



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Making a World of Difference

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

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2018 • STATE



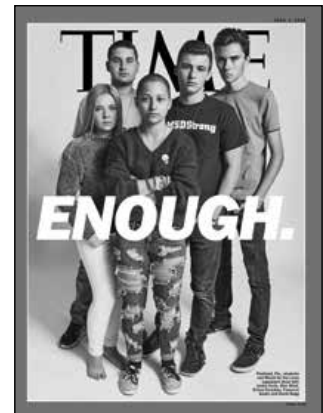
Dec. 18, 2017



Jan. 29, 2018



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April 2, 2018

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UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

STATE • 2018

- 1. Malala Yousafzai, the world's youngest Nobel laureate, returned to her home for the first time since Taliban militants shot her in the head more than five years ago for fighting for the right of girls to go to school. Where is she from?**
 - a. Afghanistan
 - b. India
 - c. Saudi Arabia
 - d. Pakistan
- 2. The first happened March 2. The next two on March 12. Sending Austin police scrambling during the South by Southwest festival, how were a teenager and 39-year-old man killed and an elderly woman critically injured?**
 - a. snipers
 - b. nerve agent, Novichok
 - c. package bombs
 - d. drunken drivers
- 3. The Federal Reserve wrapped up its first meeting since Jerome Powell was confirmed as the central bank's head. The Fed raised interest rates to the highest since September 2008, to 1.63 percent. Why?**
 - a. the increasing national debt
 - b. so big banks make more money
 - c. to give federal employees raises
 - d. inflation
- 4. Investigators believe it was Yevgeny Prigozhin, a Russian oligarch whose company financed a "troll factory," that used social media to spread fake news during the U.S. presidential campaign. Before that, what was Prigozhin's occupation?**
 - a. KGB agent
 - b. Founder of Russia's Boy Scouts, the Prigozhin Youth
 - c. Founder of VK social media
 - d. chef
- 5. The company is now public. Officials took the unusual step of pursuing a direct listing, rather than a more traditional IPO. Shares were set at a price of \$132 by the New York Stock Exchange. That gave what company a value of more than \$23 billion?**
 - a. Dropbox
 - b. Airbnb
 - c. DocuSign
 - d. Spotify

6. **The government of the city of Atlanta was brought to its knees in March. It was one of the most sustained and consequential attacks ever mounted against a major U.S. city. What kind of attack?**
 - a. bombs in packages mailed to city officials
 - b. ransomware
 - c. social media attacks launched from Russia
 - d. blackmailing numerous officials who had affairs with other city employees

7. **A computer server crucial to a lawsuit against Georgia election officials was quietly wiped clean by its custodians just after a suit was filed. A lawsuit calling for what?**
 - a. reform of old and flawed election technology
 - b. overturning the 2016 presidential election
 - c. calling for compensation for the 6.7 million people whose private data was leaked
 - d. send the person who wiped the data to jail

8. **After a store manager called 911 on two men waiting to meet a colleague and who refused to leave without making a purchase, what chain will close all of its stores for an afternoon to provide training for “unconscious bias”?**
 - a. Applebee’s
 - b. IHOP
 - c. Old Navy
 - d. Starbucks

9. **U.S. President Donald Trump called on the Pentagon to plan what type of event, one modeled after what he saw on Bastille Day. It is now tentatively scheduled for Veterans Day, Nov. 11.**
 - a. a military parade
 - b. a ceremonious withdrawal of all military in the Middle East
 - c. the world’s largest fireworks display
 - d. a coronation

10. **The top Democrat on the House Natural Resources Committee is calling for an investigation into Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke. Zinke is under fire for all of the following EXCEPT...**
 - a. engaging in political activities in support of Florida GOP Gov. Rick Scott.
 - b. acknowledging humans’ role climate change in a report on sea level rise and storm surge.
 - c. assisting a Montana-based gun manufacturer and vendor of which he is a shareholder.
 - d. paying \$139,000 for an office door.

11. **In light of growing tensions with North Korea, the Centers for Disease Control held a session on Jan. 16 to discuss personal safety measure and the training of response teams to prepare for what?**
 - a. sarin gas attack
 - b. nuclear detonation
 - c. volcanic eruptions in the region
 - d. Ebola fever virus epidemic

12. **After months of internal uproar and a letter from U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, the University of Texas at Austin said its China center would not accept funding from a Hong Kong-based foundation that Cruz said did what?**
 - a. helped spread Chinese government propaganda
 - b. funded nuclear proliferation
 - c. supported trafficking of children from China
 - d. used social media to influence U.S. elections

- 13. First he was a U.S. representative from Kansas. What other position did Mike Pompeo hold prior to becoming the 70th United States secretary of state?**
- chairman and chief executive officer, ExxonMobil
 - United States senator from Massachusetts
 - director, Central Intelligence Agency
 - United States Senator from New York
- 14. The U.S. government staggered toward another shutdown in February as Senator Rand Paul engaged in a speech of more than nine hours. What was he objecting to?**
- an amendment to restore the budget caps, set in 2011 to rein in deficit spending
 - the lack of defense spending
 - an extra \$300 billion over the next two years on defense and domestic programs
 - funding for the wall between the U.S. and Mexico contained in the bill
- 15. Hundreds of thousands of people marched in the 2018 Women’s March, taking to the streets to advocate for female empowerment on the anniversary of which event?**
- the 45th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*
 - U.S. President Donald Trump’s inauguration
 - the 100th anniversary of passage of the 19th Amendment allowing women to vote
 - the sesquicentennial of the inception of the women’s rights movement in Seneca Falls, New York
- 16. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton issued cease-and-desist letters to three school districts — Brazosport, Holliday and Lewisville — saying they were using state and local taxpayer money to do what?**
- fund school supplies for teachers by moving money into different accounts
 - report students who are not U.S. citizens
 - fund Title IX, a federal issue, not a state issue, including reporting instances of sexual harassment
 - distribute messages advocating for specific candidates, electioneering
- 17. Painted by Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald, the portraits are “strikingly different” from those of their predecessors. Nevertheless the portraits, including greenery sprout flowers and gray-toned skin, will hang in the National Portrait Gallery. Portraits of whom?**
- the students who died in Florida school shooting
 - Barack and Michelle Obama
 - gold medal Olympians from the U.S.
 - Donald and Melania Trump
- 18. Beset by falling sales and lawsuits tied to the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and hoping to wipe out \$700 million in debt, “America’s Oldest Gunmaker,” maker of the Bushmaster AR-15-style rifle, announced it would file for bankruptcy protection. Which company?**
- Sturm Ruger
 - Smith & Wesson
 - Glock
 - Remington

- 19. If the United States pulls out of the Iran nuclear deal, Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said the Saudis might do what?**
- invade their neighboring country of Iran, immediately declaring war
 - develop their own nuclear weapons
 - block Iran from developing nuclear weapons “at all costs”
 - help their allied country, Russia, in “destabilizing Western countries”
- 20. In a move that sparked outrage from Congressional Democrats, civil rights groups and liberal state attorneys general, the 2020 U.S. Census will include a question about what?**
- citizenship status
 - felony crime convictions
 - drug use, including marijuana and fentanyl
 - voting history
- 21. After the United States, United Kingdom and France launched a military strike, the president of what country said reports of chemical weapons attacks by his forces were “100 percent fabricated”?**
- Syria
 - North Korea
 - Russia
 - Iraq
- 22. After seven decades of business, Toys ‘R’ Us officials announced in March that they would be putting about 31,000 jobs in limbo by doing what?**
- closing the rest of the company’s stores
 - merging with Walmart
 - becoming an online only retailer in a partnership with Amazon
 - reorganizing as part of Chapter 7 bankruptcy to become an employee-owned company
- 23. According to a researcher at the University of Tennessee, a new forensic analysis indicates that bones found on a remote South Pacific island in 1940 are very likely those of which legendary aviator?**
- Charles Lindbergh
 - Jacqueline Auriol
 - Amelia Earhart
 - Jean Mermoz
- 24. Despite allegations of election irregularities and ballot-box stuffing, who was elected as the next president of Russia?**
- Vladimir Putin
 - Alexei Navalny
 - Dmitry Medvedev
 - Vladimir Zhirinovskiy
- 25. Conor Lamb, a Democrat, pulled off a narrow but major upset by winning a special House election in the heart of Trump country. In what state?**
- Florida
 - Ohio
 - Wisconsin
 - Pennsylvania

- 26. Just as the United States was expelling 60 Russian intelligence officers, officials in more than 20 nations — including the United Kingdom that sent home 23 Russian diplomats — vowed to boot Russian diplomats in response to what?**
- interfering in elections around the world by stealing information from Cambridge Analytica
 - stealing information from Facebook, including the phone logs of thousands of customers
 - mailing explosive devices to “disrupt the normal workings of the government”
 - poisoning Russian double agent Sergei in Salisbury, England
- 27. According to a three-year study published in March, a huge, swirling pile of trash is about 1.6 million square kilometers in size, about double the size of Texas. Where are “The Trash Isles”?**
- in the Atlantic Ocean
 - in the Pacific Ocean
 - in low orbit around the Earth, threatening new satellites
 - the Gulf of Mexico
- 28. A federal judge sided with a civil rights group that claimed Texas violated federal law by failing to register voters when?**
- when they registered using a national online voter registration website
 - when they provided proof of residency but not citizenship when getting a driver’s license in person
 - when they provided information including citizenship and phone number via Facebook
 - when they updated their drivers’ license information online
- 29. Repeating something Barack Obama and George W. Bush tried, costing the country more than \$1.3 billion over three years, U.S. President Trump signed an order to use what group to secure the U.S.-Mexico border?**
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
 - the Border Coalition
 - the National Guard
 - the Texas Rangers and similar groups in other border states
- 30. More than 40,000 teachers and thousands of support staff walked off their jobs in April despite a \$6,100 teacher pay raise rushed through the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Mary Fallin. In what state?**
- West Virginia
 - Oklahoma
 - Kentucky
 - Arizona
- 31. Scott Pruitt was renting a condominium linked to an energy company’s powerful Washington lobbying firm. He demanded 24-hour-a-day security. He installed a \$25,000 soundproof phone system in his office. He flew first class at the cost of more than \$100,000. He gave substantial raises to two political employees rejected by the personnel office. Of which governmental agency was Pruitt the administrator of when these events happened?**
- the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General
 - Environmental Protection Agency
 - Veterans Administration
 - National Economic Council

- 32. A center-left novelist and supporter of gay rights defeated a conservative evangelical pastor and singer to become president what country?**
- Armenia
 - Costa Rica
 - Belize
 - Sierra Leone
- 33. The campaign of state Rep. Dawnna Dukes is deeply in debt after her expensive legal battle — fighting 13 felony charges and two misdemeanor charges. The Austin Democrat was cleared in October of what?**
- corruption, including getting paid for days she didn't work
 - supporting other candidates in violation of the Hatch Act
 - fraud and money laundering in connection with FourWinds Logistics
 - paying \$84,000 in taxpayer funds to settle a sexual harassment claim
- 34. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi won a second term in office with 97 percent of the vote, running virtually unopposed for the presidency of what country?**
- Armenia
 - Czechoslovakia
 - Egypt
 - Finland
- 35. With the hiring of Quinton Peron and Napoleon Jinnies, the Los Angeles Rams became the first team in NFL history to do what?**
- hire men on the cheerleading squad
 - hire two quarterbacks from Kansas in the same season
 - spend more than \$10 million on new quarterbacks in one year
 - build a new stadium without any tax subsidy
- 36. The oil spill appeared to be the largest since the Deepwater Horizon explosion in 2010. About 672,000 gallons leaked in two days when a pipeline fractured. Where?**
- off the coast of Kuwait in the Persian Gulf
 - near Amherst, South Dakota
 - in the Gulf of Mexico, southeast of Venice, Louisiana
 - off the coast of Trinidad and Tobago in the Atlantic Ocean
- 37. About a year ago, U.S. President Donald Trump pledged to eliminate the national debt “over a period of eight years.” But, according to the U.S. Treasury, for the first time in history, the national debt surpassed what level?**
- \$8.95 trillion, 21% of GDP
 - \$69.7 trillion, 89% of GDP
 - \$21 trillion, 105% of GDP
 - \$18.9 trillion, 9.9% of GDP
- 38. Saudi Arabia will officially break its 35-year cinema ban by publicly showing what movie in the brand-new AMC theater in Riyadh, the nation's capital?**
- Solo: A Star Wars Story
 - A Wrinkle in Time
 - Black Panther
 - The Death of Stalin

39. Larry Kudlow blamed U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley calling it “momentary confusion.” Haley replied, “With all due respect, I don’t get confused.” What was she supposedly confused about?

- a. The U.S. was planning to bomb sites in Russia to stop production of chemical weapons.
- b. The U.S. was planning to send military forces to South Korea to enforce a North Korea blockade.
- c. The U.S. was planning sanctions against Turkey for the purchase of S-400 air defense missile systems.
- d. The U.S. was planning new sanctions against Russia.

40. It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood when the United States Postal Service released a new stamp in March featuring what television star?

- a. Sally Ride
- b. Mister Rogers
- c. Jaime Escalante
- d. Jim Parsons

ESSAY PROMPT

NOTE: *Contestants who do not write an essay will be disqualified.* Essay length is not a major grading factor as long as the essay is substantial and demonstrates a sincere effort to discuss the assigned topic. Cover as many corners of the issue as practical, including historical, political, economic, current events and cultural, when relevant. Avoid including your personal opinions, as more than enough information on the subject has been published. A focused, concise and specific essay beats a vague and rambling essay.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The academic year has been a year of social movements including, but not limited to, #metoo, #timesup, #neveragain, #blacklivesmatter, #nobannowall. Some of these started in 2017 or 2018. Some are decades old but got new life this year. Pick two or three of the movements active this academic year and discuss the circumstances surrounding each.

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ANSWER KEY

ESSAY PROMPT

The academic year has been a year of social movements including, but not limited to, #metoo, #timesup, #neveragain, #blacklivesmatter, #nobannowall. Some of these started in 2017 or 2018. Some are decades old but got new life this year. Pick two or three of the movements active this academic year and discuss the circumstances surrounding each.

1. D	21. A
2. C	22. A
3. D	23. C
4. D	24. A
5. D	25. D
6. B	26. D
7. A	27. B
8. D	28. D
9. A	29. C
10. B	30. B
11. B	31. B
12. A	32. B
13. C	33. A
14. C	34. C
15. B	35. A
16. D	36. C
17. B	37. C
18. D	38. C
19. B	39. D
20. A	40. B

DISCUSSION POINTS

- *#neveragain*. Never Again is a student-led organization that advocates for tighter regulations to prevent gun violence. The group, also known by the hashtag #EnoughIsEnough, was formed in the aftermath of the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in which 17 students and staff members were fatally shot by a former student, Nikolas Cruz, armed with an AR-15 style semi-automatic rifle. Cameron Kasky, Alex Wind and Sofie Whitney formed the groups in the first four days after the shooting. Wind stated, “The day after the shooting, we said something needs to happen. There needs to be a central space. There needs to be a movement.” Kasky posted on Facebook: “Stay alert. #NeverAgain.”
- *#metoo*. The #MeToo movement, which exploded on Twitter and the red carpet, began more than 10 years ago. Activist Tarana Burke created the campaign in 2007 as a way to reach sexual assault survivors in underprivileged communities. It started gaining national attention after allegations of sexual assault and harassment by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein began dominating the headlines. Burke said she wants people to understand that the MeToo movement is more than just a hashtag. It is, she said, “the start of a larger conversation” and a space for “community healing” for all.
- *#metoo*. The #MeToo movement has become a worldwide phenomenon, searched for on Google in 196 countries in the past year.
- *#metoo*. *Time* magazine named The Silence Breakers as the 2017 Person of the Year, honoring the cause as a whole. “By shining a light on the women whose efforts got the movement off the ground, *Time* acknowledged the profound influence of women like Rose McGowan and Ashley Judd on the year’s news, and their unprecedented ability to enact rapid change,” Alix Langone said in a March 22, 2018 article in *Time* magazine.
- *#metoo*. Women’s March U.S., gained momentum including “Power of the Polls” while protesting Donald Trump and his administration’s policies on immigration, healthcare, racial divides and other issues. Power to the Polls carries a new message with a focus on increasing voter participation through new voter registrations, encouraging more women, as “strong advocates for women’s rights,” to run for office. The number of Democratic women likely challenging incumbents in the U.S. House of Representatives is up nearly 350 percent from 41 women in 2016. A wave of Texas women candidates won or made it to runoffs in more than 50 primary races this spring statewide amid a surge of interest in running for office among women.
- *Time’s Up*. *Time’s Up* shares a similar vision for women’s empowerment with #MeToo, but it has some different, specific goals. *Time’s Up* can be thought of as a solution-based, action-oriented next step in the #Metoo movement. The organization’s aim is to create concrete change, leading to safety and equity in the workplace. It was started by a group of more than 300 women in Hollywood, including Reese Witherspoon, Natalie Portman and Shonda Rimes. The focus is on what happens to people in professional realms, workplace issues.
- *#blacklivesmatter*. Black Lives Matter is now a 4-year-old movement originating in the African-American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism towards black people. In 2013, the movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin the preceding February. In 2017 and 2018, under the banner of #blacklivesmatter, activists held events such as a rally at the College of William and Mary when college students protested an ACLU event and an art exhibit at Virginia Commonwealth University. Black Lives Matter has come under fire for being “anti-police” and, as former New York City Mayor said, “inherently racist.” Other groups, in response, began movements, including #alllivesmatter and #bluelivesmatter.
- Immigrant and refugee rights will continue to be big issues, pushing forward movements such as #muslimban, #daca and #nobannowall.