

# ARTS

## Topic 1

Given the importance of human creativity, one would think it should have a high priority among our concerns. But if we look at the reality, we see a different picture. Basic scientific research is minimized in favor of immediate practical applications. The arts are increasingly seen as dispensable luxuries. Yet as competition heats up around the globe, exactly the opposite strategy is needed.

Adapted from Mihaly Csikszentmihaly

### Assignment:

Is creativity needed more than ever in the world today? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, current events, or your own experiences or observations.

# TECHNOLOGY

## Topic 2

The root of the word “technology” is the Greek word *tecknos*, which means “art.” Technology has been linked to art for centuries. For example, it took almost four years for Leonardo Da Vinci to paint the Mona Lisa, the most famous painting in the world. Today, it would take a graphic artist using a computer about five minutes to reproduce her. Howard Sparks, a well-known author of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, suggests that, “The art of our era is not art, but technology. Today, Rembrandt is painting automobiles; Shakespeare is writing research papers; Michelangelo is designing more efficient bank lobbies.”

Source: Howard Sparks, Quote Cache Website, <http://quotes.prolix.nu/Technology/> (9/30/04)

### Assignment:

What is your view of the idea that today’s art is technology? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, current events, or your own experiences or observations.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Topic 3

In 1959, C.P. Snow, a former scientist turned novelist, gave a controversial lecture called “The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution.” He was still controversial in 1971 when he told a *New York Times* interviewer, “Technology is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other.” Again, he expressed the ambivalence people feel about technology.

Source: C.P. Snow, *New York Times* 15 March, 1971.

### Assignment:

What is your view of the idea that technology has many great benefits as well as very dangerous consequences? In an essay, support your position by discussing examples from literature, the arts, science, technology, current events or your own experiences or observations.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Topic 4

“Technological progress has merely provided us with more efficient means for going backwards.”

### Assignment:

Do you agree that technological progress has made us go backwards? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your viewpoint on the issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experiences, or observations.

## TECHNOLOGY/SCIENCE

### Topic 5

Nuclear Energy is a man-made resource developed as an alternative energy source. This technological achievement is very controversial in nature because of the possible devastation that nuclear energy could create. Proponents argue the significance and practical usage of the technology and how it has benefited thus far. The inception of this technology and the dilemma that it has created could be best described through a direct quote of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., “all progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem.”

### Assignment:

Based on your prior knowledge, what are your views in reference to nuclear energy? In an essay, support your position by discussing an example (or examples) from literature, the arts, science and technology, current events, or your own experience or observation.

## **TECHNOLOGY/SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 6**

The world is very different now. "For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty, and all forms of human life." – John F. Kennedy

#### **Assignment:**

Should our advances in technology be used to abolish the social wrongs in society or used to correct different forms of human life? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, current events, or your own experiences or observations.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Topic 7**

"Information Superhighway is really an acronym for 'Interactive Network for Organizing, Retrieving, Manipulating, Accessing and Transferring Information on National Systems, Unleashing Practically Every Rebellious Human Intelligence, Gratifying Hackers, wiseacres, and Yahoos'." – Keven Kwaku

#### **Assignment:**

Do you agree that today's Information Superhighway is benefiting humankind in the exchange of useful information? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, current events, or your own experiences or observations.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Topic 8**

The media not only transmit information and culture, they also decide what information is important. In that way, they help to shape culture and values.

Adapted from Alison Bernstein

#### **Assignment:**

Do newspapers, magazines, television, radio, movies, the Internet, and other media determine what is important to most people? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, current events, or your own experiences or observations.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 9**

In an age of changing priorities from country to country, many governments feel their form of government is the true way to life. However, how you institute or spread that form of government is critical to having a true democracy for the people. Is it best to implement that influence by political election (by the people), monarchy (Kings and Queens), or dictatorship? Joseph Schumpeter, on capitalism, socialism, and democracy once said, "The ballot is stronger than bullets."

Source: Joseph Schumpeter

### **Assignment:**

What is your view on the point that "The ballot (election) is stronger than bullets" when it compares to the American government system versus the governments of North Korea, China, Russia, or Haiti? Support your view with examples or compare and contrast America's system to any two of the above countries' government systems.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 10**

*"A law must be enforced to be effective."*

Source: <http://www.utd.edu/~duym/topicsI.htm>

### **Assignment:**

Write a unified essay in which you perform the following tasks, explain what you think the above statement means; describe a specific situation in which a law might not be enforced and still be effective; and discuss what you think determines whether or not a law must be enforced to be effective.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 11**

*"It is each citizen's duty to obey the laws of the nation."*

Source: <http://www.utdallas.edu/~duym/topicsII.htm>

### **Assignment:**

Write a unified essay in which you perform the following tasks: explain what you think the above statement means; describe a specific situation in which a citizen might not have a duty to obey a law; and discuss what you think determines when citizens have a duty to obey the laws of the nation and when they do not.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 12**

*Society is best served by giving people as much freedom as possible.”*

Source: <http://www.utdallas.edu/~duym/topicsIII.htm>

#### **Assignment:**

Write a unified essay in which you perform the following tasks: explain what you think the above statement means; describe a specific situation in which society might not be best served by giving people as much freedom as possible; and discuss what you think determines when society is best served by giving people as much freedom as possible.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 13**

*“An understanding of the past is necessary for solving the problems of the present.”*

Source: <http://www.utdallas.edu/~duym/topicsIII.htm>

#### **Assignment:**

Write a unified essay in which you perform the following tasks: explain what you think the above statement means; describe a specific situation in which solving a current problem might not require an understanding of the past; discuss what you think determines whether or not the past should be considered in solving the problems of the present.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Topic 14**

“The computer is probably the single most important invention of the twentieth century? Computers affect us not individually but also as a society as a whole. You see computers almost everywhere.”

Source: *IC3 Basics*, Ambrose, etc.

#### **Assignment:**

Identify how computers are used in our daily lives and explain how the Internet, the World Wide Web, e-mail, and networks affect the use of computers. Plan and write an essay in which you develop your position with supporting material and examples taken from your reading, experience, or observations.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 15**

*"I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law."*

Source: Martin Luther King, Jr.

#### **Assignment:**

What are your views of the idea that to welcome imprisonment is a way to express your views against injustice? Would you be willing to go to jail for something you believe in? Why or Why not? Plan and write an essay developing your point of view.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 16**

Scientists now have access to the information in the human genome. DNA is used to identify a person's presence at a crime scene as well as your genetic predisposition to diseases. Scientists will be able to share DNA information about you through the Internet. Doctors can prescribe medication according to your DNA. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "All progress is precarious, and the solution of one problem brings us face to face with another problem."

Source: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

#### **Assignment:**

What is your view of insurance companies and the government having access to your unique DNA code and how will this affect your privacy? In an essay, support your position by discussing an example (or examples) from current events, literature, or your own experience or observation.

## **TECHNOLOGY/SCIENCE**

### **Topic 17**

Some people would say that science and technology are the same, while others would argue that each is applied independently.

#### **Assignment:**

What is your view of the relationship between science and technology? In an essay, support your position by discussing an example (or examples) from literature, history, science and technology, current events, or your own experience or observations.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 18**

The U.S. is the biggest consumer of petroleum products. We rely heavily on other oil-producing countries to maintain our lifestyle and economy. Some people view this as helping other countries while others believe this is dangerous to our own economy.

#### **Assignment:**

Do you think purchasing oil from other countries strengthens the U.S. as a global consumer or weakens our country by being dependent on others? Support your position by discussing an example from science, technology, and current events.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 19**

As an American citizen, we inherently have duties and responsibilities to perform. Failure to perform these duties, such as voting, is failure to meet your responsibilities. President John F. Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

Source: John F. Kennedy

#### **Assignment:**

Is joining the military what President Kennedy meant by his statement of the responsibility of citizens to the United States? In an essay, support your position by discussing an example or examples from literature, current events, or your own experience, or observation.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Topic 20**

How and why did the founders create America’s system of federalism? How does federalism limit the powers of both the national government and the states? How does federalism extend opportunities for citizen participation?

#### **Assignment:**

Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples from your reading, studies, current events, or your own experiences or observations.

## **MISC**

### **Topic 21**

As one grows to adulthood, values are acquired throughout childhood and high school. One of the values we are taught early on is honesty and integrity, an ethic that is valued in the workplace today. In a quote from “What Makes a Great CPA (accountant)?” the author says that “CPAs are ideally their own best watchdogs, and this requires a reliable internal compass that guides one in doing the right thing at all times.”

Source: “What Makes a Great CPA?” Robert Half International,  
[www.startheregoplaces.com](http://www.startheregoplaces.com)

### **Assignment:**

Today, many students feel that cheating in school is acceptable, a value that is in sharp contrast to honesty and integrity that employers expect in the workplace. Think of examples where your core values of honesty and integrity have been challenged either in school or on the job. Support your positions with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations. Reflect on the idea that one can do “the right thing at all times.”