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winner

→ **Fall 2000 John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize**

We are pleased to invite applications for the Fall 2000 John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize. This prize of \$400 will be awarded to the teacher submitting the best sequence of writing assignments for a First-Year Writing Seminar.

Assignment sequences in a writing course are built around a series of essay topics (probably for a portion of the course). Submissions should include a rationale and a description of your plans for eliciting and responding to student drafts and revisions, as well as a description of how you ready students for each essay assignment, for example by engaging them in preparatory writing exercises, including informal writing designed to help students understand the material on which they subsequently write formal essays. Reflections on what worked well, and why, and what you would change another time, are welcome.

Submissions are due in 159 Goldwin Smith by **Friday, December 15**. No exceptions can be made. The winner will be announced to the Cornell community, and copies of the winning assignment sequence will be made available to all interested staff.

→ **Fall 2000 John S. Knight Assignment Sequence Prize Application**

Instructor's name Daniel J. Sherman

Department Government Course title Environmental Politics

Should I win a prize, I give the John S. Knight Institute permission to publish, quote from, and/or distribute copies of my essay, and to distribute publicity to newspapers and other publications, local and/or national, about my winning the prize.

Writing About Environmental Politics
title of assignment sequence

Instructor's signature 
Date 12/15/00

FALL 2000
JOHN S. KNIGHT ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE PRIZE
DANIEL J. SHERMAN
GOVT. 100.1 ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

I designed this sequence to reflect the variety of ways students might be asked to write about political topics in their lives beyond Cornell. I was struck by the fact that few if any of my students would become political scientists. Yet both "the environment" and "politics" are truly global concepts that point to phenomena everywhere and always around us. My task was to create assignments that simulated the ways in which ordinary citizens undertake writing tasks that address environmental politics. At the same time I wanted to prepare the students for the type of writing they would encounter at Cornell. The resulting sequence uses conventional academic assignments, like critical essays and debate points, to develop familiarity with environmental topics. These assignments help to prepare the students to undertake non-academic writing tasks that begin with a letter, and move to an editorial, grant proposal, and policy memo. In the essay that follows I provide the rationale behind each assignment and a description of the smaller exercises that I used to prepare the students for each new writing task.

JOINING THE COMMUNITY

These assignments challenge the students to write from a variety of perspectives, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of styles. I was very aware of the difficulties this might pose, after reading Joseph and Colcomb's article about the "two metaphors for learning" in the Writing 700 packet.¹ Each new writing task is an exercise in "joining the community." The writer must enter a new field as a novice and learn to negotiate the new writing conventions and styles. With this in mind, I used the writing task that students were most familiar with—the critical essay—to develop substantive expertise on environmental issues and then carefully controlled the information applicable to the other assignments through hypothetical scenarios. The letter, editorial, grant proposal, and policy memo are each responses to a hypothetical scenario that I developed throughout the semester in series of "notes." The "notes" were usually press releases from Ponderosa, a fictitious county in Colorado facing a controversial land use decision. By controlling the information relevant to each assignment, I hoped to enable the students to focus on each new writing task without the burden of extensive research or integrating too many overlapping issues.

ASSIGNMENT ONE: Letter to Representative Heinemann

On the first day of class I distributed "note #1," which announced the impending sale of a large tract of forested land known as the Warbler Tract, owned by the Department of Energy. The land had several potential buyers including Ponderosa County, the Sangre de Cristo Land Trust, and some private interests. The note provided information on the forest ecosystem, basic data on Ponderosa County, and information on Representative Heinemann, the local representative to Congress. I asked the students to write a letter to this Congressman advocating a particular use for the Warbler Tract.

I used this assignment to familiarize the students with the context of this hypothetical scenario and to familiarize me with their writing ability. This assignment was an excellent diagnostic tool. The students felt comfortable writing in this format. Many chose to create a persona (a Cub Scout Den Mother, a 65-year-old retired businessman), which helped them to comfortably move into this writing context. However, several students were very concerned that I would ask them to "jump in" to the other assignments in the same way. It was clear they had some anxiety about the other assignments on the syllabus. Therefore, I had to gradually work up to each new assignment, familiarizing the students with each new writing task.

ASSIGNMENT TWO: Editorial in the Ponderosa Times

Before the students would be ready to write the editorial they had to gain some substantive knowledge on natural resource issues and biotechnology, be familiar with the environmental philosophy driving the land use decision, and get comfortable with the new type of writing. I called the first preparatory assignment "guessing game." This assignment consisted of several different writings on the Waste Isolation Pilot Project in New Mexico. I asked the students to guess the purpose, audience, and source of each piece and justify their guesses based on specific differences among the writings. I found this assignment very effective for revealing the central purpose of this course—exploring

¹ Joseph Williams and Gregory G. Colomb, "The University of Chicago: Two Metaphors for Learning," in *Programs that Work*, eds. Toby Fulwiler and Art Young (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1990), 97-111.

various modes of writing about political issues. The assignment also generated a great discussion on the choices writers make and the consequences of these choices on the reader. The students were really struck by how differently each author conveyed the same basic set of facts.

The rest of the preparatory assignments form a pattern that precedes each of the major assignments. I used debates to help the students gain substantive knowledge on the relevant environmental issues. The students prepared for debates by reading several articles with conflicting perspectives and writing “**debate points**” that outlined an argument for each side of the issue. I then assigned students the positions they would take when they arrived on debate day. The debates helped the students read the material critically and forced them to consider multiple sides of every issue. The vast majority of students highlighted the debates on the mid-term evaluations as something they both enjoyed and found useful. I added an additional debate in response to this feedback. I used **critical essays** to help the students respond to the readings on environmental philosophy. These essays were conventional academic writing assignments that gave us the opportunity to develop writing fundamentals. Each essay went through peer review and multiple submissions and revisions. To prepare for the editorial, the students responded to a chapter on the “Promethean” environmental philosophy, an approach exemplified by the public officials in the hypothetical scenario. Finally, I used **group critiques of sample editorials** to familiarize the students with the new writing task. Small groups read three editorials and reflected on what they thought “worked” and “did not work” in each piece. We then used a large group discussion to generalize from these individual critiques.

The students were then ready to receive “**note #2**” on the latest developments in Ponderosa County. Press releases revealed that the land had been sold to the county, which was planning to zone half of the land for development (a biotech lab run by the Monsanto Corporation), and to maintain the other half as a nature park. Weyerhaeuser, a lumber company, was hired to clear the land for development and manage the nature park. The note also contained comments from several public officials including an open letter from Representative Heinemann extolling the virtues of the deal. I asked the students to write an editorial responding to Heinemann and the county’s plan. Before they started writing, I held a “**press conference**” at which they could ask additional questions about the scenario. This was a fun exercise, every student participated, and the scenario developed some additional complexity in response to the questions. The editorials went through a peer review process as well as multiple submissions and revisions. The most challenging aspect for the students was fitting a complex argument into a limited space (about 450 words) and transitioning from an academic style to one accessible to general newspaper readers. Each student worked through several revisions before they mastered the editorial.

ASSIGNMENT THREE: EPA Environmental Education Grant

While most students had probably read editorials before entering the class, few had written or read grant proposals. However, in a class discussion, we did manage to make a link to a form of writing they were familiar with—scholarship applications. This revelation helped us to explore the purpose of grant proposals and the characteristics of the audience. This assignment was based on an actual EPA grant offered to community groups that undertook environmental education projects. The first preparatory assignment was a **critical essay** responding to the “democratic pragmatist” environmental philosophy. This is the philosophy behind the EPA’s community outreach programs. Once again, the critical assignments gave students the opportunity to hone their writing fundamentals, while familiarizing themselves with the relevant environmental theory for the next new writing task. The EPA website provides a **grant writing tutorial**, which served as another useful preparation tool. The tutorial assumes no prior grant writing experience and is a step by step approach through each section of the application. The tutorial provided the students with the level of expertise necessary to **critique a sample grant proposal**. Once again, we broke into small groups to critique the sample. This time however, the groups were deemed “judges,” and each group was charged with determining whether the proposal should be granted the funding. We then had a large group discussion where each small group justified their decisions.

Finally, the students were ready for “**note #3**” and the grant assignment itself. Once again, the assignment was set in Ponderosa County. I asked the students to create a community organization and an environmental education project that addresses the needs of Ponderosa. We had another “**press conference**” to clarify additional questions about the context. This was without a doubt the most successful assignment of the semester. The students were very grateful for the creative opening, and this really seemed to enliven their writing. The grants were developed through peer review, an in-class workshop, and multiple revisions. Perhaps the biggest challenge of this assignment was fitting highly creative projects into the numerous substantive categories required in the application. Students also worked hard to

craft highly organized and direct writing styles. Not surprisingly, the lessons students learned in grant writing led to improvements on subsequent critical essays.

ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Department of Energy Policy Memo on Environmental Justice

The policy memo was the most difficult assignment. This assignment left Ponderosa County behind for a new hypothetical scenario and forced students into a highly specialized mode of writing. I used a **debate** to help the students develop familiarity with the environmental justice issue. I also conducted a **policy presentation** on the topic, where the students took the perspective of government employees during the question and answer period. A **critical essay** assignment on the topic allowed them to solidify their arguments. We spent more time than usual critiquing a sample memo. Students (justifiably) found government writing stilted, confusing, and indirect. I encouraged them not to mimic the sample, but to improve on it. We decided to go beyond critiquing the sample, to actually lifting sections out of the document and working to improve them. This was not a planned exercise, but it was invaluable to the students. It helped them see how they could satisfy the strict organizational requirements of a memo, while still expressing a writing voice that was compelling, natural, and easy to read. "**Note #4**" outlined the requirements of the memo and a list of facts relevant to the case. I asked the students to assume a role on a policy team that was examining the possibility of environmental justice concerns around Los Alamos National Laboratory. They had to assimilate previous documents (which I provided) on the topic and the new information from this specific case into a coherent recommendation for future action. Once again, we held a "**press conference**" to address any additional concerns about the scenario. These memos went through *extensive* revisions in peer editing sessions, an in-class workshop, conferences, and multiple submissions and revisions. The final products were considerably better than most government memos, or final documents for that matter, that I have read.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is always room for improvement. In the future I think I can integrate the critical essays in a tighter way with the other assignments. While the essays helped students gain substantive knowledge and work on writing fundamentals, the students did not always connect the ideas from these assignments with the other projects. However, on the whole I was very satisfied with this course. It was experimental for me in two important ways. First, I was assigning writing tasks that extended beyond academic essays. Second, I used hypothetical scenarios rather than relying solely on academic writing and current events. In the final analysis these two experiments worked beyond my wildest dreams. The hypothetical scenario seemed to release a wave of suppressed creativity in the students that made the assignments enjoyable for them. The wide range of writing tasks encouraged the students to experiment and take chances with their writing, which I think helped them to become more conscious of the choices they make as writers.

ASSIGNMENTS AND THE ACCOMPANYING PREPARATORY WORK

Assignment #1: Letter to Representative Heinemann

Assignment #2: Editorial in the Ponderosa Times

- **Preparatory Work for Assignment #2**

- ✓ Guessing Game Exercise: reading several different writings on the Waste Isolation Pilot Project in New Mexico and guessing the different types of publications, audiences, and purposes.
- ✓ Debate on Natural Resources: whether or not nature has intrinsic value.
- ✓ Critiquing a sample critical essay, after reading Trimble's chapter on critical analyses.
- ✓ Critical essay responding to Dryzek's chapter on the Promethean environmental discourse.
- ✓ Peer editing and revision.
- ✓ Re-writing critical essay.
- ✓ Debate on Biotechnology.
- ✓ Exercises on rhetorical devices.
- ✓ Group critique of sample editorials.
- ✓ Questions and "press conference" on Note #2.
- ✓ Peer editing and revision.
- ✓ Re-writing the editorial.

Assignment #3: EPA Environmental Education Grant Proposal

- **Preparatory Work for Assignment #3**

- ✓ Critical essay responding to Dryzek's chapter on the Democratic Pragmatist approach to environmental problems.
- ✓ EPA Grant Tutorial.
- ✓ Group critique of sample EPA grant proposal.
- ✓ Questions and "press conference" on Note #3.
- ✓ Peer editing and revision.
- ✓ Grant writing workshop.
- ✓ Re-writing the grant proposal.

Assignment #4: Department of Energy Policy Memo on Environmental Justice Recommendation

- **Preparatory Work for Assignment #4**

- ✓ Debate on environmental justice.
- ✓ Critical Essay responding to two writings on environmental justice.
- ✓ Group critique of sample memo.
- ✓ Policy presentation on environmental justice: questions and answers.
- ✓ Questions and "press conference" on Note #4.
- ✓ Peer editing and revision of policy memo.
- ✓ Policy memo workshop.
- ✓ Re-writing the policy memo.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1: Letter to Representative Heinemann on the Warbler Tract

Your task in this assignment is to write a letter to your representative in the US House of Representatives, Charles W. Heinemann, on the impending sale of the Warbler Tract by the Department of Energy. You must offer your best attempt to persuade Heinemann on your preference for the ultimate use of the Warbler Tract. Base your letter on the information provided in Note#1. Feel free to create a persona to help you take a perspective on this issue.

Follow Hacker's formatting instructions *exactly* in section D3-a. The letter must not exceed one page. The margins should be one inch on top, bottom, left and right. You must use Times New Roman font, size 11. Heinemann's address is:

308 White Church Rd.
Ponderosa, CO 80537

Your address is:

17 Shift St. Apt.#1
Ponderosa, CO 80537

The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize you with the hypothetical scenario. Several other assignments will be based on this developing story. Another purpose of this assignment is to familiarize me with your writing.

Assignment #2: Editorial to the *Ponderosa Times* on the Warbler Tract Development Plan

Your task is to write a response to Rep. Heinemann's open letter in the form of an editorial to the *Ponderosa Times*. All the information you need has been provided in Note #2 and the press conference. The editorial should be a convincing, easy to understand *argument*. You can create your own personal history for the sake of the exercise (e.g. age, sex, career, experiences, and/or interests as a resident of Ponderosa). Remember the editorial strategies that we worked out in class. Your editorial should be no longer than 450 words. Any information that is not your own must be credited in the actual text (*not with footnotes or parenthetical notation*) as it would be in an editorial. Have Fun!

Assignment #3: Environmental Education Grant Proposal

(adopted from the EPA's Environmental Education Grant)

Purpose

The Environmental Education Grants Program is authorized under Section 6 of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990 (PL 101-619). The goal of this grants program is to support environmental education (EE) projects which enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to make informed and responsible decisions that affect environmental quality. The program provides financial support for projects which design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques.

Eligibility

Any local or tribal government education agency, state government education or environmental agency, college or university, not-for-profit organization, or noncommercial educational broadcasting entity may submit a proposal.

Funds cannot be used for:

1. construction projects;
 - EPA will not fund construction activities such as the acquisition of real property (e.g., buildings) or the construction or modification of any building. EPA *may, however, fund activities such as creating a nature trail or building a bird watching station* as long as these items are an integral part of the environmental education project, and the cost is a relatively small percentage of the total amount of federal funds requested.
2. non-educational research and development; and/or
3. environmental information projects that have no educational component.
 - EPA will fund only environmental education projects, not projects that are solely designed to develop or disseminate environmental information. As discussed, **environmental education** teaches critical-thinking, problem-solving skills, and decision-making skills. By contrast, **environmental information** provides facts or opinions about environmental issues or problems, but does not enhance critical-thinking, problem-solving, or effective decision-making skills. Although information is an essential element of any educational effort, environmental information is not, by itself, environmental education.

A sampling of some of the priorities in past years includes:

- educating teachers, students, parents, community leaders, and the public about human health threats from environmental pollution, especially as it affects children;
- educating teachers, faculty, or nonformal educators about environmental issues to improve their environmental education teaching skills (e.g., through workshops);
- educating the public about environmental issues in their communities through community-based organizations or through print, film, broadcast, or other media.

Amount of Money Available to Applicants

The EPA sets a maximum limit of \$250,000 in environmental education grant funds for any one project. However, because of limited funds, EPA prefers to issue smaller grants to more recipients with the available funds. Grants of \$25,000 or less are awarded by EPA's ten regional offices. Grants for more than \$25,000 are awarded by EPA headquarters in Washington, DC. As mandated by law, the majority of grants are awarded for projects which request \$5,000 or less. Consequently, most of the grants that are awarded are done so on a Regional level.

Evaluation

EPA education and environmental specialists as well as professionals in the environmental education community are involved in evaluating all EPA environmental education grant applications. The most important factors considered in selecting the grantees are: the effectiveness of the delivery system in reaching the targeted audience, whether the goals are realistic, and the strength of the evaluation.

Components of a Proposal

The grant proposal is a work plan that describes your proposed project. The components of the work plan include: (1) a project summary or abstract; (2) an introduction to your organization; (3) a statement of the problem or the need for a program; (4) a description of the goals and objectives, (5) the methods for delivering the project to the target audience; (6) a plan for evaluating the progress and outcomes of the project; (7) and the project budget.

The proposal must be printed with laser printer or ink-jet comparable quality, in Times New Roman size eleven font, double-spaced, with one inch margins on all sides. The total length of the proposal must not exceed nine pages. You are advised to use summary headings for the different components of the proposal.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT

Although this summary is generally the first section of a proposal, you will probably write it after you have fleshed out the rest of the proposal. Make the summary clear, concise, and specific—it's worth the effort. The potential funder is likely to read this section first; and some people in the decision-making process may see nothing more. Keep this abstract brief, **it should be no more than one double-spaced page long**. Include a description of the proposed project, its goals and expected results, and introduce your organization. For clarity, you may wish to use charts, bullets, or outlines in lieu of narrative for the program description. Note the grant amount requested from the funder and the total amount of the project budget.

INTRODUCTION TO YOUR ORGANIZATION

This section provides an opportunity to build your credibility with the funder. Build a picture of organization—its history, purpose, goals and objectives, accomplishments, service area, and population served—helps you make the case that your organization, rather than another, should be funded. Many funding decisions rest heavily on the reputation of the applicant or key project personnel. Use the Introduction to make a clear connection between your organizational interests and the priorities of the funder. As should the rest of your proposal, this section **should be specific and brief. It should be no more than one double-spaced page long**. The funder will be looking for evidence that your organization—and the project personnel—can carry out the program.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, OR NEED FOR PROGRAM

While the Introduction focuses on your organization, this section concentrates on the problem(s) you propose to address through the project. Even if you believe that most people understand the problem you hope to address, take advantage of this additional opportunity to establish your organization's credibility by offering an informed and incisive view of the problem. What situation prompted your organization to propose this environmental education project?

Clearly connect the abilities and background of your organization with the problem you hope to address. Give evidence that the problem exists within the area you hope to serve. Be factual and specific in your assessment of the problem, speaking in general or emotional terms will not help the funder know how your organization intends to have an impact.

If statistical evidence is available and appropriate, use it sparingly. It is more compelling to summarize what the statistics say and substantiate the summary, with a few particularly relevant facts than it is to use too many statistics, charts, and graphs. Supplement the statistical evidence with statements from other organizations and individuals concerned with the problem. Some proposals respond to very tangible problems in society that are amenable to a problem-solving approach. Other projects arise in response to situations that are less tangible, more value-oriented, and do not easily fit into a problem-solving equation. For these proposals, it may be helpful to think of this section as being an assessment of needs.

This section should be no more than one double-spaced page long.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This section deals with the changes you hope to see as a result of your program. In the context of the problem you have described, and with the capabilities of your organization, what do you hope to accomplish?

- The **goal statements** should illustrate the overall thrust of the program. Since these are not designed to be measured directly, goals can be stated broadly.
- **Objectives**, on the other hand, should state specific and measurable outcomes of the proposed project. In what ways will the project improve the situation? What measurable changes do you anticipate as a result of the project? Is there a target audience for this change? What is the time frame during which you expect to see change?

It is often a challenge to determine how the results of your program can be measured, and what kinds of results to anticipate. It is a challenge worth taking up, since your program proposal will be stronger if you know—and can clearly articulate—what kinds of changes you seek. Setting concrete objectives is often an important step in ensuring that you can communicate your ideas to the people who will be reviewing the proposal.

This section should be no more than two double-spaced pages long.

METHODS

Now that you have described your organization, the problems you are concerned with, and the changes you hope to effect, you have set the context for a description of the project. A variation of the journalist's "Ws" applies to the preparation of this Methods section: You must answer *who* will be doing *what* for *whom*, *when*, and *why* you selected this approach.

This is your opportunity to paint a clear picture of your proposed project. Provide an overview of the strategy and activities that make up the project and then describe them in enough detail so that the funder will know how the project will work. Try to anticipate the reviewer's questions. If your project requires trained volunteers, for example, explain how the volunteers will be recruited and educated. If a traveling exhibit is part of your proposal, provide a general description of the exhibit content. If you plan to use a survey instrument, tell how, when, and by whom the survey will be developed and conducted, and explain how the results will be used.

When possible, explain the *products* that you anticipate resulting from the project. These might be materials developed, public meetings held, exhibits constructed, teachers trained, or workshops conducted. Link your strategies, activities, and products to a clear project schedule. Be realistic about this schedule, since you will have to live with it later. Tying the schedule to measurable outcomes or milestones will make it easier to report to the funder about your progress after the grant is awarded.

Include as part of your project description a characterization of the target audience. Cite how this audience has been consulted during the development of your proposal, and how the target audience will be represented in your efforts to evaluate the project. The Methods section also provides another opportunity to enhance your credibility by showing the funder that you are aware of alternative approaches to the problem you are addressing. It is important to tell the funder why you have chosen the approach you propose. What are the shortcomings of other approaches? Why will they not work as well for your organization or your purposes?

This section should be no more than two double-spaced pages long.

EVALUATION

Every project proposal should contain an evaluation plan that will operate in conjunction with the project. Evaluation can contribute to your project in two ways. Process evaluation provides information necessary for improving the project as it goes along. Outcome evaluation measures the success of your project in meeting its objectives.

In this section, describe to the funder both the evaluation procedures and the criteria that will be used. Make your evaluation plan as objective as you can--plan to measure the program's results in concrete ways. You may want to enlist the assistance of an outside organization in designing and/or conducting your evaluation, since it is often difficult to be objective in evaluating your own program. If you choose this approach, consider including the organization's name and brief credentials in the proposal. The evaluation plan should be clearly linked with the objectives you have established in a previous section of the proposal. **It should be no longer than one double-spaced page long.**

BUDGET

Build your budget--your estimate of project costs and sources of funding--on the groundwork laid by the *Project Goals and Objectives* and *Methods* sections of your proposal. Based on that understanding of your project, develop a list of costs.

Personnel Costs are the salary or wage costs for each program staff member, the following information provides clarity:

- Number of persons working under a particular title
- salary per position

Non-Personnel Costs include facilities costs, equipment rental, lease or purchase, office supplies, travel, and other costs that do not fit in another category. These are itemized in logical groupings. It may be helpful to distinguish what money is going to support the program (office supplies, staff travel, etc.) and what money is going directly to support program participants (overnight lodging for students, teaching materials, etc.).

Indirect Costs are expenses which, while not easily identified with a particular project, are necessary to the operation of the organization that administers the grant-funded program. Indirect costs might include items such as building and equipment maintenance, administrative salaries, general telephone or supply costs, and depreciation. It is often impractical to separate these costs into the categories listed above, so it is common to use a standard indirect cost rate that attempts to estimate what percentage of an organization's general costs the project should cover.

Make your budget detailed, and make sure that you can substantiate the figures you use. Be sure that the funder will be able to understand your budget. It should be clearly laid out and any specialized items or labels should be explained. **The budget should be no longer than one double-spaced page long.**

ASSIGNMENT #4: Policy Memo Assignment

You are now an employee of the United States Department of Energy (DOE). You are part of the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) compliance team for a DOE facility. The team leader has asked you to submit a policy memo on the potential environmental justice implications of a proposed site.

Other team members are conducting studies and compiling information on the potential for “significant and adverse environmental effects” stemming from the proposed site. **Your task** is to assess the site location in terms of minority communities, low-income communities, and other demographic characteristics within a 50 mile region of influence (ROI). **You must answer the following question with your memo:** If the NEPA team finds significant and adverse effects stemming from the proposed site, is there good reason to invest in an intensive environmental justice investigation on top of the standard environmental assessment?

Your memo will consist of the following components:

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This is a comprehensive summary of the entire memo. It is similar to the first section of a grant proposal in that it must familiarize the reader with each section of the whole document. This may be the only part of your document that many government officials read.
- An executive summary should be no longer than one double-spaced page.

2. BACKGROUND ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- This may be drawn from the lecture I will give on the history of environmental justice as a policy issue, or other sources.
- The object of this section is to familiarize the reader with the underlying history of the issue on which you will be giving policy recommendations. A definition of environmental justice is critical here. Often times, background is given in a chronological format.
- This should be no longer than one double-spaced page.

3. DOCUMENT HISTORY

- Once your readers have a general understanding of the environmental justice issue, the document history provides them with an understanding of how the issue has been treated in the regulations that apply to your particular government agency.
- You must cover the following documents:
 - **Executive Order 12898** (Executive Order on Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations) and **accompanying memorandum**. This document is available on-line at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/tools/tools.htm>. This document presents the general goals and purpose of the federal effort to address environmental justice concerns. And, the memorandum specifically links the executive order to NEPA—your particular niche in the policy process.
 - **National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)**. This document is available on-line at <http://tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa/policy/policy.htm#policy>. It is useful for its general goals and philosophy (stated in the beginning) and how this might relate to environmental justice.
 - **United States Environmental Protection Agency: Final Guidance for Incorporating Environmental Justice Concerns in EPA’s NEPA Compliance Analyses April 1998**. This document is available on-line at <http://es.epa.gov/oeca/ofa/ejepa.html>. It provides more explicit guidance on the definition of key terms (minority, low-income, population) and the demographic aspects that NEPA analysts should cover.
 - **United States Department of Energy: Working Draft Guidance on Incorporating Environmental Justice Considerations into the Department of Energy’s National Environmental Policy Act Process October 1998**. I will provide this document. It is useful for relating the previous documents to the DOE specifically, and in outlining a specific environmental justice strategy for the DOE.
- The document history should be no longer than 2 double-spaced pages.

4. STATEMENT OF FACTS

- In this section you relay the information on:
 - The minority population in the census block groups within 50 miles of the site.
 - The low-income population in the census block groups within 50 miles of the site.
 - The comparative statistics on Age, population density, literacy, and economic growth in the counties within 50 miles of the site.
 - Environmental Justice Index results for the census block groups within 50 miles of the site.
- I will provide all of this information.
- This section should not exceed 2 double-spaced pages.

5. FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATION

- In this section you use the facts from the previous section to answer the question: If the NEPA team finds significant and adverse effects stemming from the proposed site, is there good reason to invest in an intensive environmental justice investigation on top of the standard environmental assessment?
- This section should be no longer than one double-spaced page.

6. REFERENCES

- Cite all relevant materials (including lecture and all government documents you use).