Opinion Columnist Project  
Pre-IB English 9A  
Ms. Mauer



**DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NEWS ARTICLE AND OPINION PIECE?**

**GOAL:** In order to prepare for the quarter two persuasive writing common task, students will begin an independent study of the professional writing of newspaper columnists, focusing on topics that interest them, and studying the writer’s techniques as they try to persuade.

**OPTIONS:** CHOOSE one of two project options:

A) Select one opinion columnist to follow for a four-week period as he/she writes about various topics.

- or -

B) Select a single topic of interest and read *various* writers’ opinions over a four-week period.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Part I**: Annotate five articles—one per week, two the final week. Identify the author’s claim, evidence, purpose, and tone, and comment on the author(s)’ persuasive strategies. **Bring to class a closely annotated article each Friday in October.** You will earn evaluative grades, so be sure to review the annotation scoring rubric. (REMEMBER: News articles are NOT opinion pieces. Carefully select opinion articles.)

**Part II:** Research and annotate at least one political cartoon that makes a similar claim as one of your opinion articles. Compare HOW the cartoon and the opinion article use different techniques to make a similar argument. (Due: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

**Part III:** Write a well-developed paragraph (Due: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). Either:  
A) Analyze the columnist’s style, as evidenced in the five essays

-or-

B) Evaluate which writer makes the strongest case and defend your choice, analyzing the columnist’s persuasive strategies.

**Notes:**  
1) News sources: *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Miami Herald, Chicago Tribune, The Wall Street Journal*. (These are some of the largest circulated daily papers in the country.)

2) You may select any columnist from the above listed newspapers. You might want to research Pulitzer Prize-winning columnists. You must get permission to work with a columnist from another paper.

3) Annotations will earn completion and evaluative grades. Your final paragraph will earn an evaluative grade.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** You will write an argumentative essay (Common Task) on a topic of your choice, incorporating opposing opinions. You will either write an essay a) in the style of the columnist you studied, or b) using at least three of the most persuasive techniques of the various columnists you studied.