

NewsBank Hot Topics

September 2009

CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE: Ted Kennedy

TOPIC: Senator Ted Kennedy was the second most senior member of the Senate. What were his most passionate legislative issues, and what has been his legislative record to support those issues? What have been the government and non-government positions, causes, and accomplishments of the Kennedy family over the past ½ century? How did Senator Kennedy work with other family members over the decades to further those political ideals?

SEARCH TERMS: Ted Kennedy

ENVIRONMENT: California Wildfires

TOPIC: Wildfires in the Los Angeles area are threatening thousands of homes. What is the cause of these fires? What is being done to contain or stop them and protect the residents of the area? How can these be prevented or loss of property diminished in the future?

SEARCH TERMS: wildfires AND Los Angeles

ECONOMICS: Recession Status

TOPIC: Germany, France and Japan all signal that they have emerged from the recession in the last quarter. Other areas of the globe lag behind these countries' economic growth. Central Bankers met in the U.S. in August. What economic indicators signal the end of the recession? What did the central bankers think about current economic conditions?

SEARCH TERMS: recession AND central bankers

SPORTS: U.S. Open

TOPIC: Play has started in the U.S. Open. Who are the top seeds? What is the significance of this tournament to the world of tennis?

SEARCH TERMS: U.S. Open

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Japanese Elections

TOPIC: As the Japanese election season commences, the Democratic Party of Japan seems poised to run the government for the first time. Why is this happening now? What issues are propelling this change? Who won the election? What is the reaction of the people in Japan to this outcome?

SEARCH TERMS: Japan AND elections

SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: National Deficit Projection

TOPIC: The Congressional Budget Office and the Obama Administration have announced their projection that the federal deficit will rise to \$9 trillion this year. What is driving the deficit so high? What impact is this expected to have on the economy? What are being considered as solutions to resolving the imbalance?

SEARCH TERMS: deficit AND projection

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Afghanistan Elections

TOPIC: A presidential election recently took place in Afghanistan. Hamid Karzai ran for re-election. Who were the other candidates? What issues did they run on? How did the Taliban act during the campaign season?

SEARCH TERMS: Afghanistan AND elections

CRIME AND LAW: Iran Trials

TOPIC: Iran has put many of those who protested against the results of the presidential election on trial. The accused include former members of the government, activists and others. What are they accused of? What are the intentions of the government in bringing this case?

SEARCH TERMS: Iran AND protests AND trials

CRIME AND LAW: CIA Interrogation Tactics

TOPIC: The Obama Administration is launching a criminal investigation into the interrogation techniques of detainees. What are some of the techniques used in interrogations that are being investigated? What is the legal status of the people being questioned?

SEARCH TERMS: CIA AND terrorism AND investigation

CRIME AND LAW: Michael Jackson

TOPIC: The death of Michael Jackson has been ruled a homicide. What evidence was found to make this conclusion? What are some of the health issues that he had suffered in his life?

SEARCH TERMS: Michael Jackson AND homicide

CRIME AND LAW: Moving Prisoners from Guantanamo

TOPIC: Prisons in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and Standish, Michigan have been considered as places to house the detainees from the military prison at Guantanamo Bay. What are the characteristics that are being considered in trying to find prisons to house the detainees? What other changes are being reviewed to process these detainees?

SEARCH TERMS: Guantanamo Bay AND prisoners

ECONOMICS: Social Security

TOPIC: By law, Social Security premiums cannot be cut, but the payouts may still drop. What are ways in which recipients may see their payouts lowered? What is being explored as solutions?

SEARCH TERMS: Social Security AND recipients

ECONOMICS: Ben Bernanke

TOPIC: President Obama has reappointed Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke to another term. What have been some notable events during his term at the Federal Reserve and how has he handled them? What are some of his economic philosophies and how have they impacted his decisions during the course of his career?

SEARCH TERMS: Bernanke AND Federal Reserve

EDUCATION: Bus Routes

TOPIC: Cash strapped school districts are cutting out some bus routes in an effort to cut back on their budgets. What are some other ways schools are finding to save money? What have been some reasons that schools have had to tighten their budgets?

SEARCH TERMS: school buses AND routes AND budget

HISTORY: Anniversary of Galileo's Telescope

TOPIC: It is the 400th anniversary of Galileo's telescope. While he did not invent this tool, he refined it and, using it, saw some amazing things. Where did the telescope originate? What did Galileo see, and then what did he theorize from his research? How were his findings received?

SEARCH TERMS: Galileo

SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS**ENVIRONMENT: Wildfires in Greece**

TOPIC: Wildfires have raged out of control in Greece. Two years ago similar fires happened, and critics of the current government are speaking out about the lack of preparation in fighting fires. Should the government have been better prepared? What is the extent of the damage?

SEARCH TERMS: Greece AND wildfires

ENVIRONMENT: Cash for Clunkers

TOPIC: The government program that offers rebates to people who turn in their older car for scrap and buy a new fuel-efficient car has ended. Have consumers embraced the offered rebates? How did the program help the environment? How did it help the economy?

SEARCH TERMS: cash for clunkers

ENVIRONMENT: Dry Conditions in India

TOPIC: The poor farmers in India depend upon the monsoons to provide water for their crops and animals. The monsoon season this year has been very dry. How have farmers reacted to it? What are some reasons for this occurrence?

SEARCH TERMS: India AND monsoons

HEALTH: Swine Flu

TOPIC: Chilean officials confirm that swine flu has crossed the species barrier and is being found in turkeys in their country. What are the dangers if it combines with avian flu? What steps has Chile taken to confine this outbreak?

SEARCH TERMS: Chile AND swine flu AND turkeys

HEALTH: AIDS in South Africa

TOPIC: The approach of former president Thabo Mbeki to the AIDS crisis has been thoroughly discredited by scientists, and the new government plans to alter its approach to treating this disease. How badly has South Africa been affected by this disease? How did Mbeki handle it? What are the criticisms of his approach?

SEARCH TERMS: South Africa AND AIDS

HEALTH: Health Care Reform

TOPIC: The Affordable Health Care Choices Act in America is a bill sponsored by several Congressional Representatives that broadly represents the health care reform policies of the Obama Administration with room for congressional amendments. The bill has been addressed by members of Congress and government officials in sometimes hostile town meetings. What have been some of the controversial issues surrounding the bill? What are some agreed on items?

SEARCH TERMS: health care AND legislation

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: South Korea's Satellite

TOPIC: South Korea has launched a satellite into outer space. This happens just months after a North Korean launch prompted world-wide criticism that it was building a long range missile for military purposes. Did the rocket put the satellite into the correct orbit? Is the world-wide response going to be different this time and, if so, why?

SEARCH TERMS: South Korea AND rocket launches

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: General Motors Volt

TOPIC: General Motors is claiming that its new hybrid car, the Volt, will get 230 miles to the gallon. What has been the reaction to this claim? What has been the evolution of hybrid cars and how have they worked?

SEARCH TERMS: General Motors AND hybrid

SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS

SPORTS: Solheim Cup

TOPIC: Team USA has won Solheim Cup this year, a golf tournament for women played this year in Sugar Grove, Illinois. What are the requirements to qualify for the Solheim Cup? How did the Solheim Cup start? What were the most exciting moments of the tournament this year?

SEARCH TERMS: Solheim Cup

SPORTS: The Fastest Man in the World

TOPIC: Usain Bolt has set two world records at the World Athletics Championships in both the 100 and 200 meter sprints. What was so impressive about his feats? What are his plans for the future?

SEARCH TERMS: Usain Bolt

SPORTS: Cricket Competition

TOPIC: The UK has beaten Australia this year in their long-running international cricket competition. What is the history of the event? Why is it called the Ashes?

SEARCH TERMS: cricket AND The Ashes

SPORTS: Phillies and Mets Game Ends in Solo Triple Play

TOPIC: Eric Bruntlett of the Philadelphia Phillies became the second player in major league baseball history to end a game with an unassisted triple play in Philadelphia's 9-7 recent victory over the Mets. Who was the first player to end a game this way? How many unassisted triple plays have there been in the history of major league baseball?

SEARCH TERMS: Eric Bruntlett AND Mets AND triple play

ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS

FILM AND TELEVISION: John Hughes

TOPIC: John Hughes was a film director known for making comedic films that have become iconic for showing teen life in the 1980s. What are some of his films, and who are some of the young actors and actresses known for acting in his films? What are some of the recurring themes in his films?

SEARCH TERMS: John Hughes

FILM AND TELEVISION: World Film Festival

TOPIC: The World Film Festival in Montreal, running from late August through early September, features films by unknown directors rather than premieres of mainstream films. As such, it can offer a career boost to filmmakers who might otherwise lack the connections to get their films screened. What films were screened this year? Who has won the various prizes on offer?

SEARCH TERMS: Montreal World Film Festival

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: National Gallery of Scotland

TOPIC: The National Gallery of Scotland hosts a show called *The Discovery of Spain* which features Spanish art collected by British collectors, and art by British artists that involves Spanish scenes. What do international shows of art like this one try to do? What is involved in setting them up?

SEARCH TERMS: National Gallery of Scotland AND Spanish art

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Christie's High Tech Warehouse

TOPIC: Christie's Auction House has opened a new very high-tech warehouse in Red Hook, Brooklyn that will store and protect multi-million dollar artworks as well as other expensive items for auction. What new high-tech features will this warehouse provide, and how do they work? What are some of the techniques used in the past to protect expensive artwork?

SEARCH TERMS: Christie's AND Red Hook

LITERATURE: Cheney Memoirs

TOPIC: Ex-Vice President Dick Cheney is currently working on his memoirs. What revelations have been offered by Mr. Cheney in discussions about his upcoming book? What political activity has Mr. Cheney involved himself since leaving office?

SEARCH TERMS: Dick Cheney AND memoirs

PERFORMING ARTS: Les Paul

TOPIC: Les Paul was a guitar pioneer, inventor and musician. What famous innovations did he bring to the guitar? What other contributions did he make to music?

SEARCH TERMS: Les Paul

PERFORMING ARTS: Mozart

TOPIC: Mozart died young, and for years people have speculated about his final illness. Now a new team of researchers feel they have found the answer. What do they think killed him? What are some of the earlier theories?

SEARCH TERMS: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

PERFORMING ARTS: Dame Kiri Te Kanawa

TOPIC: Dame Kiri Te Kanawa has announced that her final opera performance will take place next spring, though she will continue to sing in concert. How long has she been performing? What roles is she particularly identified with?

SEARCH TERMS: Kiri Te Kanawa

PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE: Eunice Kennedy Shriver

TOPIC: Eunice Kennedy Shriver was the founder of the Special Olympics. What is the Special Olympics, and how did it start and evolve? Who are other members of the Shriver family that have distinguished themselves, and what did they do?

SEARCH TERMS: Eunice Shriver

PEOPLE: Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi

TOPIC: Scotland has freed ill Lockerbie bomber Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and has allowed him to return home to die of cancer. The families of the victims of this terrorist act complained bitterly, as do other governments. What was the Lockerbie bombing? Do you believe in compassion for individuals who have committed acts of violence?

SEARCH TERMS: Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi

PEOPLE: Kim Dae-jung

TOPIC: Kim Dae-jung was the former South Korean president. What did he do before he was in office? How many times did he run for office? What were his policies toward North Korea while in office?

SEARCH TERMS: Kim Dae-jung

PEOPLE: Don Hewitt

TOPIC: Don Hewitt was a broadcast news director, producer and creator of CBS news show 60 Minutes. What is the most famous televised political debate that Mr. Hewitt directed? How did 60 Minutes impact the way news is broadcast on TV?

SEARCH TERMS: Don Hewitt

PEOPLE: Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipients

TOPIC: President Barack Obama has awarded 16 Presidential Medals of Freedom. Who were his choices, and what did they do to distinguish themselves? What is the history of this medal and what does it award?

SEARCH TERMS: Medal of Freedom