

Exercise Week 1: Text Examples

For each text, each group should answer the following questions:

What are the main topic words that occur in the text? What is the text about (if different)?

Is this factual? Are there any opinions or sentiments expressed?

Other topics for discussion:

Text genres: news articles, tweets, blogs, reviews, dialogue, comedy/sarcasm

Text styles: What is the tone of the text? Formal vs. informal? Descriptive?

Do you need context to understand the text?

1. Example 1:

US troops to move into support role in Afghanistan in the spring, Obama says

By Becky Bratu and Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News

U.S. troops in Afghanistan will move into a support role starting this spring, President Barack Obama announced at a joint news conference with Afghan President Hamid Karzai on Friday.

"This war will come to a responsible end," Obama said. Troops will have a new mission in Afghanistan, Obama said, which will include the training, advising, and assisting of Afghan forces and will set the stage for a further reduction of coalition forces.

The president acknowledged that the timetable to turn over the lead to Afghan forces in military operations this spring was "accelerated somewhat." The drawdown was already scheduled to take place sometime this summer. Some 66,000 U.S. troops are currently in Afghanistan. Obama was also clear that while Afghan forces will "take the lead" in any future military operations, American troops will continue fighting alongside them.

International forces will no longer be present in Afghan villages, Karzai said, adding that Afghanistan is moving closer to becoming a strong, sovereign state that can stand "shoulder to shoulder" with the United States. Karzai had previously said that the presence of U.S. troops were putting strain on Afghan villages. Beyond 2014, the troops' focus will be two-pronged: on one hand, they will continue training and assisting Afghan troops; in addition, they will continue to go after remnants of al-Qaida and other terrorist affiliates who may threaten the United States.

Example 2:

Tweets collected from the hashtag "#OccupySandy":

If you're not in NYC, but you want to do something productive to help: Organize your community to be sustainable #ClimateChange #Sandy

take a look and consider donating to OccupySandy Rockaways <http://t.co/CZ3JUno4>

RT @OccupySandy: "@KXLBlockade: #FF Mutual Aid in Action @InterOcc @350 @occupysandy @occupywallstnyc #SandyAid"

"@OccupySandy: @jessicaeve155 we will be collecting all tools at locations like Clinton & Jacobi" Ill drop off this week, 2day or 2mrw.

RT @BoingBoing: For those interested in volunteering or donating to help people harmed by Sandy, the @OccupySandy account is tweeting ways t...

Example 3:

Occupy Sandy relief effort puts Occupy Wall Street activists in the spotlight again a year after Zuccotti Park

By [Rebecca Davis](#) AND [Meena Hart Duerson](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Those who believed the Occupy Wall Street movement was all but dead after its dramatic removal from Zuccotti Park last fall may have been surprised to see the group pop up again in the days after Hurricane Sandy. But this time, they weren't organizing protests – they were calling on their large network to come to the aid of those hit hardest by the storm.

Brett Goldberg joined Occupy in October of 2011, and considers himself a full-time activist. In the aftermath of Sandy, as Occupy organizers launched a relief effort dubbed Occupy Sandy, Goldberg quickly pitched in at the group's hub in Brooklyn's St. Jacobi church.

“At the beginning the priority was flashlights, batteries, blankets and hot food,” Goldberg said. “I came in, started fielding questions and inquiries that were coming in on Twitter and Facebook, and then within a few days, because I was answering those questions, I started getting a big picture idea of what was going on. I started doing site coordination and that's primarily what I've been doing since.”

Goldberg now helps coordinate volunteers at the church who take donations and hot meals out to Occupy Sandy satellite sites in the Rockaways, Staten Island, Coney Island, Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach and Red Hook. There are now at least 30 of these small hubs in the affected areas, and thousands of people have volunteered through Occupy.

Longtime activists like Jessica Roff weren't surprised that Occupy quickly became a leader in the Sandy relief effort, viewing the shift from organizing in Zuccotti Park to community aid as a natural extension of the movement's original mission.

Example 4:

(The White House posts official responses to every petition that collects at least 25,000 signatures.)

OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE RESPONSE TO Secure resources and funding, and begin construction of a Death Star by 2016.

This Isn't the Petition Response You're Looking For
By Paul Shawcross

The Administration shares your desire for job creation and a strong national defense, but a Death Star isn't on the horizon. Here are a few reasons:

- The construction of the Death Star [has been estimated](#) to cost more than \$850,000,000,000,000,000. We're working hard to reduce the deficit, not expand it.
- The Administration does not support blowing up planets.
- Why would we spend countless taxpayer dollars on a Death Star with a fundamental flaw that can be exploited by a one-man starship?

However, look carefully ([here's how](#)) and you'll notice something already floating in the sky -- that's no Moon, it's a Space Station! Yes, we already have a giant, football field-sized [International Space Station](#) in orbit around the Earth that's helping us learn how humans can live and thrive in space for long durations.

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Example 5:

[A Sumptuous Feast for the Eye and Ear and Mind - BRILLIANT!](#) December 5, 2012

By [Grady Harp](#)

There have been many cinematic versions of Leo Tolstoy's epic novel ANNA KARENINA but for this viewer none matches the creative excellence and power of this very different version. Tom Stoppard wrote the screenplay for this adaptation and the work was directed with eye toward timeless artistry by Joe Wright. There will be some detractors who feel that cinema is cinema and stage plays are stage plays, but Wright's decision to combine the two works extraordinarily well. The flavor of Tolstoy's story and mood are maintained and yet made somehow more vital by Wright's electing to place this story as though it were happening on a theater stage (including catwalks, backstage, audience and theater boxes etc.) The story is theatrical and Wright embellishes the last of the Czarist days with great aplomb.

The story needs no summary: . . .

The exceptionally strong supporting cast includes such fine actors as Matthew Macfadyen, Kelly Macdonald, Olivia Williams, Ruth Wilson, Emily Watson, Michelle Dockery, and Shirley Henderson. The luxuriant costumes are by Jacqueline Durran, the cinematography is by Seamus McGarvey, and the glorious musical score is by Dario Marianelli. A Stunning Film. Grady Harp, December 12

Example 6:

Text excerpts from the Fug Girls blog, pictures omitted:

[Golden Globes Weekend Fugs and Fabs: Jennifer Lawrence](#)

I love Jennifer Lawrence for her forthrightness and her sense of fun, and obviously her talent; some actresses you want to hang out with for a three-martini lunch, but Jennifer Lawrence, you meet at a dive bar for cheap pitchers of Shiner while you play some darts and bitch about Bradley Cooper's skeezy Hangover III hair. This does not mean I always love her outfits, but we'd so much rather she took a shot and missed than showed up in a nude strapless fishtail. Actually, if she did that for the Oscars, I would assume it was sarcastic and probably applaud her for it, but whatever. You get the point. Now let's get to the clothes.

[Golden Globes Fug or Fab Carpet: Lucy Liu](#)

Here is the thing about Lucy Liu. She is never boring. She looks crazy sometimes, yes. But she never shows up wearing a totally boring beige fishtail and for that I thank her.

[Critics' Choice Awards Fug Carpet: Leslie Mann](#) by Heather

Usually, I really like Leslie Mann's dresses that have an unusual twist. But this is like the throw-pillow version of what [Lea Michele just wore to the People's Choice Awards](#), and worse, it looks absurd on Leslie — I mean, on Elle Fanning, I think we'd have something to discuss, but as beautiful as Ms. Mann is... Your movie was called This Is 40, not This Is 14.

[Example 7:](#)

[xkcd: Python](#)

Image URL (for hotlinking/embedding): <http://imgs.xkcd.com/comics/python.png>.

[[Guy 1 is talking to Guy 2, who is floating in the sky]]

Guy 1: You're flying! How?

Guy 2: Python! I learned it last night! Everything is so simple! Hello World is just "print 'Hello, World!' "

Guy 1: I dunno ... dynamic typing? Whitespace?

Guy 2: Come join us! Programming is fun again! It's a whole new world up here!

Guy 1: But how are you flying?

Guy 2: I just typed "import antigravity"

Guy 1: That's it?

Guy 2: I also sampled everything in the medicine cabinet for comparison. But I think this is the Python.