

Metcalfe Journalism Rubric					MAX SCORE
CONTENT					
Topic	Topic is irrelevant or overworked. Fails to convey much insight or emotion	Topic is not as relevant or may have been overworked. Does not give readers a reason to think, reflect, feel emotion or laugh	Topic is relevant to audience, but may have been recently covered. May give readers a reason to think, reflect, feel emotion or laugh	Topic relevant to audience, but not overworked. Causes readers to look more closely at an aspect of agronomy, crops, or soils, and how these topics related life or society. May help them rethink an issue	5
Title	No Title	No special quality to grab readers attention	Grabs the readers attention	Grabs readers attention, is creative and appropriate	5
Lead (introduction)	No lead, or very weak lead. Lead is adequate but not extremely catchy or original; or there is no nut graph, even though it is necessary. First paragraph is inappropriate for story or missing	Lead is adequate but not extremely catchy or original. The lead is not inviting to the reader. Weak first paragraph. Does not contain needed parts. Does not hook the reader	Lead is appropriate to story and fairly effective at getting attention; shows some signs of originality. The lead states the topic, and makes an attempt to draw the reader into the article. Interesting first paragraph. Tries to hook the reader with a funny, clever, or surprising statement	Lead is original and catchy; fits well with the rest of the story; invites readers into the piece; contains a strong open that tells the essence of the story. The lead is inviting and draws the reader into the article. Strong first paragraph. Interesting, tries to hook the reader with a funny, clever, or surprising statement	5
Focus	The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information. No clear angle; story is rambling and awkward.	Main idea is somewhat clear, or the writer tries to bring in too much off topic material. Story lacks strong sense of unity and focus; several areas seem to detract from angle. Needs more supporting information and thoughts	Main idea is clear, but the supporting information is general. Focus is fairly clear but one or two areas detract from the primary angle	There is one clear, well-focused, defined topic. Main idea is supported with detailed information. Focus of story is clear; nothing detracts from primary focus; everything contributes to overall angle. The main idea stands out and is supported by detailed thoughts and information	5
Writing style/voice	Conveys no sense of the person behind the words. Tone is not appropriate; lifeless or mechanical. Writing lacks a clear voice and original style.	Conveys a limited sense of the person behind the words. Tone is somewhat not appropriate for purpose and audience. Occasionally expressive. Writing is rather bland; lacks a clear voice and/or sense of originality; is wordy or redundant; or diction may be repetitive.	Conveys a general sense of the person behind the words. Tone is generally appropriate for purpose and audience. Somewhat individualistic or expressive. Writing is adequate but not extremely compelling or original; may be wordy or voice may be unclear; storytelling may not be as vivid or sophisticated.	Writing conveys a strong sense of the person behind the words. Tone is suited to purpose and audience. Individualistic, expressive, and engaging throughout. Writing is strong and effective with a clear voice and a variety of sentence structures; piece is tightly written; utilizes active verbs and vivid word choice; original writing.	5
Balance	No evidence that other side was investigated. No facts or counterargument is given.	Some evidence of research, but sources not very good. Student is extremely unprofessional in their counterargument.	Some evidence of good research. Writer shows the other side of the story but could give better facts to clearly display the other side's point of view.	Strong evidence of good research and interviewing by the use of effective facts and quotes if needed. Writer clearly shows the other side of the argument and professionally explains why the other side is incorrect.	5
Conclusion	There is no conclusion	The writer rambles in the conclusion	The writer draws a conclusion, but it is not satisfying	The writer draws and appropriate conclusion and writes it well	10
Graphic	There is no graphic, or the graphic present is incomplete or does not relate to the story. Message of graphic is absent or contradictory to the rest of the story. Lack of contrast dramatically weakens the overall work. Graphic elements are unorganized. Typography choices, if present, weaken the work. Imperfections are highly distracting and take away from the overall effectiveness. Legend is not included, if needed	Graphic, photo or figure is present, and appears to relate to content of the manuscript. Message is slightly confusing. Use of contrast and/or white space could be improved. An absence of alignment or composition creates a cluttered overall look. Spacing, font, and effects create distractions. Imperfections in the work are noticeable and distracting. Legend is included, if needed.	Graphic(s) provide clear meaning, but do not add interest or importance of message. Image quality is good, but not great. Elements are generally lined up appropriately, centered, left or right if needed. Colors are used well, and do not clash with one another or clutter the work. Font choices are appropriate and professional, and support the work. Legend is clear, and supports the manuscript text.	Graphic(s) allows reader to clearly perceive what is important and connected in the story. Legend enhances the material in the text.	10
Content Total					50
STRUCTURE					
Organization	Lack of organization, difficult to read choppy, jumps around story is choppy; organization is unclear; few effective transitions; does not lead the reader into the body of the text	somewhat organized, attempts to use transitions, often difficult to follow, story lacks strong organization, jumps around too much or lacks effective transitions; Opens broadly to lead reader into text, but body of the text lacks coherent structure.	Organized. Most transitions are clear, most often easy to read, story is organized and most transitions and connections are clear, but either organization is somewhat lacking or the sense of flow is somewhat abrupt. Organization supports comprehension of the reader.	Strongly organized with transitions and paragraphs that flow together, Easy to read. Story opens with lead at the top, making a path for readers to understand the specific topic. Details are elaborated in the central portion of the piece, and conclusion leads readers out of the details leaving them with broader overall perspective. Most important information is in the middle and a conclusion summarizes everything at the end. It is strongly organized with clear transitions and logical connections that create a sense of being tightly woven together	15
Sentence/Paragraph structure	Missing, invalid or inappropriate topic sentence. Main idea missing. Insufficient, vague, or undeveloped examples. Unrelated details; no transitions. Inconsistent or Inappropriate tone; Awkward, unclear, or incomplete sentences; Bland diction	Acceptable topic sentence presents one idea. Sufficient number of examples and details that relate to the topic. Acceptable arrangement of examples. Transitions may be weak. Acceptable tone; some variety in sentence structures; adequate diction	Clearly stated topic sentence presents one main idea, Examples and details relate to the topic and some explanation is included. Details are arranged in a logical progression; appropriate transitions. Appropriate tone; clear sentences with varied structures; effective diction	Interesting, original topic sentence, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea. Interesting, concrete and descriptive examples and details with explanations that relate to the topic. Thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples; Mature transitions between ideas. Appropriate tone, distinctive voice; pleasing variety in sentence structure. Vivid diction	10

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Word Choice	Writer uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the readers interest	Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch, or flair	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone.	Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement seems accurate, natural, and not forced.	5
Sources (i.e., References and image credits)	One or fewer sources used in story; or sources are improperly identified; much info is given without attribution; inaccurate or vague info . Opinion is not well supported with facts. No expert quoted. May use sources for quotes and facts which are less than credible (suspect) and/or are not cited correctly.	Two or fewer sources are used; some sources are improperly identified without attribution. Most info is accurate but may not be as thorough. The expert adds off topic information. Most sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly. Quotes are general, vague, bland and factual.	A minimum of three sources are used and clearly identified in story; most information is attributed to sources; information is accurate but sources could be better. The expert is quoted. The purpose is clear, but it does not add to the text. All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and most are cited correctly. Quotes are interesting or insightful.	Evidence of author trying to get as many sources as necessary to adequately present his or her opinion of this issue. Sources are from reputable web sites or articles. An expert is quoted in the article. The purpose is clear, and of interest, and adds credibility to the article. All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly. Quotes are colorful, authoritative, and insightful.	5
Grammar	Errors distract the reader, has many errors in journalistic style, names are misspelled; or spell check was not run; or contains many grammatical errors, Writer made more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the readers from the content	Several errors (3+) in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling. Has several errors in journalistic style structure. Story is spell checked and all names are correct; contains several grammatical errors. Writer made 3-4 errors in the grammar or spelling that distract reader from the content	Few (1-2) errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling. Has few (one or two) errors in journalistic style. Contains few grammatical errors and all names are correct. Writer made 1-2 errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the paper is still easy to read	NO errors in grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling. NO errors in journalistic style (quotes, dates, scores, numbers, money, percents, time, commas, etc.). Attributions are done correctly. If it is a two-sentence quote attribution is in the middle. Story is well edited and virtually flawless; NO spelling errors; includes the proper spelling of all names. Each paragraph contains one thought. Writer made no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the paper is exceptionally easy to read.	15
Structure Total					/50
Sub Total					/50
Bonus – Fits meeting theme? Up to 5 pts					/5
TOTAL					