

B: Sample Current Events Assignment

This assignment requires that the student select a newspaper or internet article reporting on an alleged crime. It should be no longer than one-page in length and contain the following sections written in the student's own words. A copy of the article should be attached to the assignment for the instructor's review.

Title: You should title your current event in your own words. Do not merely use the title of the "article you chose to review, but rather something that is indicative of the theme of the article and your subsequent discussion on the topic.

Source: You may choose an article from a local, regional or national newspaper, news magazine, or internet site (make sure you check the validity of this source and that it is not just a blog). Include the given title to the article, the news source, and date of the article(s). [Note – you may find more than one article on the same topic you choose to address.]

Facts: What are the facts, in your own words, with quotations where appropriate, that are appropriate to the topic and issues you wish to address. This should be approximately one paragraph long, which gives the reader enough information to understand the issues and commentary.

Status: What is the status of the case/topic that you chose to address? In other words, what is the status of the case at the time of your review (e.g., arrest stage, in the trial process, during sentencing, or on appeal). This information will come into play when you are writing your opinion and questions regarding the topic and issues. This section most likely requires just a sentence or two for the purpose of this assignment.

Issues: You are to raise issues of criminal law/criminal procedure that you find of interest. Unlike case brief assignments, do not merely state the issues, but express why you find them to be of particular interest to you. They may not be contained directly in the substantive portion of the article as many of such "reports" merely raise topics and state facts, from which you will draw your own conclusions and questions. Again, a couple of sentences will be sufficient for this section of the paper.

Conclusions: What do you make of this case as it is reported? What do you think is the next stage of the process? What do you think should happen in the case? What is the significance of it from a societal perspective? This discussion section should be approximately a paragraph long and make up the substance of your paper.

Questions: What additional facts would you like to know? What additional questions came to mind while you were reading/reviewing this article? Usually, such media reports are not complete as the journalists are into rapid "reporting" and do not give the public all of the information necessary. Do not short-shrift this section as the articles usually do not address a completed case and, even it reports the conclusion of a case.