

Attention Rising Sophomores!

The Cass Tech English Department has created a brief summer assignment for you to complete in an effort to best support your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills before we return to school. Please read the assignment below as well as the example we provided. All Technicians who will be in the 10th grade for the 2020-2021 school year are required to complete this assignment which will be submitted, read, and graded by your English teacher upon your return to school.

STEP ONE: Select and Read Your Article

Visit longform.org (<https://longform.org/>) a website which showcases thought-provoking and well written non-fiction articles from a variety of accredited news sources. Select ONE article to read and use for your written response. Your article must be published after 2015, and cannot be the same article as our example, entitled “Will the Corona Virus Make Us Rethink Mass Incarceration?”

STEP TWO: Create a SOAPSTONE Chart

As a non-fiction reader, it is important not only to pay attention to what the author is writing, but also to recognize who they are writing to, and for what reason. Review the SOAPSTONE chart below, and create one of your own based on the text you selected. Ensure that you are completing both the claim and the evidence column on your chart. Use short quotes from the text as evidence.

CLAIM <i>What's your argument?</i>	EVIDENCE <i>Where in the text is your proof?</i>
S- Speaker. The voice that tells the story. Is it the author? A narrator? A character?	
O- Occasion. The time and the place of the piece; the context that prompted the writing.	
A- Audience. The group of readers to whom this piece is directed.	
P- Purpose. The reason behind the text.	
S- Subject. The main idea of the text.	

TONE: The attitude of the author towards his/her subject.	
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STEP THREE: Write a Précis Paragraph (see Stillman Précis Example for further details)

All the information posted below about describing and crafting précis paragraphs was taken from the following document:

[https://www.uen.org/lessonplan/download/46399?lessonId=41064&segmentTypeId=6#:~:text=The%20four%2Dsentence%20rhetorical%20pr%C3%A9cis,or%20a%20phrase\)%20to%20convey](https://www.uen.org/lessonplan/download/46399?lessonId=41064&segmentTypeId=6#:~:text=The%20four%2Dsentence%20rhetorical%20pr%C3%A9cis,or%20a%20phrase)%20to%20convey)

The four-sentence rhetorical précis is a highly structured paragraph that records the essential elements of a unit of spoken or written discourse. Each of the four sentences requires specific information (see below). The précis might also include brief quotations (typically a few words or a phrase) to convey an author's sense of style, tone, and/or unique voice.

Sentence #1

- Name of the author and, if possible, a phrase describing the credentials of the author
- The genre (essay, lecture, research paper, etc.) and title of the work
- The date, if available (inserted in parentheses)
- A rhetorically accurate present tense verb (asserts, argues, suggests, implies, claims, etc.) that describes what the author is doing in the text
- A THAT clause which states the major assertion (thesis statement) of the author's text

Sentence #2

- An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis (such as by comparing and contrasting, narrating, illustrating, defining, etc.)
- Present explanation in the same chronological order that the items of support are presented by the author in the text
- Use present tense verbs

Sentence #3

- A statement of the author's purpose
- Followed by an IN ORDER TO clause which explains what the author wants the audience to do or feel as a result of reading the work
- Use present tense verbs

Sentence #4

- A description of the tone the author uses
- A description of the intended audience
- Use present tense verbs

STEP FOUR: Write a Thesis Statement

Thesis statements allow your reader to know your stance and direction in writing. These can be tricky to get the hang of, so we have provided two ways for you to think about and craft a thesis statement. Pick the option (A or B) which makes more sense to you!

- A)** A thesis statement can be broken down into three components and then combined to make it clear and direct: **topic**, **claim**, and **direction** (2-3 reasons that support the claim).

Example:

Writing Prompt: Educators often discuss whether high school sports have a positive influence on students. Some educators think high school sports do have a positive influence because the lessons learned from athletic competition add to the lessons learned in the classroom. Other educators think high school sports do not have a positive influence because the emphasis on sports often overshadows student achievement in other areas. In your opinion, do high school sports have a positive influence on students?

Identify the Topic: Sports offered in High School	Claim: They have a positive influence	Direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach Social Skills• Teach time-management• Provide exercise and teach benefits of hard work
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Thesis:
High school sports unquestionably have a positive influence on high school students because they teach social skills, reinforce time-management skills, provide exercise and show the benefits of hard work.

Identify the topic and claim of the piece you read, provide 2-3 pieces of evidence (direction) to complete a thesis statement.

- B)** This year you will be introduced to the term rhetoric, the art of writing and speaking persuasively. As you read your article, consider the author's rhetorical choices:
- What types of words are they using?
 - Is this diction (word choice) positive, negative, or neutral?
 - Are they creating an emotion in their audience?
 - Are they doing this through imagery? Their tone? Including people's stories?
 - Are they using data or statistics to support their claim? Are these numbers convincing?
 - Are they interview experts in the field to support their claim? Is this convincing?

In your thesis statement, include the author's name, subject (from SOAPSTONE), audience (from SOAPSTONE), purpose (from SOAPSTONE) and 2-3 rhetorical choices they utilized to achieve their purpose. Manipulate the following formula to work for you:

In (Author's Last Name) article about (subject), (he/she/they) (verb) (purpose) through utilizing (insert 2-3 rhetorical choices here).

STEP FIVE: Review our Examples

The Cass Tech English teacher team has completed this assignment using an article we found particularly interesting. Please review our work below, which follows the instructions of what we are asking you to complete, so that you feel better prepared to approach this task. Each example is highlighted in **yellow**.

ARTICLE: "Will the Corona Virus Make Us Rethink Mass Incarceration?"

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/25/will-the-coronavirus-make-us-rethink-mass-incarceration>

SOAPSTONE CHART:

CLAIM	EVIDENCE
S- Speaker	Sarah Stillman, professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. Former war correspondent for WAPO. https://www.newyorker.com/contributors/sarah-stillman
O- Occasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Spring 2020 in the height of the COVID19 Outbreak.● New Orleans, Louisiana
A- Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Uninformed civilians who fail to see the havoc the virus has created for vulnerable populations● Lawmakers and policy stakeholders who contribute to the flawed policies that negatively impact the public health● Activists and grassroots organizations that focus on ending mass incarceration and abolishing prisons.● Public Health officials who need to recognize the inequity that led to the terrible rates of infections
P- Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To draw attention to the lack of healthcare in prison facilities, poor facilities, and ineffectiveness of our criminal justice system: the infection rate there was already seven times higher than in the city's general population. The jail's chief physician called it "a crisis of a magnitude no generation living today has ever seen." P17● To amplify the voices of those who are incarcerated and most vulnerable to COVID19. "By far, the most effective driver of change right now has come directly from those locked up, on the inside," Jayadev said. "Their voices, their demands for survival." P10
S- Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Public health inequalities that disproportionately affect Black people● Unjust causes for incarcerating people● Lack of humanity and dignity in the

	criminal justice system
TONE	<p>Outraged: “Since 2013, the main jail in Orleans Parish has been under a consent decree for what the Department of Justice called “dangerous and unacceptable” conditions, including “inadequate medical care.” Prisons, too, present a contagion risk; they have less rapid turnover than jails, but staff come and go, and large populations and underfunded health services make outbreaks hard to contain.”</p> <p>Urgent: “Local organizers are ramping up their fight. The Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition is pressing for an agreement from police to reduce arrests” P24</p> <p>Doubtful (in the system): “Roslyn Crouch has a similar hope for her city, but she wonders how many incarcerated people will die before any such changes take place.” P25</p>

PRECIS PARAGRAPH (see Stillman Precis Example for further details):

In the essay, “Will the Coronavirus Make Us Rethink Mass Incarceration?” (2020), Sarah Stillman argues that the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the dangers of public-health risks in mass incarceration and led to vital decarceration. Stillman conveys these dangers by exposing the insufficient prison health services, the dangers of a “hard to contain” prison Covid-19 outbreak, and the need to decarcerate. She incorporates facts, statistics and credible sources in order to warn of the virus risk factors due to lack of “protective measures in jails and prisons” and the negative health outcomes of Covid-19. Stillman adopts a serious and empathetic tone while employing personal cases to appeal to those readers who will sympathize and support the necessary release of these prisoners.

THESIS STATEMENT:

In Stillman’s article which discusses how the recent pandemic exposed insufficient prison health services, she argues that COVID-19’s risk factors have proven decarceration necessary for public health through utilizing facts, credible sources, and an empathetic tone.