

**CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS**

**CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Iran Election Investigation**

**TOPIC:** Iran's supreme leader has ordered an investigation into allegations of election fraud after opposition forces engaged in street clashes to protest the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad over Mirhossein Mousavi. What are the issues that separated the two candidates? Why have people objected to the outcome of the election? What is the significance to the supreme leader ordering the investigation?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Iran AND elections

**HEALTH: Swine Flu Pandemic**

**TOPIC:** The Swine Flu has been officially named a pandemic. What defines a pandemic? What has been the response to this new classification of the problem?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Swine Flu AND pandemic

**FILM AND TELEVISION: Switch to Digital TV**

**TOPIC:** The U.S. has switched its TV signal from analog to digital. Why was this done? What does this mean for TV viewers? Is the change justified?

**SEARCH TERMS:** digital TV signal

**CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Sonia Sotomayor**

**TOPIC:** President Obama has named Federal Judge Sonia Sotomayor to replace retiring Supreme Court judge David Souter. What are some of the well-known cases that Judge Sotomayor has presided over as a Federal Judge? What other positions in the legal profession has Judge Sotomayor held, and what are some interesting things she has done in those positions? What is the process for confirming her appointment?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Sonia Sotomayor

**SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS**

**CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: President Obama Seeks Common Ground in the Middle East**

**TOPIC:** President Obama visited both Middle Eastern and European nations on his most recent trip abroad. He gave a major address in Cairo and was present at the 65<sup>th</sup> D Day anniversary ceremonies. What was the theme of his Cairo address? How was it received in Muslim countries? What were his major points about the Middle East peace negotiations?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Barack Obama AND Cairo

**CRIME AND LAW: American Journalists become Prisoners in North Korea**

**TOPIC:** Two American journalists were sentenced to 12 years of hard labor in North Korea. What crime were they charged with? Who were they working for? What story were they pursuing? How is the international community responding to the sentence? What negotiations are taking place?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Laura Ling AND Euna Lee

**CRIME AND LAW: New York Terror Plot**

**TOPIC:** Four men from the Bronx borough of New York City have been arrested in a homegrown terror plot to blow up military planes and synagogues. What was the background of these men? What do we know about this kind of hatred, its roots and influences?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Bronx AND terrorist

**CRIME AND LAW: Cheney Obama GITMO Debate**

**TOPIC:** President Obama and former Vice President Dick Cheney each gave a major speech on closing the military prison at Guantanamo Bay. What are the positions of each side on this issue? What overall political philosophies are behind each position and what are some past decisions of each man that stand as examples of these philosophies?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Cheney AND Obama AND Guantanamo

**CRIME AND LAW: Holocaust Museum Shooting**

**TOPIC:** James von Brunn, a Holocaust denier, has been arrested in the murder of a guard to the U.S. Holocaust Museum. What is Mr. von Brunn's background? What are some of the primary hate groups in the U.S. and what are their beliefs?

**SEARCH TERMS:** James von Brunn AND Holocaust Museum

**ECONOMICS: General Motors bankruptcy**

**TOPIC:** General Motors Corporation has declared bankruptcy. What is the outcome of this bankruptcy on the company and the overall economy? What are some directions the U.S. auto industry are exploring to improve their finances?

**SEARCH TERMS:** General Motors AND bankruptcy

**ECONOMICS: Credit Card Restrictions**

**TOPIC:** President Obama is looking to add regulations to the credit card industry that will curb practices the administration views as predatory. What specific practices is the primary focus of this policy? What impact does this industry have on the overall economy?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Credit Cards AND Obama

**ECONOMICS: Time Warner Spins off AOL**

**TOPIC:** Time Warner has spun off its subsidiary AOL. What is the financial reason that this decision was made? What is the impact on the economy?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Time Warner AND AOL

**ECONOMICS: An Italian Chrysler CEO**

**TOPIC:** Sergio Marchionne, the CEO of Fiat in Italy, has said he will take over the reins of ailing Chrysler when his company purchases Chrysler. How do Italian companies differ from American companies? How will Chrysler change as a result of the takeover?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Chrysler AND Fiat AND mergers

**EDUCATION: The Taliban and Girl's Education**

**TOPIC:** In Afghanistan, girl's schools have seen an increase in terrorist activity by the use of chemicals to poison the students. Hundreds of girls have been hospitalized due to the inhalation of fumes which many blame on the Taliban in their quest to see girls not going to school. Why do the Taliban want to stop girls from being educated? Why, according to the Taliban's perspective, does religion take precedent over the rights to an education?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Afghanistan AND girls AND schools

**EDUCATION: National Spelling Bee**

**TOPIC:** Thirteen year old Kavya Shivashankar was the winner of this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee. What are some of the more difficult words in this year's contest? What are some of the mental exercises that students do when they are preparing for such challenging competitions? What is the history of spelling bees?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Scripps National Spelling Bee

**HISTORY: D-Day**

**TOPIC:** On June 6, 1944 Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy to fight the Germans in an historic battle in World War II. Why is this battle so significant to the Allied victory in World War II? Why is this battle so personally emotional for Allied veterans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** D-Day AND anniversary

**HISTORY: The Tiananmen Anniversary**

**TOPIC:** China observed the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen massacre in Beijing. Many college students demonstrated for democracy in China, and the activity was put down by military forces with the death of an unknown number of students. What has changed in China since the Tiananmen Square massacres? How has the international community responded to the anniversary?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Tiananmen AND massacres AND anniversaries

**SOCIAL ISSUES: The Settlement Issue**

**TOPIC:** Jewish settlements in occupied territories are a major sticking point in the Middle East peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Most of the international parties to the peace negotiations, including U.S. President Obama, want them stopped, but the Israelis see them as necessary. Why is the Middle East peace process complex? Why has there never been a successful outcome to the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians? What role should negotiators from outside countries have in establishing peace in the Middle East?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Jewish settlements AND peace negotiations

**SOCIAL ISSUES: Rural Homeless**

**TOPIC:** Shalom House, a Maine mental health organization conducted the first study of rural homelessness. Why have the rural homeless largely been unaccounted for? What are some of the different patterns between rural and urban homelessness?

**SEARCH TERMS:** homeless AND rural

**SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS**

**ENVIRONMENT: Tornadoes in Colorado**

**TOPIC:** Colorado has suffered a rare occurrence of multiple strong tornadoes that resulted in a state of emergency being declared. How is the strength of tornadoes measured? What are some of the common precautions taken by communities when tornadoes are forecast in their areas?

**SEARCH TERMS:** tornadoes

**ENVIRONMENT: Turkey and Iraq's Water Supply**

**TOPIC:** Turkey has been diverting water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers which flow into Iraq. Farmers in Iraq are upset at the results: lower levels of irrigation water. What water rights do countries have with rivers that flow through their territory? What are the future challenges between countries that share rivers and lakes? How should competing interests in water be managed?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Turkey AND Iraq AND rivers

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Europe's Space Observatories**

**TOPIC:** The European Space Agency has launched two space telescopes which in the next few years will investigate the origins of our solar system. Why is it important for us to understand the origins of the solar system? How are these space telescopes operating and giving us information?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Europe AND space telescopes

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Cyber Czar**

**TOPIC:** President Obama is creating a new federal government position to oversee the protection of government-run and private computer networks, nicknamed for now the Cyber Czar. What report has spurred the creation of this new position and what were its findings? What concerns have been raised about this new position?

**SEARCH TERMS:** cyber czar

**SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS**

**SPORTS: Randy Johnson**

**TOPIC:** Pitcher for the San Francisco Giants, Randy Johnson has become the 24<sup>th</sup> pitcher in the history of baseball to win 300 games. Who are the other 23 pitchers to have achieved this status? What are some other career highlights for Mr. Johnson?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Randy Johnson

**SPORTS: Real Madrid stuns the world**

**TOPIC:** The Spanish soccer team makes two deals in three days to bolster their line-up, spending over \$200 million to acquire stars Kaka and Cristiano Ronaldo from A.C. Milan and Manchester United respectively. Why would their former teams make such a deal? How do transfer fees work in soccer? Are such high prices good for the overall health of the game?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Real Madrid AND Kaka OR Cristiano Ronaldo

**SPORTS: UEFA Cup Completed**

**TOPIC:** Barcelona defeated Manchester United to win the Champions League. What is the Champions League? What is UEFA?

**SEARCH TERMS:** UEFA Cup

**SPORTS: French Open**

**TOPIC:** The road to the men's finals is wide open after the upset of last year's champion Rafael Nadal. Why was his loss astonishing? Who are the other players who should have a chance at winning?

**SEARCH TERMS:** French Open

**SPORTS: David Beckham**

**TOPIC:** Now that the Italian soccer season is over, David Beckham is scheduled to return to his U.S. team, the Los Angeles Galaxy. Their season began in March. How do you think he will be received by his team members? How do you think the fans will react to his return?

**SEARCH TERMS:** David Beckham

**SPORTS: Manny Ramirez**

**TOPIC:** Professional baseball's highest paid player, Manny Ramirez of the Los Angeles Dodgers has been suspended for 50 games for use of a banned substance, the fertility drug HCG. How does this drug work on the body to improve athletic performance? What has been the impact on the game and its fans?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Manny Ramirez

**ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS**

**FILM AND TELEVISION: American Idol**

**TOPIC:** Kris Allen has beaten Adam Lambert to become this year's upset winner of the singing contest on the popular show American Idol. Why did so many people think Mr. Lambert had the edge? What successful popular music stars today got their start on American Idol? How does a performer go about trying to make his/her debut on American Idol?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Kris Allen AND Adam Lambert AND American Idol

**FILM AND TELEVISION: Cannes Film Festival**

**TOPIC:** The annual French film festival has finished. Who have won the top prizes? What was the opening selection of the festival? What was the most anticipated premiere at the festival? Why is this festival so highly regarded?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Cannes Film Festival

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: British Architect wins Prince of Asturias Prize**

**TOPIC:** Norman Foster, a British architect, has won the Prince of Asturias Prize, among the highest awards in Spain, for his innovative glass and steel buildings. Can you name some of the buildings and sites he is famous for?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Norman Foster

**FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Alaska Museum**

**TOPIC:** Aldus Higgins Chapin, executive director of the Corcoran Gallery and president of the board of the Washington Ballet has passed away. What other interesting careers has Mr. Chapin had? What legacies did Mr. Chapin leave on Washington DC arts?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Aldus Chapin AND Washington

**LITERATURE: Marilynne Robinson**

**TOPIC:** This year's Orange Prize for Fiction goes to American author Marilynne Robinson. What novel did Ms. Robinson get recognized for with this award and what was praised about the book? What book did Ms Robinson win the Pulitzer Prize for and what was praised about that book?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Marilynne Robinson

**PERFORMING ARTS: Tony Awards**

**TOPIC:** The musical Billy Elliot has won 10 Tony awards. What writers and composers worked on this musical to make it a success? What other musicals have these people worked on?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Billy Elliot

**PERFORMING ARTS: Eurovision Song Contest**

**TOPIC:** The Eurovision song contest – hosted by Russia - is now over and it was won by Norwegian singer Alexander Rybak. While there were some controversial aspects around the contest, it had an audience of over 100 million people. Do the winners of these contests go on to successful music careers? What other contests like this have you heard about?

**SEARCH TERMS:** European Broadcasting Union AND contests

**PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS**

**PEOPLE: Susan Boyle**

**TOPIC:** Susan Boyle was a breakout star on the TV program Britain's Got Talent. How have the intense media coverage and changes in her life affected Ms Boyle? What kind of music does Ms Boyle sing? Why were her performances so striking?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Susan Boyle

**PEOPLE: Alexander is the Greatest**

**TOPIC:** In a recent television poll in Greece asking who was the most popular Greek of all time the winner was Alexander the Great! Who was Alexander the Great? What was he known for, and what were his greatest accomplishments? Why do you think he was chosen?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Alexander the Great

**PEOPLE : Zhao Ziyang**

**TOPIC:** Chinese leader Zhao Ziyang, whose sympathies with the students and activists in the 1989 pro-democracy movement caused his dismissal and jailing, managed to secretly record his autobiography before his death. It has been published to coincide with the anniversary of Tiananmen Square massacre. How will the release of this book affect public opinion in China? Do you think the Chinese will have the opportunity to see the book?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Zhao Ziyang

**PEOPLE : Aung San Suu Kyi**

**TOPIC:** Just after her sixth year of house arrest, the military government in Burma decided to put Aung San Suu Kyi on trial again. An American swam to her property without her knowledge and she did not report the intruder to the government. While her house arrest is over, she is in jail because of the new charges. What can world leaders do to pressure the military government to allow for her civil rights? While Suu Kyi has suffered the ramifications of the swimmer's intrusion, how has the swimmer been reprimanded? How has the swimmer justified his actions?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Aung San Suu Kyi

**PEOPLE: Newt Gingrich**

**TOPIC:** Ex-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich has become a very vocal critic of President Obama as he and the Republican Party plan to regain political power. What have been Mr. Gingrich's objections to the policies of the Obama Administration? What have been Mr. Gingrich's recent controversial public comments?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Newt Gingrich

**PEOPLE: Millvina Dean**

**TOPIC:** Millvina Dean the last survivor of the sinking Titanic has passed away. Who were some of the famous people on the Titanic the night it sunk? What changes in the luxury ship industry did the sinking of the Titanic bring? Why did the Titanic sink?

**SEARCH TERMS:** Millvina Dean