



UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE
Making a World of Difference

CURRENT ISSUES & EVENTS

 @UILCIANDE
2018 • DISTRICT



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Charging Bull, which is sometimes referred to as the **Wall Street Bull** or the **Bowling Green Bull**, is a bronze sculpture, originally guerilla art, by Arturo Di Modica that stands in Bowling Green Park in the Financial District in Manhattan, New York City.

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- 1. The American Association of Poison Control Centers sent out an alert about the “laundry packet challenge” also called the “Tide pod challenge.” In the first 15 days of 2018, centers have already had 39 cases with “serious health implications.” Cases of what?**
 - a. people swimming in tidal pools with dangerous rip currents
 - b. high school students helping their parents with the laundry
 - c. people eating colorful pods of laundry detergent
 - d. high school students challenging their classmates to wear dirty clothes, something that has a health risk
- 2. The secret House Republican memo reportedly accuses the FBI of improperly obtaining a FISA warrant to surveil what Trump associate?**
 - a. Jared Kushner
 - b. Michael Flynn
 - c. Carter Page
 - d. Stephen Bannon
- 3. There was a “black out” on the red carpet at the Golden Globe Awards related to what movement?**
 - a. #blacklivesmatter
 - b. #metoo
 - c. #alllivesmatter
 - d. #takeaknee
- 4. “I plan to make this organization 100 percent about empowering women,” Gretchen Carlson said. She became the chair of the board of directors of what nearly 100-year-old organization?**
 - a. Stanford University
 - b. Fox News
 - c. Miss America
 - d. “Be Fierce: Stop Harassment”
- 5. The Montecito neighborhood of Santa Barbara County was devastated by fire. A few weeks later, however, it was what that killed more than 17 people?**
 - a. looting from people who couldn’t get food
 - b. magnitude 7.6 earthquake
 - c. mudslides
 - d. Tropical Storm Lidia
- 6. Founded in Waco in 1885, with a secret recipe, and bottled for decades in Dublin, Texas, Dr Pepper has been owned since 2006 by a group based in Plano. What non-Texas company purchased the group for \$18.7 billion?**
 - a. Samuel Adams
 - b. Baskin-Robbins
 - c. Keurig Green Mountain
 - d. BJ’s Wholesale Club

7. **“The political center of the state collapsed today,”** said Rice University political scientist **Mark Jones** referring to when a central figure in Texas politics announced he would not run for re-election and questions began about what he would do with his **\$10 million campaign war chest**. **Who?**
- House Speaker Joe Straus
 - Gov. Greg Abbott
 - Sen. Jeff Flake
 - Rep. Sam Johnson
8. **The INTERDICT Act provided border and customs agents with \$9 million for additional tools to detect what?**
- people crossing the wall between Texas and Mexico
 - packages in the mail that contain marijuana, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamines
 - steroids being used by Olympic athletes
 - smugglers bringing in fentanyl and other opioids
9. **U.S. District Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos ruled that Senate Bill 5, signed by Gov. Greg Abbott in June, doesn’t absolve Texas lawmakers from what?**
- intentionally gerrymandering districts to benefit republican incumbents
 - requiring voters to obtain a single form of state-issued ID, a violation of federal laws
 - responsibility for discriminating against Latino and black voters when crafting voter ID laws
 - invoking a controversial section of the Voting Rights Act, a process called preclearance
10. **Stocks went into free fall, and the Dow plunged almost 1,175 points. Which of the following was NOT true about the Feb. 5 “correction” that alarmed investors up to that point?**
- It was the biggest point decline in a trading day in history.
 - The Dow lost 4.6 percent of its value.
 - The market lost more value than during the European debt crisis in 2011 and the financial crisis of 2008—in one day.
 - The Dow closed at 24,345.75, still not far from the record high of 26,616.71.
11. **After Republican proposals to overhaul the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, failed to pass a Republican-controlled Congress, lawmakers looked poised to move on to other topics, like a tax overhaul. However, Vermont Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders came back with what plan?**
- “Whatever plan Congress has, we all have.”
 - “Medicare for All”
 - “Obamacare II. Keep what works. Fix what doesn’t.”
 - “Healthcare Supermarket. Let private companies in an open market provide all insurance.”
12. **Forming a country with sister island Antigua, which small Caribbean island is deserted after Hurricane Irma destroyed 95 percent of homes there?**
- Montserrat
 - Barbuda
 - Basseterre
 - Guadeloupe

- 13. CIA Director Mike Pompeo scrapped his appearance at Harvard University over the school's decision to make a former U.S. Army soldier convicted of leaking classified information a visiting fellow. Then Harvard rescinded the title of the person Pompeo called an "American traitor." Who?**
- Sean Spicer
 - Michael Morell
 - Corey Lewandowski
 - Chelsea Manning
- 14. Four of the biggest-name Texas Democrats in the U.S. Congress all voted against a bill that would grant Harvey victims some relief of tax breaks. No Texas Republicans voted against the bill that passed 264-155. Why did the Democrats vote against the bill?**
- They're voting against everything until Democrats regain control of Congress.
 - The bill did not include other natural disasters and wasn't tied to a measure to extend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.
 - The bill included other things including measures dealing with the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals.
 - There were no hearings on the bill and Democrats never had any chance for input.
- 15. In August, a judge ruled against the state of Texas and halted major provisions of SB4, an immigration enforcement law. What did SB4 allow law enforcement officials to do?**
- request identification that shows the gender of people in Texas bathrooms
 - put a lien on property until additional taxes are paid
 - deport gang members guilty of crimes related to drug trafficking
 - question the immigration status of people they detain or arrest
- 16. Saying they're racist and unneeded, a school librarian in Massachusetts rejected first lady Melania Trump's donation of what?**
- her husband's memoirs
 - Dr. Seuss books
 - copies of *Obama: The Call of History*
 - copies of *White Trash*, *The New Jim Crow* and other bestselling nonfiction books
- 17. On the eve of congressional testimony to be given by former CEO Richard Smith, forced into retirement, what company reported that hackers may have stolen the personal information of 145.5 million U.S. consumers?**
- the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team
 - Equifax
 - Experian
 - TransUnion
- 18. In an attempt to form a united front in coalition talks, German Chancellor's Angela Merkel's Christian Democrat block set the cap at 200,000. The cap of what?**
- companies with headquarters in Germany
 - millions of dollars used to fund Brexit
 - billions of dollars in national debt
 - refugees entering Germany

- 19. The state of Maryland appears set to do its part to further billionaire Elon Musk’s vision of a “hyperloop” tunnel. What purpose would this tunnel serve?**
- take travelers to the moon in about an hour
 - take travelers between the U.S. and Europe in about an hour
 - take travelers between cities at up to 700 miles per hour
 - help scientists study supercharged particles
- 20. Dissolving the parliament and announcing new elections, the Spanish government took control of what government after secessionist voted to establish an independent republic?**
- Barcelona
 - Valencia
 - Andorra
 - Catalonia
- 21. Waymo, which started as a Google project in 2009, is ready for the next phase. Starting in November, Waymo began testing what?**
- a rocket that can deliver people to Mars
 - a modular, open-source cell phone
 - a self-stabilizing spoon for people with Parkinson’s
 - cars on public roads, without anyone in the driver’s seat
- 22. Only a few weeks after Florida State suspended all Greek life activities, Texas State University suspended the activities of all fraternities and sororities. Why?**
- the necessity to cut costs as state funds decline
 - legislation required all student organizations to contribute to university’s mission
 - police linked Greek houses to drug trafficking
 - a pledge’s suspected alcohol-related death
- 23. TransCanada resumed operations of its Keystone pipeline in late November after the buried pipeline leaked 210,000 gallons of oil onto agricultural land. Where?**
- South Dakota
 - Nebraska
 - Kansas
 - Oklahoma
- 24. Former sports doctor Larry Nassar was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison for abusing more than 150 young women, including Olympic gymnasts and athletes, at what university?**
- University of Georgia
 - Michigan State University
 - University of Houston
 - Colorado State University
- 25. In a massive deal that could remap the healthcare industry, CVS Health, a massive drugstore chain and prescription drug insurer, is planning to acquire which of the nation’s largest health insurers for \$69 billion?**
- UnitedHealth Group
 - Anthem
 - Blue Cross and Blue Shield
 - Aetna

- 26. Which professional sports team decided to retire its controversial logo this year?**
- Cleveland Indians
 - Atlanta Braves
 - Chicago Blackhawks
 - Washington Redskins
- 27. Despite a lawsuit, claims of voter fraud and the candidate's unwillingness to concede the election, Doug Jones defeated Roy Moore to become a United States senator from what state?**
- Alabama
 - Texas
 - New York
 - Pennsylvania
- 28. YouTube star Logan Paul apologized for posting a video filmed in Aokigahara. What did the video show?**
- an apparent suicide victim
 - a protest in Iran
 - a satirical version of the State of the Union speech
 - a group poking fun at North Korean leader
- 29. Researchers announced in January that they had discovered what on Mars that could be useful for human exploration of the planet?**
- massive ice sheets
 - evidence of past civilization
 - an oxygen/nitrogen atmosphere
 - plant life
- 30. The Texas Supreme Court is hearing the case *Laredo Merchants Association v. The City of Laredo*. In this case, the association is arguing that a ban on them is illegal even though cities such as Austin, Fort Worth and Port Aransas have outlawed them. A ban on what?**
- live Christmas trees
 - services to same-sex couples
 - plastic water bottles
 - single-use plastic grocery bags
- 31. Hawaii emergency management officials said an alert sent to mobile phones and televisions was a mistake, a false alarm. Yet for about 40 minutes, people in the area thought there was a threat of what?**
- tidal wave, tsunami
 - ballistic missile inbound to Hawaii
 - earthquake
 - volcanic eruption
- 32. The book by Michael Wolff topped the bestseller list after being released four days early despite allegations from people involved that it was full of inaccuracies. What was the book's name?**
- Second Chance*
 - The Crisis of the Self-made Man*
 - Donald Trump: An American Controversy*
 - Fire and Fury*

- 33. The bombogenesis or bomb cyclone hit the East Coast dropping the barometric pressure rapidly. What was it?**
- the results of a nuclear bomb exploded over the ocean
 - a winter storm
 - a tropical hurricane
 - a series of tornadoes
- 34. A three-judge panel in federal district court ruled North Carolina was in violation of the 14th Amendment when Republicans did what?**
- drew up the congressional map, gerrymandering it to benefit Republicans
 - tapped the phones of Democratic nominees
 - used social media campaigns without reporting them as “motivated by invidious partisan intent”
 - allowed non-citizens to vote
- 35. Surrounded by beautiful stretches of ocean, it’s hard to believe Cape Town, a city with 4 million residents, could become the first major city in the world to run out of what?**
- gasoline
 - space to bury the dead
 - drinkable water
 - salt
- 36. With an 84-13 vote, Jerome Powell, was confirmed by the Senate as the chair of which federal agency, among the most powerful jobs in the U.S. government?**
- Office of Management and Budget
 - National Security Agency
 - Federal Reserve System Board of Governors
 - Department of the Treasury
- 37. On Sept. 28, Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.) got back to work after six weeks in the hospital. Why was he in the hospital?**
- He was diagnosed with brain cancer, a primary brain tumor.
 - He was shot during a congressional baseball team practice last spring.
 - He got radiation sickness visiting Russia.
 - His aide said, “He’s doing as well as can be expected for a man of 90. His health isn’t what it should be thanks to this media assault.”
- 38. A federal investigation found that the Texas Education Agency effectively capped – at 8.5 percent of students or fewer — the statewide percentage of one group of students who could be properly evaluated and provided with an adequate public education. What group?**
- students with disabilities or special needs
 - children of immigrants
 - gifted and talented students desiring college credit
 - students with English as a second language

39. More than half of Americans could be drinking tap water tainted with a radioactive element, increasing the risk of cancer. The state with the most widespread contamination is Texas. What element is contaminating the water and causing concern according to the Environmental Working Group?

- a. fluoride
- b. uranium
- c. radium
- d. thorium

40. The U.S. Navy dismissed the commander of its 7th Fleet. Why?

- a. Sen. John McCain said the vice admiral wasn't fit to command any ship named in his honor.
- b. The vice admiral sent out offensive messages on social media.
- c. Actually, he wasn't dismissed. He retired and was honored with the Navy's top honor, the Navy Cross at a White House ceremony last fall.
- d. The fleet suffered its second deadly mishap in less than three months.

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.

In his first State of the Union address, U.S. President Donald Trump hammered home that the economy shows his success in office. "There has never been a better time to start living the American dream," Trump said. And, certainly, there are signs the economy is strong. Democrats, however, say he inherited a strong economy and isn't doing enough. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the economy from varying viewpoints.

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ANSWER KEY

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In his first State of the Union address, U.S. President Donald Trump hammered home that the economy shows his success in office. “There has never been a better time to start living the American dream,” Trump said. And, certainly, there are signs the economy is strong. Democrats, however, say he inherited a strong economy and isn’t doing enough. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the economy from varying viewpoints.

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| 7. A | 27. A |
| 8. D | 28. A |
| 9. C | 29. A |
| 10. C | 30. D |
| 11. B | 31. B |
| 12. B | 32. D |
| 13. D | 33. B |
| 14. B | 34. A |
| 15. D | 35. C |
| 16. B | 36. C |
| 17. B | 37. B |
| 18. D | 38. A |
| 19. C | 39. C |
| 20. D | 40. D |

DISCUSSION POINTS

- *Trump responsible.* To hear President Trump tell it during his State of the Union address, he’s solely responsible for every economic success since even before he took the oath of office. Trump says this is all thanks to him. The stock market is up because he got rid of all the regulations that were holding American businesses back, and the GOP tax bill has led companies to give their employees bonuses.
- *Obama responsible.* But economists argue Obama-era policies are actually responsible for the current economy, and Trump is just taking the credit. The numbers Trump are citing as markers of his success are trends that are continuing from the Obama era. The majority of American credit Obama-era policies for the growth since the 2008 Great Recession.
- *Bull market.* Despite major corrections in February, the Dow Jones Industrial Average has risen by some 35 percent since the day Trump was elected president, making the last 14 months one of the greatest bull market runs in history. On Feb. 1, it was above 26,000 having dropped steadily in the week following the State of the Union. *The Washington Post* Fact Checkers wrote: “Trump is correct that \$8 trillion in wealth has been created since the election — or \$6.9 trillion since he took the oath of office, according to the Wilshire 5000 Index of stocks. But much of that gain in wealth did not trickle down to most Americans. Only about 50 percent of Americans own stocks directly or through retirement funds, according to a Gallup survey. And most of the value in stocks is held by the top 10 percent.”
- *Unemployment.* Unemployment continues to decline, but that is a trend that started with Obama. Between 2010 and 2016, unemployment went down from 10 percent to 4.8 percent when Obama left. It was at 4.1 percent in January according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- *African-American unemployment.* Trump said: “African American unemployment stands at the lowest rate ever recorded, and Hispanic American unemployment has also reached the lowest levels in history.” The unemployment rate for African Americans has been declining since 2010. The rate was 7.7 percent when Trump took the oath of office. It’s now 6.8 percent, as *The Post* Fact Checkers reported.
- *Hispanic-American unemployment.* Hispanic-American unemployment had been trending lower before Trump’s presidency. It hit a low of 4.8 percent in several months in 2017.
- *Unemployment claims.* Trump said: “Unemployment claims have hit a 45-year low.” Data for the week that ended Jan. 20, new jobless claims jumped up.
- *New jobs.* Trump said: “Since the election, we have created 2.4 million new jobs, including 200,000 new jobs in manufacturing alone.” “Those claims are accurate,” *USA Today* reported. “Job growth was already strong under President Barack Obama’s administration and has continued.”
- *Tax cuts.* Trump said: “Just as I promised the American people from this podium 11 months ago, we enacted the biggest tax cuts and reforms in American history.” “It is false that the tax cut package passed in December is the largest cut ever, as Trump has repeatedly claimed,” according to PolitiFact. “In inflation-adjusted dollars, the recent tax bill is the fourth-largest since 1940. And as a percentage of GDP, it ranks seventh.”
- *Bonuses.* A list of firms offering employees bonuses and customers fee cuts has surged, something Trump says is due to tax reform. Bank of America, for example, is paying \$1,000 bonuses to 145,000 U.S. employees. American Airlines is offering \$1,000 bonuses for every employee. JetBlue is offering \$1,000 bonus for all 21,000 employees. These appear to be one-time benefits.