in one song).

It is but one of several theories. Sports marketing analysts say it is a matter of numbers: the Yankees sell more merchandise than any other baseball team. As of August, they hold a 25.13 percent market share of nationwide sales of merchandise licensed by Major League Baseball, with the Red Sox second at 7.96 percent and the Mets seventh at 5.32 percent, according to SportsOneSource, a firm that tracks the sporting goods industry.

For criminals outside New York, the team's caps and clothing are nearly as popular.

The man who robbed a Chase branch in a Chicago suburb in May wore a Yankees cap. In July, a young man in a Yankees cap assaulted an 81-year-old woman in her home, about 2,800 miles from Yankee Stadium, in Seattle.

“Why people pick the Yankees over the Mariners, I don't know,” said Detective Mark Jamieson, a Seattle police spokesman. “It just happened to be an article of clothing he was wearing on that particular day.”

Find an example of direct evidence and of indirect evidence and circle it.

- In what way does this reporter (and people commenting in the story) use inference: the process of combining clues with observations to come up with a hypothesis that might logically explain a pattern or might connect the wrong sets of causes and effects?

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**Example 6: What is the evidence, what is the inference, is it sound?****Pulling all-nighters earns lower GPAs**

By Michael Virtanen, Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — Students who rely on all-nighters to bring up their grades might want to sleep on that strategy: A new survey says those who never study all night have slightly higher GPAs than those who do.

A survey of 120 students at St. Lawrence University, a small liberal arts college in northern New York, found that students who have never pulled an all-nighter have average GPAs of 3.1, compared to 2.9 for those who have.

The study, by assistant professor of psychology Pamela Thacher, is to be included in the January issue of [Behavioral Sleep Medicine](#).

"It's not a big difference, but it's pretty striking," Thacher said. "I am primarily a sleep researcher and I know nobody thinks clearly at 4 in the morning. You think you do, but you can't."

A second study by Thacher, a clinical psychologist, had "extremely similar" results showing lower grades among the sleep skippers. Many college students, of course, have inadequate or irregular sleep, for reasons ranging from excessive caffeine to poor time management.

Prav Chatani, a St. Lawrence sophomore who wasn't involved in either study, said the findings made sense.

The neuroscience major has been pulling fewer all-nighters, but recently stayed up until "around 4 or 5 in the morning" to prepare for an organic chemistry test and a neuroscience presentation, he said.

He found himself unable to remember some of the things he had studied.

"A lot of students were under the impression all-nighters were a very useful tool for accomplishing work, that caffeine intake was very useful in meeting deadlines and stuff like that," said Chatani, who had a 3.4 GPA last semester and doesn't expect to do too badly this semester, either. Dr. Howard Weiss, a physician at St. Peter's Sleep Center in Albany, said the study results make sense.

"Certainly that data is out there showing that short sleep duration absolutely interferes with concentration, interferes with performance on objective testing," he said.

*Find an example of inference and circle it. What conclusion could replace the inference? Is it provided? What is the common logical fallacy demonstrated in this story?*

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**Example 7: Transparency example****Scott Brown quietly returned Travelers Insurance money before launching attacks on Elizabeth Warren**

By Noah Bierman, Globe Staff

Senator Scott Brown, who has criticized Elizabeth Warren over her work on behalf of Travelers Insurance, quietly returned \$7,000 to the company's political action committee last month, according to newly released campaign finance records.

The campaign returned the money on Sept. 10, 10 days before Brown began a concerted effort to attack Warren over her work on behalf of the company, during the candidates' first debate. Brown, a Republican, has since launched advertisements about the case that claim that Warren, a Democrat, was working against the interest of asbestos victims. Warren, a Harvard bankruptcy specialist, was paid \$212,000 by Travelers from 2008 to 2010, helping Travelers in a Supreme Court case in which it was trying to win immunity from asbestos-related cases in exchange for a \$500 million settlement, to be divided among current and future claimants.

Travelers won the immunity. But after a series of legal twists, the company avoided paying the \$500 million settlement. Warren was no longer involved at that point, but Brown argues she should have foreseen that potential result.

Though some victims opposed the settlement, most were on Warren's side when she worked on the Supreme Court case. The biggest opponent of the settlement was Chubb Insurance, which was concerned that immunity for Travelers would prevent Travelers from sharing liability with Chubb in the event Chubb was sued by asbestos victims. Records show that Chubb's PAC donated at least \$4,500 to Brown over the past two years. A Chubb employee also donated \$250 to Warren, records show.

Records also show Brown has received \$6,000 in contributions from Dow Chemical Company Employees PAC over the past two years. The Senator has also criticized Warren's legal work for Dow in the 1990s.

Brown's campaign did not immediately respond to questions about the returned Travelers PAC donation or the Chubb donation.

*What is asserted?* \_\_\_\_\_

*What kind of evidence is used to verify Brown's actions?*

\_\_\_\_\_



Example 8: Context gives facts more meaning

## Massachusetts Senate Race



### Gives New Meaning to Gender Politics



by Curt Nikisch

National Public Radio

Despite its liberal reputation, the home of Jack Kennedy and Tip O'Neill has never elected a woman as governor or senator.

And in Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown's tight re-election race with Democratic challenger Elizabeth Warren, gender could prove the difference.

When Brown won his Senate seat in a special election in 2010, he came away unscathed by

something his female opponent at the time would have had a much harder time explaining away. He posed nude for *Cosmopolitan* when he was 22 to help pay for law school.

About a year ago, Warren, who also went to law school and is now a Harvard Law professor, was asked how she financed her college education. She quipped: "I kept my clothes on!"

Days later, in an interview with Boston radio station WZLX, Brown had this response to Warren's comment: "Thank God."

That struck a nerve among women in the state.

They have seen Massachusetts consistently vote down women running for high political office. Neighboring New Hampshire is currently served by two women U.S. senators. Maine has two, as well. Connecticut has elected multiple women governors. But in Kennedy Country? Never.

Carol Hardy-Fanta of the University of Massachusetts says the state has an especially long tradition of politics as the path to wealth and influence.

"They say politics is a blood sport here — and it is everywhere, I mean, everybody wants power — but men are never going to give this up without a really big fight," she says.

Massachusetts is the lone state that tilted for dove George McGovern for president in 1972. It was the first state to legalize same-sex marriage. But Victoria Budson of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government says it's not as liberal as people might think. "Massachusetts was founded by the Puritans," she says, "and some of that sense of Puritan propriety and norms and expected sets of behaviors has remained."

Warren has a shot at breaking some of those norms. In recent polls, she came out ahead of Brown among likely female voters.

Other voters, like Michelle Burrell, say gender does matter.

"Boston is full of majority men ... not ruling, but running the town. We need more women in the world putting a mark on this town," Burrell says.

*Find an example of context and circle it.*

*How does the context help you make sense of other information in this*

*report?*

**Example 9: Deconstruct this story (Which has been heavily cut to fit)**

## **Attack Ads, by Outside Groups With Murky Ties Shape 3 New York Senate Races**

*The New York Times*

By THOMAS KAPLAN

In Westchester County, a television advertisement accused a Democrat running for the State Senate of using campaign money to treat himself to fancy dinners. In Rochester, a commercial branded a Republican candidate as anti-women. And in Queens, a mailer attacked a Democratic incumbent for providing taxpayer money to a nonprofit organization that facilitates parrot adoptions.

The searing advertisements have one thing in common: they were financed by independent groups, not political campaigns.

As both parties battle for control of the State Senate, the most forceful attack advertisements have been concentrated in a handful of races that will determine who controls the chamber — and, increasingly, they are being drawn up by outside groups, including some not even in New York State.

The advertisements financed by independent groups are infuriating candidates and government reformers alike. “It gives the race a negative vibe, and it’s unfortunate,” said Alexander Blenkinsopp, a graduate student and member of Community Board 9 in Queens.

The independent spending also highlights New York State’s notoriously lax campaign-finance laws, which in many instances do not require groups that run attack ads to reveal anything about themselves. The average voter would be hard-pressed to identify who is behind many of the advertisements and mailers financed by third-party groups.

For instance, a commercial that attacks the Republican candidate in the Rochester Senate race, Assemblyman Sean T. Hanna, discloses only that it was paid for by an entity called the “VOTE/COPE Committee.” A viewer could be forgiven for not recognizing that entity as the political arm of the statewide teachers’ union. Another group financing television commercials is the Republican State Leadership Committee, an organization based in Washington that seeks to elect Republicans to state-level offices. The group has spent more than \$1.3 million in New York since the beginning of September, an outlay that has included television commercials that attempt to tie Mr. Hanna’s opponent, Ted O’Brien, a Democratic county legislator, to a judge accused of sexual harassment.

Perhaps the most mysterious advertisements have come from a group based outside Richmond, Va., which calls itself Common Sense and has produced a blizzard of mailers attacking Democratic candidates in the three Senate districts.

One displayed a “Missing” poster bearing the face of Assemblyman George S. Latimer, the Democrat running for the Senate seat in Westchester, and criticized him for skipping votes in the Legislature “You don’t need to hire a team of campaign-finance lawyers to figure out how to evade disclosure under the Board of Elections regulation,” said Adam Skaggs, a senior counsel for the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law. “It’s as simple as pie. And all you do is leave out the ‘vote for’ or ‘vote against.’ ”

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*Evaluate the sources, using IM VAIN*

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*What could you conclude from this story about the transparency of election spending reports?*

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**Example 10:****Experts Had Long Criticized Potential Weakness in Design of Stricken Reactor**

By TOM ZELLER JR.

Published: March 15, 2011

The warnings were stark and issued repeatedly as far back as 1972: If the cooling systems ever failed at a “Mark 1” nuclear reactor, the primary containment vessel surrounding the reactor would probably burst as the fuel rods inside overheated. Dangerous radiation would spew into the environment.

Now, with one Mark 1 containment vessel **damaged** at the embattled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant and other vessels there under severe strain, the weaknesses of the design — developed in the 1960s by General Electric — could be contributing to the unfolding catastrophe.

When the ability to cool a reactor is **compromised**, the containment vessel is the last line of defense. Typically made of steel and concrete, it is designed to prevent — for a time — melting fuel rods from spewing radiation into the environment if cooling efforts completely fail.

In some reactors, known as pressurized water reactors, the system is sealed inside a thick steel-and-cement tomb. Most nuclear reactors around the world are of this type.

But the type of containment vessel and pressure suppression system used in the failing reactors at **Japan’s** Fukushima Daiichi plant is physically less robust, and it has long been thought to be more susceptible to failure in an emergency than competing designs. In the United States, 23 reactors at 16 locations use the Mark 1 design, including the Oyster Creek plant in central New Jersey, the Dresden plant near Chicago and the Monticello plant near Minneapolis.

In 1972, Stephen H. Hanauer, then a safety official with the Atomic Energy Commission, **recommended** that the Mark 1 system be discontinued because it presented unacceptable safety risks...(and) was more susceptible to explosion and rupture from a buildup in hydrogen — a situation that may have unfolded at the Fukushima Daiichi plant. Later that same year, Joseph Hendrie, who would later become chairman of the **Nuclear Regulatory Commission**, a successor agency to the atomic commission, **said the idea of a ban on such systems was attractive**. But the technology had been so widely accepted by the industry and regulatory officials, he said, that “reversal of this hallowed policy, particularly at this time, could well be the end of nuclear power.”

In an e-mail on Tuesday, David Lochbaum, director of the Nuclear Safety Program at the Union for Concerned Scientists, said those words seemed ironic now, given the potential global ripples from the Japanese accident.

“Not banning them might be the end of nuclear power,” said Mr. Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer who spent 17 years working in nuclear facilities, including three that used the G.E. design.

Michael Tetuan, a spokesman for G.E.’s water and power division, staunchly defended the technology this week, calling it “the industry’s workhorse with a proven track record of safety and reliability for more than 40 years.”

Mr. Tetuan said there are currently 32 Mark 1 boiling-water reactors operating safely around the globe. “There has never been a breach of a Mark 1 containment system,” he said.

*Using IM VAIN analysis, rate Lochbaum, Tetuan, the Union of Concerned Scientists and Hendrie?*

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*Does this reporter make his work transparent? Where?(circle it)*

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*Identify an example of context and circle it. If it were not included, how would that change your understanding of the situation?*

**Example 11: Assertion vs. Verification**

## Inside Obama's (Tiny) Caymans Investment

By Michael R. Crittenden

President Barack Obama's pension from his days as an Illinois legislator made an unexpected cameo appearance, in disguise, at Tuesday night's debate.

In response to Mitt Romney's pledges to get tough on China, Mr. Obama attacked the GOP nominee over his personal investments in Chinese companies. The president also cited news reports that Mr. Romney's company – presumably Bain Capital – “invested in what were called pioneers of outsourcing.”

“Governor, you're the last person who's going to get tough on China,” Mr. Obama said.

Mr. Romney, apparently ready for this line of attack, said his investments were in a “blind trust,” and twice asked Mr. Obama if he had looked at his own pension.

“You also have investments in Chinese companies,” Mr. Romney told Mr. Obama. “You also have investments outside the United States. You also have investments through a Caymans trust.”

The Romney campaign said afterward that the GOP nominee was referring to Mr. Obama's Illinois pension, which the president in his ethics filings has valued at between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

The Illinois State Board of Investment's 2011 annual report said it had 19% of its \$11.5 billion invested outside the U.S., including holdings in many Chinese companies.

To back up the candidate's assertion about the Cayman Islands, the Romney campaign pointed to a \$17 million investment by the Illinois fund in a Caymans-registered partnership — the equivalent of 0.15% of the fund's total holdings.

The Romney campaign said the comparison between the Illinois pension and Mr. Romney's estimated \$190 million to \$250 million portfolio was justified.

*Is Gov. Romney's rebuttal, that Obama has off-shore investments, verified or is it an assertion? Explain*

*Does the reporter make his work transparent? Explain*

**Example 12: Is Thomas Beattie Pregnant or not?**

**Pregnant man is expecting baby in July**

March 27, 2008

The ADVOCATE Magazine



By COMBINED NEWS SERVICE

An Oregon transgendered man who used to be a woman says he is five-months pregnant..

Thomas Beattie, who's expecting a girl, tells his story in a first-person account published in "The Advocate" magazine. Beattie is legally a male and lives with his wife, Nancy. He claims to have stopped taking his testosterone injections to

get pregnant, and that conception was achieved through home insemination. "Sterilization is not a requirement for sex reassignment, so I decided to have chest reconstruction and testosterone therapy but kept my reproductive rights," he writes in the article for the gay and lesbian magazine. "How does it feel to be a pregnant man? Incredible," he adds. "Despite the fact that my belly is growing with a new life inside me, I am stable and confident being the man that I am." Beattie is expected to give birth in July.

*How many sources are used?*

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*Are they reliable? Why or why not?*

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*Does the reporter place the story in context?*

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*What is missing from this story?*

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**Example 13: A simple deconstruction**

Police found a "viable" explosive device at a Long Island Home Depot on Monday afternoon, a law enforcement source told Fox News.

Management evacuated the store on Tuesday when an employee found the device, which was accompanied by a note demanding \$2 million or else more bombs would be placed in stores on Black Friday, a source said.

Cops put the device into a containment device and detonated it, a source said. Suffolk County Police confirmed that cops "rendered it safe." Police then sent the remnants to the FBI for analysis.

Home Depot issued a statement saying: "[W]e are cooperating with authorities on their investigation. The safety of our customers and associates is certainly of the utmost importance to us."

Investigators are checking if a disgruntled former employee might be involved.

*How reliable are the sources, based on an IMVAIN analysis?*

*Does the reporter open the freezer?*

*What can you conclude from this report?*



**Example 14: Deconstruct this story using all steps of the guide**

## College Costs Keep Rising, Report Says

By TAMAR LEWIN

*The New York Times*

The price of a college education rose substantially last year, despite a 2.1 percent decline in the [Consumer Price Index](#) from July 2008 to July 2009.

Hit hard by state budget cuts, four-year public colleges raised tuition and fees by an average of 6.5 percent last year. Prices at private colleges rose 4.4 percent, according to a [report](#) issued Tuesday by the [College Board](#).

Patrick Callan, president of the [National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education](#), called the increases “hugely disappointing.”

“Given the financial hardship of the country, it’s simply astonishing that colleges and universities would have this kind of increases,” Mr. Callan said. “It tells you that higher education is still a seller’s market. The level of debt we’re asking people to undertake is unsustainable.

“A lot of people think we can solve the problem with more financial aid, but I think we have to have some cost containment. For all the talk about reinventing higher education, I don’t see any results.”

With room and board, the average total cost of attendance at a public four-year college is now \$15,213, the report found. At private nonprofit colleges, which enroll about one in five college students nationally, the average total cost of attendance is now \$35,636.

Over the last 30 years, college costs have risen steadily, especially at four-year public universities, once considered the affordable route to higher education. At such universities, the last decade’s increases, adjusted for inflation, have been the steepest.

At private universities and public two-year institutions, the rate of increase has slowed over the last decade. The 4.4 percent rise in tuition at private colleges last year, for example, was smaller than in past years, when it has been about 6 percent.

In releasing the figures, the College Board, a membership organization made up of schools, colleges, universities and education organizations, put a bright face on the issue. Sandy Baum, the senior policy analyst who wrote the report, “Trends in College Pricing 2009,” said the findings were not as bad as they might have been, since in times of recession, tuition increases are often “really, really steep.”

Ms. Baum emphasized that it was important for families to understand that only about a third of students pay the published tuition, or sticker price. Most pay a lower net cost because they get some kind of assistance, whether in the form of a scholarship from the university, a federal Pell grant or state aid.

Nonetheless, Ms. Baum acknowledged that over time, the costs trends at four-year public universities have been troubling.

“From 1979 to 1989, the annual rate adjusted for inflation was 3 percent,” she said, “the next decade was 4 percent, and the most recent decade 5 percent. So the trend was exacerbated in recent years.”

Public universities have been forced to raise tuition largely because state governments, facing huge budget shortfalls, have reduced spending on higher education. But many education experts said colleges must do a better job of cutting costs.

“Colleges need to be looking for ways to permanently restructure, not just cut their budgets,” said Jane Wellman, executive director of the [Delta Project on Postsecondary Costs, Productivity and Accountability](#). “A perfect example is furloughs, in hopes that eventually the work force can come back. But this isn’t a one-time problem, and eventually they’ll have to bite the bullet and reduce their work force.”

About two-thirds of full-time undergraduates receive grants, according to “[Trends in Student Aid 2009](#),” a companion College Board report by Ms. Baum that was also released Tuesday. And grant aid, especially Pell grants, has been growing.

Taking into account both grant aid and tax credits and deductions, Ms. Baum said, the situation looks far less dire.

“The really interesting thing to me,” she said, “is if you look at net prices students pay, considering the grant aid and tax benefits, students at public two-year institutions are actually paying less, in inflation-adjusted dollars. And that’s pretty significant. Even though the sticker price, adjusting for inflation, is up 20 percent in the past five years, the net price is actually lower than it was five years ago.”

But with college costs so high, borrowing is increasing as well. Although grant aid rose significantly in the 2008-9 school year, the latest year for which data are available, student borrowing — and the gap between available resources and the overall cost of attending college — continued to increase, the report said.

The borrowing has changed, though, with a significant shift away from private loans as the credit markets froze and federal loans expanded. According to the new report, total education borrowing increased 5 percent from 2007-8 to 2008-9, the report said, but private loans declined by about half last year, to about \$11 billion, while federal loans increased by about \$15 billion.

Last year, the average grant aid per student was \$5,041, with the largest amounts coming from colleges and universities and the federal government.

At public four-year colleges, the report found, two-thirds of the grant money is given as merit aid, that is, without considering the recipient’s financial need.

“It is particularly disturbing that public colleges are using such a large share of their financial aid resources for so-called merit aid in these tough times,” said Lauren Asher, president of the Institute for College Access and Success.

This year, the report found, full-time students at private, nonprofit four-year institutions — those with the most expensive tuition — are receiving about \$14,400 in grant aid and federal tax benefits, reducing their net tuition and fees to about \$11,900, from the published \$26,300.

Full-time students at public four-year colleges and universities receive an estimated average of about \$5,400 in grant aid and federal tax benefits, reducing their net tuition and fees to about \$1,600, from the published \$7,000.

And full-time students at public two-year colleges actually get an average \$3,000 in grant aid and tax benefits — enough to pay the average \$2,500 tuition and fees and still have \$500 left toward living expenses.

### **The Deconstruction Method**

1. Summarize the main points and then check: Does the headline and the lead support the main point(s) of the story?

2. How close does the reporter come to opening the freezer? Is the evidence direct or “arm’s-length?”

3. Evaluate the reliability of the sources using **I’M VA/IN**:

✓ **I**ndependent sources are better than self-interested sources.

✓ **M**ultiple sources are better than a single source.

✓ Sources who **V**erify are better than sources who assert: “I know” vs. “I believe”

✓ **A**uthoritative/**I**nformed sources are better than uninformed sources.

✓ **N**amed sources are better than unnamed sources

4. Does the reporter make his or her work transparent?

5. Does the reporter place the story in context?

6. Are the key questions answered?

7. Is the story fair?