

These links take you to sites where you can quickly find something good to read. As you get more familiar with the assignment, you should try to venture out into the other areas according to your interests.

1. **[This I Believe](#)**: *This I Believe* invites people to write about the core beliefs that guide your daily life. NPR airs these personal statements from listeners each Monday. The producers hope to create a picture of the American spirit in all its rich complexity. *This I Believe* is based on a 1950s radio program of the same name, hosted by acclaimed journalist Edward R. Murrow. In creating *This I Believe*, Murrow said the program sought "to point to the common meeting grounds of beliefs, which is the essence of brotherhood and the floor of our civilization."
2. **[Inventor of the Week](#)**: Each week MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) profiles a different inventor, from the past or present. Visit the current Inventor of the Week, or Browse the Archives, where you can search for information on a specific inventor or invention. I thought this was a very interesting and nicely designed site.
3. **[The History of US \(Webisodes\)](#)**: Freedom is what has drawn to America countless human beings from around the world; it is what generations of men and women have lived and died for; it is, in a profound sense, our nation's highest calling. This is also the story of the chief obstacles to American freedom – the "unfreedoms" that have littered our national story, and in some cases have called its very integrity into question. But despite all the mistakes and all the tragic setbacks, there is an overarching positive message to this series. This is a history of the United States as the unfolding, inspiring story of human liberties aspired to and won.
4. **[Teens and Money](#)**: This website offers fun, short, and profitable articles about money. All articles are written specifically for teens. Whether you want to make a million, learn how the stock market works, or how to get more money from your parents, this site is for you.
5. **[New York Times' "Portraits of Grief"](#)**: I added this page because these people lead interesting lives. I also include it here so we can honor them so that from their lives and the reminder of their loss, we might better appreciate and live our own.
6. **[Poetry 180](#)**: This site is devoted to high school students. US poet laureate Billy Collins feels that poetry must be read and enjoyed, not constantly "tied to a chair and beaten with a hose until it says what it means." Here you will find 180 poems, one for each day of the school year, that you will enjoy and want to write about.
7. **[Daily Word](#)**: Every word they choose is worth knowing, but what is interesting is the story behind the word. Every day you get a word and its history. For those who like language or want to improve their vocabulary, this is a fun pick.
8. **[Daily History](#)**: This site is part of the Library of Congress's American Memory Project. Each day they create a remarkable page about an important person or historical event related that date. For those interested in looking further, each page also includes many additional links for further study. Each day you will find an image, a story, and an important piece of information about your own country.
9. **[Pictures of the Week](#)**: *Time* magazine offers a compelling visual documentation of the week through photographs. The site also includes easily accessible archives of past weeks. Every picture here is worth...well, you guessed it: a thousand words.
10. **[Biography.com](#)**: Interested in Jackie Robinson? Julius Caesar? Albert Einstein? Go to Biography.com and type in the name of someone that has always interested you.
11. **[TED \(Technology, Entertainment, Design\)](#)**: An amazing site! Here is how TED describes itself: "TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from those three worlds. Since then its scope has become ever broader. The annual conference now brings together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives (in 18 minutes). This site makes the best talks and performances from TED available to the public, for free. More than 200 talks from our archive are now available, with more added each week. These videos are released under a Creative Commons license, so they can be freely shared and reposted."

## Reading Literature

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1. [Searching for Books that Touched Lives](#): This article just appeared in the *Washington Post*. It is about a teacher in Washington, D.C. who read my book *I Hear America Reading* and asked her students to bring in the books that meant the most to them. Consider writing about the book you would bring in and what it means to you.
2. [Favorite Poem Project](#): This page offers a list of Americans' favorite poems; each poem is available in written form but also as a very cool video (never more than five minutes) based on the poem. This is one of my favorite sites.
3. [Daily Poetry](#): This site features a different poet every day. The poems are usually short and almost always interesting. If you like poetry you will like this site.
4. [Poetry 180](#): This site is devoted to high school students. US poet laureate Billy Collins feels that poetry must be read and enjoyed, not constantly "tied to a chair and beaten with a hose until it says what it means." Here you will find 180 poems, one for each day of the school year, that you will enjoy and want to write about.
5. [Six-Word Memoirs](#): These memoirs, each six words long, are accompanied by a drawing or photograph that adds an interesting visual element to the story. Amazing what you can say in six words.

## Reading Images

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1. [NEW: National Gallery of Art Virtual Tours](#): The National Gallery in Washington, D.C. offers excellent virtual tours and exhibits of different artists. Highly recommended.
2. [Getty's Art Education Web Site](#): This site offers ongoing exhibits of interest to anyone interested in art. Because the site is targeted for schools, the contents tend to be of special interest to kids. Very good site whose contents change regularly; so come back often.
3. [The Dorothea Lange Photographic Archive](#): Housed at the Oakland Museum, Lange's photographs provide a powerful and useful set of images for the classroom. Many teachers studying the Depression and authors like John Steinbeck will find this site invaluable.
4. [Smithsonian Institute Image Gallery](#): The ultimate American museum offers outstanding collections of photographs from around the world.
5. [Walker Evans Photography Exhibit](#): Arguably the most important photographer in the 20th century, Evans' images will reward your eye. This exhibit has been traveling around the country.
6. [Picturing the Century: 100 Years of Photography from the National Archives](#): The galleries are arranged by broad chronology (A New Century, the Great War, etc.); the portfolios include works by Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange and other great chroniclers of American life.
7. [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#): A site that honors our diverse artistic traditions; includes interactive exhibits and experiences. You will love this site.
8. [Time Magazine's Photo Essays](#): *Time* magazine offers a compelling visual documentation of the week through photographs. The site also includes easily accessible archives of past weeks. Every picture here is worth...well, you guessed it: a thousand words.
9. [The Oxford Project](#): This is a fascinating project! The photographer set out to capture every person in a town and photograph them over a twenty-five year period to see how they changed. Photographs are beautiful black-and-white images presented in an ebook format with short but interesting text that tells you more about the project.
10. [The Academy of Achievement](#): Here is how they describe their mission: "The American Academy of Achievement is like no other organization in the world. For more than 45 years, this unique non-profit entity has sparked the imagination of students across America and around the globe by bringing them into direct personal contact with the greatest thinkers and achievers of the age. The annual International Achievement Summit has provided thousands of outstanding students with an unforgettable, life changing experience – one in which young people whose

dreams will determine our collective tomorrow draw inspiration, courage and strength from those individuals who have shaped our world of today."

11. [Found Magazine](#): Here is how they describe Found.com: "We collect found stuff: love letters, birthday cards, kids' homework, to-do lists, ticket stubs, poetry on napkins, doodles—anything that gives a glimpse into someone else's life. Anything goes.  
We certainly didn't invent the idea of found stuff being cool. Every time we visit our friends in other towns, someone's always got some kind of unbelievable discovered note or photo on their fridge. We decided to make a bunch of projects so that everyone can check out all the strange, hilarious and heartbreaking things people have picked up and passed our way. "
12. [Picturing America](#): Here is how they describe Picturing America on their website: "Picturing America, an exciting new initiative from the National Endowment for the Humanities, brings masterpieces of American art into classrooms and libraries nationwide. Through this innovative program, students and citizens will gain a deeper appreciation of our country's history and character through the study and understanding of its art. The nation's artistic heritage—our paintings, sculpture, architecture, fine crafts, and photography—offers unique insights into the character, ideals, and aspirations of our country. Picturing America, a far-reaching new program from the National Endowment for the Humanities in cooperation with the American Library Association, brings this vital heritage to all Americans."
13. [Indexed](#): Here is a description from *Time* which gave Indexed.com one of its 2008 Web Awards: Created by writer and illustrator Jessica Hagy, this blog reduces the rich pageantry of life to small Venn Diagrams and bar graphs that graphically and (often hilariously) highlight life's profundities and absurdities. One diagram features three circles labeled "laxatives," "acne cream," and "wart removal" sharing an intersection marked "no eye contact with the cashier". Another Venn fable: three circles marked "crumbs" "pennies" and "years of your life" share the intersection "in the couch cushions." A dating/romance line graph shows a steadily declining number of "potential mates without baggage" as one's age increases, with the non-baggage mates plummeting to zero after age 40.
14. [TED \(Technology, Entertainment, Design\)](#): An amazing site! Here is how TED describes itself: "TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from those three worlds. Since then its scope has become ever broader. The annual conference now brings together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives (in 18 minutes). This site makes the best talks and performances from TED available to the public, for free. More than 200 talks from our archive are now available, with more added each week. Our mission: Spreading ideas. We believe passionately in the power of ideas to change attitudes, lives and ultimately, the world. So we're building here a clearinghouse that offers free knowledge and inspiration from the world's most inspired thinkers, and also a community of curious souls to engage with ideas and each other."

## Reading Letters and Journals

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1. [Peace Corps Stories](#): Here you will find some of the journals that have been written by Peace Corps Volunteers about their countries and experiences. These stories offer "day in the life" views of what it is like to live in other countries. (I served in the Peace Corps in Tunisia)
2. [Milestone Documents](#): The following is a list of 100 milestone documents, compiled by the National Archives and Records Administration, and drawn primarily from its nationwide holdings. The documents chronicle United States history from 1776 to 1965.
3. [Teen Diaries](#): Since 1996, the Teenage Diaries series has been giving tape recorders to young people around the country to report on their own lives. They conduct interviews, keep an audio journal and record the sounds of daily life usually collecting more than 40 hours of raw tape over the course of a year.
4. [War Letters](#): Launched on November 11, 1998, the Legacy Project is a national, all-volunteer initiative that encourages Americans to honor and remember those who have served—or are currently serving—this nation in wartime by seeking out and preserving their letters and e-mails

home. We believe these personal messages offer unique insight into warfare and the thoughts and perspectives of those who have experienced it firsthand.

Wartime letters and e-mails are also powerful reminders that U.S. troops are not just soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen; they are husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, fathers and mothers. Every one of these individuals has a distinct voice and personality, and our mission is to preserve their stories—as expressed in their own words—for posterity.

### Reading Multimedia Texts

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1. [This American Life](#): Here is how they describe their own wonderful show: "We view the show as an experiment. We try things. There was the show where we taped for 24 hours in an all-night restaurant. And the show where we put a band together from the musicians' classified ads. And the show where we followed a group of swing voters for months, recorded their reactions to everything that happened in the election up through their final decision. And the show where one of our contributors went on a fast to find out if, in fact, fasting leads to enlightenment as promised. We sometimes think of it as a documentary show for people who normally hate documentaries. A public radio show for people who don't necessarily care for public radio. In addition to the radio show, our staff has a movie deal with Warner Brothers which may lead to stories from the radio show being made into motion pictures."
2. [Teen Diaries](#): Since 1996, the Teenage Diaries series has been giving tape recorders to young people around the country to report on their own lives. They conduct interviews, keep an audio journal and record the sounds of daily life usually collecting more than 40 hours of raw tape over the course of a year.
3. [America's Story](#): This well-organized site offers a range of texts that explore people, events, music, and trends in American history. Articles are easy to find and offer interesting information and useful links about people and events worth knowing about.
4. [Radio Diaries](#): Our mission is to find extraordinary stories in ordinary places. We work with people to document their own lives for public radio: teenagers, seniors, prison inmates and others whose voices are rarely heard. We help people share their stories and their lives in their own words, creating documentaries that are powerful, surprising, intimate and timeless
5. [Lost and Found Sounds](#): A very cool site, created and run by The Kitchen Sisters. These radio pieces combine storytelling and history, sounds and images. This site and their work has won many awards. For those who like to hear their stories read by great voices, with rich textures of sound behind them, you can't go wrong. A long menu of pieces to choose from each month. All are short, all are very good.
6. [Wisdom Project](#): Andrew Zuckerman went around the world to interview well known artists, thinkers, scientists, and leaders to ask them what they have learned. These short videos offer powerful insights into their experiences and our own.
7. [Digital Storytelling](#): The Center for Digital Storytelling is a non-profit training, project development, and research organization dedicated to assisting people in using digital media to tell meaningful stories from their lives. Our focus is on developing large-scale projects for community, educational, and business institutions, using the methods and principles of the Digital Storytelling Workshop. We also offer workshops for organizations and individuals and serve as an international clearinghouse of information and resources about storytelling and new media.

### Reading Speeches

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1. [American Rhetoric](#): Years worth of great speeches are captured here, as well as some interesting exercises for students of speech and American History. Check out the Daily Speech or the Most Requested Speeches or dig deeper and look at the searchable database or the 100 Great Speeches.

## Reading the Media

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1. [American Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame](#): The title tells you all you need to know. A very good web site with interesting exhibits about musicians and music.
2. [The Newshour Essays](#): These five-minute video essays appear regularly at the end of The Newshour. They are wonderful commentaries on our society, but more importantly they are good. They incorporate words and images to help us understand art, sports, politics, and ourselves. You can view the actual video-essays through the web site. When you go to this page you see a nicely organized list of topics, complete with descriptions of what they talk about in the essay.
3. [Newseum](#): A very cool site that offers those interested in news an interactive history of...the news. Of special interest are such features as "Capture the Moment: The Pulitzer Prize Photographs," an online exhibit of photographs that show us the images behind the stories we read. You will like this site if you like: images, cultures, news, or technology.

## Reading Information

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1. [The World Question Center 2001](#): The Edge is a meeting place for thinkers who share their Big Questions and answers to them. Currently, there are responses to "What questions are no longer being asked?"
2. [Internet Women's History Sourcebook](#): For Women's History Month, start with this thorough set of links to primary sources in women's history world wide. For major historical periods and for different continents and countries, you'll find documents on general resources, great women of that time and place, the structure of women's lives, women's agency, feminism (where present), women's oppression, and gender construction.
3. [Inventor's Museum](#): This site includes concise articles about different inventions and inventors. The inventions and inventors are organized into different categories for easy reference. You could look, for example, under "Women Inventors," or under "Medical Inventions." (Note: the previous link for this "died." I am hoping this new link serves as a useful substitute.)
4. [Indexed](#): *Time* magazine describes her blog: "Created by writer and illustrator Jessica Hagy, this blog reduces the rich pageantry of life to small Venn Diagrams and bar graphs that graphically and (often hilariously) highlight life's profundities and absurdities. One diagram features three circles labeled "laxatives," "acne cream," and "wart removal" sharing an intersection marked "no eye contact with the cashier". Another Venn fable: three circles marked "crumbs" "pennies" and "years of your life" share the intersection "in the couch cushions." A dating/romance line graph shows a steadily declining number of "potential mates without baggage" as one's age increases, with the non-baggage mates plummeting to zero after age 40. But there's always a graphic ray of hope. To honor the death of Kurt Vonnegut, three circles marked "cruelty" "death," and "waste" intersect at Vonnegut's lifelong sweet spot: "humor and hope."

## The Most Influential People of the 20th Century

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To mark the turn of the century, TIME has profiled 100 individuals—from five fields of endeavor—who helped shape the last 100 years.

1. [Leaders and Revolutionaries](#)  
Twenty people who helped define the political and social fabric of our times
2. [Artists and Entertainers](#)  
Twenty pioneers of human expression who enlightened and enlivened us
3. [Builders and Titans](#)  
Twenty innovators who changed how the world works

4. [Scientists and Thinkers](#)  
People who overthrew our inherited ideas about logic, language, learning, mathematics, economics and even space and time
5. [Heroes and Icons](#)  
Twenty people who articulate the longings of the last 100 years, exemplifying courage, selflessness, exuberance, superhuman ability and amazing grace.
6. [Albert Einstein: Person of the Century](#)  
He was the iconic 20th century scientist, the bumbling professor with the German accent, a comic cliché in a thousand films. Instantly recognizable, like Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp, Albert Einstein's shaggy haired visage was as familiar to ordinary people as to the matrons who fluttered about him in salons from Berlin to Hollywood. Yet he was unfathomably profound — the genius among geniuses who discovered, merely by thinking about it, that the universe was not as it seemed. [Read the full story by Frederic Golden](#).

#### **Reading the World: Hard to Categorize**

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1. [Scott McCloud](#): A brilliant cartoonist whose web site offers a rich array of good stuff. Not limited to those who like cartoons or comics.
2. [Visual Thesaurus](#): Unlike any thesaurus you've ever seen or used; guaranteed to make you think and say, "Wow."
3. [San Francisco Exploratorium](#): An amazing site that features online exhibits, experiences, and resources for those who love science and ideas.