

News Literacy

Opposing Viewpoints

Homework directions

Due Date (to be set by your instructor)

Name:	Rec. #
Recitation Instructor:	Upload and/or bring a hard copy to recitation, at instructor's direction.

What you're doing: This looks long and complicated, but it's not. The goal is for you to read and react (in writing) to information that confirms and challenges your opinions. You'll write it all on one page in three short bursts. Follow the steps in order and you'll be done in no time.

Before you do anything else...

Step 1. Look at the list of topics below and select the topic on which you are most opinionated. At the top of your paper, write your opinion with three points that support your opinion. So if milk pasteurization were a topic...

States should prohibit the sale of un-pasteurized milk:

- 1. Young children are not able to refuse their parents;*
- 2. Young children are not legally able to consent to risky behavior;*
- 3. The state has the right to regulate it because studies show that kids whose hippie parents force them to drink un-pasteurized milk have a much higher incidence of infectious disease.*

Pick a Topic You Feel Strongly About

- A. Does the First Amendment right to free speech extend to people who **picket soldiers' funerals** to publicize one church's belief that war casualties are God's punishment of the United States for tolerating homosexuals?
- B. Should states prohibit **texting while driving**?
- C. Should **genetically modified foods** such as the jumbo salmon we showed in lecture be approved for sale in the U.S.?
- D. Is **animal experimentation** an acceptable means to advance knowledge?
- E. Were **government bailouts of private industry** a wise response to the Great Recession?

Step 2. Follow the directions (below) to sites where you will find two or more points of view on the topic you chose.

First read the side you most agree with.

Step 3. Next, read the article that takes the side you most disagree with.

Step 4. What is the first thing you thought when you finished reading the opposite of your viewpoint?(We're looking for authenticity. Don't revise.)

Now record that first reaction in one sentence on the next line below what you wrote in Step 1.

Then, write a summary just like the one in Step 1, of the opposing argument.

Step 5. Finally, in 150-200 words, describe the strongest point(s) of the opposite side and why you found it(them) to be strong points. Reflecting on what you have learned about cognitive dissonance in Lecture and in the readings, describe your experience of studying the point of view opposite to yours.

As you were reading and thinking about it, did you notice any differences in how you read, what you did while you read it or at what points you wanted to stop?

There's no correct answer, but if you notice anything, analyze it using material from class.

FINDING THE READINGS

If you chose Topic A (picketing soldiers' funerals) here are the links:

Even vile speech merits protection

http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2010-10-06-editorial06_ST_N.htm

Vulgarity is not a message

http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2010-10-06-editorial06_ST1_N.htm

If you chose one of the other four topics, you'll find those readings on the Stony Brook Libraries' Opposing Views Resource Center.

1. Go to: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/libraries.shtml>

2. In the center of the page, under "Resources" select "Databases". ▶

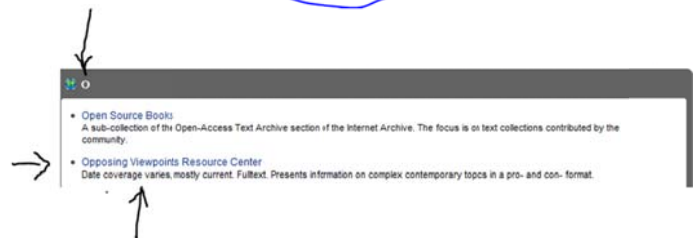


3. In the alphabetical directory, select the letter "O" as in Opposing Viewpoints.....▶



4. Under "O", select "Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center".....▶

5. Whew! Now you're there. Find your matching and opposing viewpoints and get started.



Why you're doing this: To practice one of the key lessons of News Literacy, which is to exercise your brain by seeking information that challenges your beliefs. **What you should aim to get out of this:** The rare skill of seeking out and really engaging with the arguments of an opposing viewpoint. **Plus...This assignment is worth up to 4 points.**