THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

# Critical Thinking Resource

Communication



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### About The Wall Street Journal's Critical Thinking Resource

We developed this guide to help you maximize The Wall Street Journal as a resource for your classes. You'll be able to energize discussions and engage students with tangible examples of course concepts that your students can apply in the real world. In addition, with the help of faculty partners, we've curated a special collection of our most popular and thought-provoking articles across business. For each of these readings, we provide a summary, correlation to course topics, classroom applications and questions suitable for launching discussions and conducting assessments.

Here are some of the many ways to incorporate WSJ into your courses:

- **Course Readings:** Assign articles as required reading alongside your textbook sections. For best results, include assessment questions on quizzes and exams.
- **Discussion Launchers:** Use articles to spur classroom and threaded discussions in online and hybrid courses on core concepts and current events.
- **Extra Credit:** Allow students to read optional articles and answer assessment questions for extra credit.
- **Group Projects:** WSJ is a rich source of real-world topics for group research and presentation projects.
- **Research Papers and Case Studies:** WSJ features provide timely citations for research projects.

### Subtopic: Journalism

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# **COVID-19 Ushers in a New Era of Full-time Travel**

Reporter: Nancy Keates Reviewed by: Maria B. Marron, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Date: December 7, 2020 Topics: Travel, Digital nomads, Pandemic-ushered Change, Hotels, Innovation Link to Article: Click Here

**Summary:** The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how people work and travel. About 8% to 10% of workers are predicted to work from home full time. If 10% of workers work and travel remotely, there will be a huge population of digital nomads. Although millennials pioneered the digital nomad trend, the future may encompass middle-aged nomads who rent or own homes for less time. This article focuses on a particular individual, an entrepreneur, who has divested himself of belongings and who opts instead to travel, work remotely and lease or rent what he needs, even down to sneakers. Companies have popped up to facilitate the digital nomad lifestyle by providing subscription-based services for stays at member properties around the globe, leases in various apartment buildings where nomads can stay for a few months or less. Mint House, a chain of 23 hotels across the United States, allows guests to pay a lump-sum fee to get a guaranteed nightly rate on stays. The chain has seen average stays increase from three nights to 20 since March, a rise spurred by the pandemic as people work from anywhere. Digital nomad is not for everyone because of loneliness and the difficulty of establishing social ties. Taxes, visas and even technology connections can be problematic, but more countries are predicted to cater visa and tourism programs to the nomads.

**Classroom Application:** Divide your class into teams of no more than five people and have them review the COVID-19 pandemic in areas from healthcare to the funeral business, restaurants and hotels, travel and transport, religion and churches, schooling and education, the labor force, the economy, the electoral process and any other social, cultural phenomena they wish to explore. Students can analyze changing patterns in each of these areas and, based on their research, predict future trends. Have each group develop a PowerPoint presentation or a multimedia presentation based on their findings and predictions. Compare and contrast the findings and predictions related to COVID-19 research with research about changes wrought by the 1918 Influenza pandemic.

### Questions:

- 1. This is a human-interest story, with Alan Frei, a 38-year-old entrepreneur, representing digital nomads. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of having Mr. Frei represent a group of people? What are some of the factors that make it possible for him to be a digital nomad?
- 2. The article suggests that more middle-aged workers may become digital nomads. What circumstances are likely to militate against middle-aged workers adopting that trend?
- 3. The article's sources include entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry as well as academicians from Stanford University, The University of Surrey and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. What types of sources are omitted from the story?
- 4. Although COVID-19 is said to usher in a new era of full-time travel, it is not possible for digital nomads to travel extensively during the pandemic. This article is predictive, suggesting a trend that will arise post-pandemic. How would you categorize this story: Is it news? A feature? An analytical piece? All of these?
- 5. Journalism is based on fact. What are the facts in this story?
- 6. Is there speculation about the future, e.g., a prediction? Identify verbs that resonate with the prediction and/or point to the speculative nature of the future.

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# U.S. Appeals Court Judge Made Mark on Business Law

Reporter: James R. Hagerty Reviewed by: Maria B. Marron, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Date: December 16, 2020 Topics: Ralph K Winter, Yale Law School, Taft School, Business Law, Thurgood Marshall, Obituary Link to Article: Click Here

**Summary:** Ralph K. Winter, a former Manhattan-based U.S. Court of Appeals judge for the Second Circuit, died Dec. 8 at a nursing home in Guilford, Conn. He had fought esophageal cancer and had tested positive for Covid-19 some months before his death. Having grown up in Waterbury, Conn., he attended the Taft School and Yale University where he obtained a bachelor's degree in political science and a law degree. After graduating, he served as a law clerk to Thurgood Marshall, who became a Supreme Court justice, and with whom he bonded. He had been a professor at Yale until joining the appeals court in 1982, having been nominated by President Ronald Reagan. Known for his wit, he was once described by a colleague on the appeals court as "a jovial truck driver with a 300 I.Q." A conservative, he believed in state control over laws governing the relationship between shareholders and management. He insisted that state regulation was preferable to federal rules in corporate governance, arguing that competition among states for chartering large corporations had reduced regulation in a way that benefited shareholders by reducing compliance costs and making companies more profitable. Some of his appeals court decisions are taught in law schools. Predeceased by his wife Kate, he is survived by his son Andrew, and his granddaughter.

**Classroom Application:** This obituary profiles a law-making judge of the appeals court, Second Circuit based in Manhattan. An expert in business law, Judge Winter was known to buck conventional wisdom on corporate governance, particularly in relation to the chartering of large organizations. Some of his appeals court decisions were so important that they are taught in law schools. Divide your class into teams of four students to research more about business and corporate law, the opinions of Judge Winter taught in law schools, some of the key opinions of the appeals court, Second Circuit, and the role of the late Ralph Nader in business regulation.

### Questions:

- 1. Obituaries are generally thought of as stories about a life, not simply about someone's death. What are the elements in this obituary that bring Judge Winter to life so that readers can get a sense of the type of person he was?
- 2. Judge Winter did not always take the opinions of someone else as true. What are the elements in the story that point to that? Was he independent minded from an early age? Would you like to know more about his background and his early years? Why or why not?
- 3. One of the sources for the obituary is Judge Winter's son, Andrew Winter. Other courses are former colleagues, articles and opinions written by the judge, and documentary sources. What are some of the documentary sources that provided material? How do writers get some of the information, such as quotations, that are in this obituary?
- 4. Is it important to include the cause of death in obituaries? Why or why not? Do you think it is relevant to include that the late judge tested positive for Covid-19 a couple of months before his death?
- 5. Writing obituaries traditionally was one of the jobs of beginning reporters. Obits were regarded as a test of the reporter's ability to get the facts right and to craft a story about someone's life. If the beginning reporter was competent in writing obituaries and was trustworthy with the facts, it was likely he or she would be assigned bigger stories. Why is it so important for reporters to get the facts right in obituaries, as well as in other stories? What is special about obituaries?

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# **Snowstorm Blankets Parts of East Coast**

Reporters: Scott Calvert and Talal Ansari Reviewed by: Maria B. Marron, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Date: December 16, 2020 Topics: First Major Snowstorm, East Coast, Vaccine Distribution, Impact on Various States Link to Article: Click Here

**Summary:** The first major snowstorm of the winter moved over Pennsylvania and into New York and other Northeastern states this week with predictions that the storm would impact distribution of the coronavirus vaccine to hospitals. However, shipping companies and state government officials said they were prepared to handle the distribution of vaccine deliveries despite the storm. FedEx and UPS also said they were monitoring the situation and would coordinate the movement of truck and flight shipments. The Rhode Island Department of Health closed all state-operated Covid-19 test sites Thursday and said they would reopen on Friday. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation encouraged motorists to restrict travel and dispatched all available crews to help with plowing. The precipitation was expected to end Thursday afternoon with about one foot of snow in Boston and in a band stretching across western Maryland, central and eastern Pennsylvania, northwest New Jersey and southern New York. Up to 2 feet of snow was anticipated in parts of Pennsylvania and the Catskills.

**Classroom Application:** Divide your students into groups of four and have each group research a major storm that had significant consequences for a region or for the country. For example, some students might research flooding in Iowa and other parts of the Midwest, flooding in Galveston and other storms that affected Galveston Island, Hurricane Hugo that devastated much of South Carolina, Hurricane Katrina that had a massive impact on New Orleans, and so forth. Have your students examine primary sources (national and local media, for example) for stories about these major storms, and have them track down some of the sources named in the stories for follow-up interviews about how people's lives unfolded and/or changed as a result of the storms. Get your students to make presentations to their class about their findings, using multimedia, PowerPoint and other platforms.

### Questions:

- 1. This is a weather story about the first winter storm of the year along the East Coast. The story talks about the likely impact of the storm on vaccine deliveries. Why is the relationship between the storm and the deliveries so critical to this story?
- 2. This is a cyclical or seasonal story, based as it is on the first winter storm of 2020 on the East Coast. What are some of the characteristics of news evident in this story?
- 3. The sources in the story include Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York as well as unnamed sources in FedEx, UPS, the Rhode Island Department of Health, and the Weather Service. How would you describe these sources: Are they persons, organizations, official or unofficial?
- 4. The sources in this story are mostly cited indirectly, i.e., via indirect quotation or paraphrase. Point to examples of indirect quotation, paraphrase, and direct quotation in the story.
- 5. What makes the direct quotations in the story highly effective? What are some of the rules for using direct quotation?
- 6. Why is it important for the media to produce stories about weather-related issues such as storms? What sort of impact can weather have on people and places?

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