# Current Event Articles

Reading Scientific topics in popular literature

Carl Sagan: *The Demon Haunted World:  Science as a Candle in the Dark.*
- tools to use when reading
  - Should be independent confirmation of the "facts"
  - Debates on the evidence by knowledgeable people from all points of view.
  - There cannot be an "authority," – at most, there are experts.
  - Try to think of another explanation for the results – or another hypothesis
  - When looking at an argument, every link in the chain must work, not just most of them.
  - Quantification is much more persuasive than qualification, but beware of incomplete statistics
  - Control experiments are essential
  - Variables must be separated
- remain skeptical!

ScrAPES:
Every quarter (2 times a semester), you will find an article that relates to what we have covered in class from a popular literature source (Time, Newsweek, LA Times, NY Times, Washington Post, Library databases, etc.).  You will write a reflection following the format described below.
You will also sign up to present your current event one day per quarter (2 times a semester).  You will present the information on your current event to the class.  If you are absent on your assigned day and do not talk to me before hand, you will receive a zero on the presentation portion of the current event.  You reflection and article will be due on the date that you present the article.  Any articles submitted after the due date will be considered late and will earn you half credit.

In order to write a good reflection, you should be able to do the following:

1. SUMMARY:  Provide a BRIEF summary of the article – what does the author say happened and why.  One short (5-8 sentences) paragraph.
2. ANALYSIS:  Give a good analysis of the article.  Look for bias and "authority."  Go through the list of tools to use when reading in order to determine if this article can be considered valid, or do you have questions about its validity.  *As a template*, you can start by answering the following questions:
   a. Who Says So? – is there any place where there is bias?
   b. How does he Know? – what is the data, 'facts', analysis presented? Is this biased?
   c. What's missing? – this one is not in the article.  Is there anything else you can think of that would add to your understanding of what is being presented?  Think of contrary data.
   d. Do they change the subject rapidly, without answering the question? – (if not, don't write an answer for this question – it's just something to keep in mind. If they do change the subject, what does that say about the validity of the research being presented?)
3. REFLECTION:  This is the longest section.  It is your *opinion* of the research based on the article, your analysis of the article, and your **prior knowledge**!  You will relate what is being presented in the article to what we have covered in class.
   a. Does it make sense?  Does what they are presenting make sense with their data and what you already know.
   b. How does it relate to what we have covered in class?  Be specific and provide details from material covered in class.
   c. Do you agree with the methods or findings?  Why or why not? This is your opinion, but provide data or information presented in the paper to support your opinion.  You must be informed.
   d. How would you confirm or disprove these results?  Give a short outline of a different experiment that you would do where these results could be confirmed or disproved.