

NewsBank Hot Topics
February 2010

CURRENT EVENTS RESEARCH TOPICS

ENVIRONMENT: Haiti Earthquake

TOPIC: A massive earthquake hit Haiti, destroyed its capital city and major port, and killed tens of thousands of people. In the weeks since, a major international relief effort has begun. What are the first things needed in a disaster like this? What are some of the long-term measures needed?

SEARCH TERMS: Haiti AND earthquake

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: State of the Union

TOPIC: President Obama has given his State of the Union Speech. What were the key policies he discussed in his speech and what was the political reaction among various members of Congress? What are some issues that were debated and how were they debated when President Obama met with Republicans in the days after the State of the Union? Going back to the early days of U.S. history how has the process of how a president delivers the State of the Union changed?

SEARCH TERMS: State of the Union AND Obama

ECONOMICS: Problems with Toyota Vehicles

TOPIC: Toyota has recalled millions of vehicles and stopped sales of the eight recalled models. What problem caused this and how dangerous is it? Will this undercut Toyota's reputation for quality? What has been their response to the problem? How will this affect their image?

SEARCH TERMS: Toyota AND recalls

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Apple Tablet PC

TOPIC: Apple's iPad, a tablet computer, is one of the newest products of its kind to enter the market. What has been the praise and criticism of this new computer? Why did it generate so much media attention?

SEARCH TERMS: Apple iPad

SPORTS: Super Bowl XLIV Preview

TOPIC: The Indianapolis Colts and the New Orleans Saints will be vying for the national championship in this year's Super Bowl. Which of these teams is going to the Super Bowl for the first time? What player for the Colts was born and raised in New Orleans and what role in professional football did his father play?

SEARCH TERMS: Super Bowl

SOCIAL STUDIES RESEARCH TOPICS

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Massachusetts Senate Election

TOPIC: Against all early predictions, Republican Scott Brown has beaten Martha Coakley for the Massachusetts senate seat left open by Ted Kennedy's passing. What is the impact on the political makeup of the Senate and how can it impact legislation now in process? What impact does this have on the Obama Administration and on the Democratic Party?

SEARCH TERMS: Scott Brown AND Massachusetts

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Federal Budget

TOPIC: President Obama is sending the U.S. Congress an \$8.3 trillion budget for approval. What is the projected deficit with this new budget? What in the budget is addressing the unemployment problem? What are some other factors in the budget that are designed to assist our economic problems?

SEARCH TERMS: federal budget

CIVICS, GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Campaign Spending Law

TOPIC: The Supreme Court has ruled that the federal government may not ban political spending by corporations or unions in elections. What is happening in states that have laws that conflict with this ruling? What other impacts have come from this ruling?

SEARCH TERMS: campaign spending AND Supreme Court

CRIME AND LAW: Togo Soccer Team

TOPIC: A bus transporting the Togo soccer team was shot at as it arrived for the Africa Cup of Nations tournament. A coach and the driver were killed and several others were wounded. Did the tournament go on? Did the Togo team play in it? What do you think they should have done?

SEARCH TERMS: Togo AND Africa Cup of Nations

CRIME AND LAW: New York City Terror Trial

TOPIC: The Obama administration has chosen New York City for the trial of accused terrorist Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. What has been the reaction to this decision? Why had the administration picked New York for the trial?

SEARCH TERMS: Khalid Sheikh Mohammed AND New York City

ECONOMICS: Unemployment

TOPIC: There are signs that the economy is growing yet unemployment remains static. What has been done over the past year to ease this problem? What new legislation is there to address the problem of unemployment?

SEARCH TERMS: jobs AND unemployment AND legislation

ECONOMICS: Economy Growth

TOPIC: The economic growth rate of 5.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 marks the fastest rate of economic growth since 2003. What are the factors that are contributing to this growth? What industries are showing the most effective rebound from economic distress?

SEARCH TERMS: economy AND growth

ECONOMICS: Bankruptcy for Japan Airlines

TOPIC: Japan Airlines has filed for bankruptcy. It will shed workers, restructure air service routes and replace aging equipment. Are there elements behind the airline's problems that are similar to problems facing other airlines? Are there conditions unique to JAL?

SEARCH TERMS: Japan Airlines AND bankruptcy

EDUCATION: Yale University being sued by Peru

TOPIC: Peru has sued Yale University for the return of Incan cultural remains, while Yale is seeking the suit's dismissal. What are Yale's reasons for seeking the dismissal and what are Peru's counter-arguments? Do you think that artifacts should always be in the country of their origin, and, if so, why?

SEARCH TERMS: Yale AND Incan AND Peru AND lawsuit

EDUCATION: Change to No Child Left Behind

TOPIC: President Obama is planning changes to President Bush's education policy that he titled "No Child Left Behind". What are the changes that President Obama wants to make? How does President Obama's program called Race to the Top differ from No Child Left Behind?

SEARCH TERMS: No Child Left Behind AND Obama

EDUCATION: Investment Loss and University Endowments

TOPIC: Many universities are suffering economically from losses in their investments in addition to what they have lost with lower endowment funds. What are colleges and universities doing to make up for these losses? What are the most expensive costs in running a university?

SEARCH TERMS: colleges AND endowments AND investments

HISTORY: Black History Month

TOPIC: February is Black History Month in the United States. When and how did Black History Month originate as an idea? What are some broad areas of African-American history that are common topics for research?

SEARCH TERMS: Black History Month

HISTORY: Skeletal Remains Found in Germany

TOPIC: A skeleton found in a German cathedral could be that of Princess Eadgyth of England. This Anglo-Saxon princess was married to Otto of Saxony, who was later Otto I of the Holy Roman Empire. How was Eadgyth perceived during her lifetime? What tests would determine whether or not the bones are hers?

SEARCH TERMS: Eadgyth

SOCIAL ISSUES: Trouble for American Baptists in Haiti

TOPIC: Ten American Baptists are in jail for trying to take 33 undocumented children from earthquake-ravaged Haiti to Santo Domingo. Why were authorities concerned by this relief effort? What are the defenses offered by the Americans? What do you think should happen to them?

SEARCH TERMS: Haiti AND children AND Baptists

SOCIAL ISSUES: The Amount of Traffic Fines in Europe

TOPIC: Several European nations are now using an offender's wealth and previous record in assessing traffic fines. A man in Switzerland was recently fined \$290,000 for speeding, for example. What are the advantages and disadvantages to this type of approach in handling offenders?

SEARCH TERMS: traffic laws AND fines AND wealthy people

SOCIAL ISSUES: Don't Ask Don't Tell

TOPIC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Michael Mullen and Defense Secretary Robert Gates are testifying to end the 16-year-old "don't ask don't tell" law that forbids gays serving in the military to reveal their sexual orientation. What are the origins of this law? What have been the difficulties with this law that Chairman Mullen and Secretary Gates are addressing?

SEARCH TERMS: don't ask don't tell

SOCIAL ISSUES: Rise of Teen Pregnancies

TOPIC: Recent research shows that teen pregnancies have risen a few percentage points between the years 2005 and 2006. What are said to be the primary factors for this rise? What are said to be the primary factors for the long drop during the 1990s in teen pregnancy?

SEARCH TERMS: teen pregnancy

SCIENCE AND HEALTH RESEARCH TOPICS

ENVIRONMENT: Past Decade Warmest on Record

TOPIC: The first decade of the millennium has been the warmest on record. What are the predictions for the next decade and what are they based on? What have been some of the strongest impacts of global warming?

SEARCH TERMS: global warming AND decade

HEALTH: New Surgery Methods

TOPIC: Belgian doctors replaced an injured woman's windpipe, utilizing a new method of getting the body to accept foreign tissue. Though time consuming, this method allows the patient to eventually live without taking anti-rejection medication. How did the doctors achieve this?

SEARCH TERMS: organ transplants AND windpipes

HEALTH: AIDS/HIV Medical Discovery

TOPIC: British and United States researchers have discovered a way to view the structure of an enzyme called integrase which is found in retroviruses and can be targeted for AIDS/HIV medicine. What significance does this hold to finding a vaccine for AIDS and HIV? What role do retroviruses play in HIV?

SEARCH TERMS: HIV AND integrase

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Underwater Fiber Optic Cable

TOPIC: Global warming has meant open seas in the Arctic and open seas means there is a chance to lay underwater fiber optic cable between London and Tokyo going around Canada without having to use icebreakers. What are the appeals of such a cable line? What are the economic impacts of it?

SEARCH TERMS: Arctic AND fiber optic cable

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Google and China

TOPIC: Google has threatened to end censoring its search results in China following a sustained computer attack on its email system that targeted Chinese dissidents. The Chinese government has proclaimed that Google needs to follow the law. Why does the Chinese government want search results censored? What options does Google have?

SEARCH TERMS: Google AND China

SPORTS RESEARCH TOPICS

SPORTS: Kelly Kulick

TOPIC: Kelly Kulick is the winner of this year's Professional Bowlers Association bowling title and the first woman to win the competition. What is the history of the PBA? What are some of the other major accomplishments in her career?

SEARCH TERMS: Kelly Kulick

SPORTS: Bowl Championship Series

TOPIC: Alabama's Crimson Tide has beaten the Texas Longhorns for the Bowl Championship Series (BCS). Who were the star players of the game and what were their strongest plays? What association hosted the game and why is it significant?

SEARCH TERMS: Alabama AND Texas AND BCS

SPORTS: Australian Open

TOPIC: Roger Federer and Serena Williams won the Australian Open, but the player who amazed people was Justine Henin, the women's runner-up. What was special about her playing? Why did she earlier retire from tennis and what brought her back to the game?

SEARCH TERMS: Australian Open AND Justine Henin

SPORTS: Winter Olympics in Vancouver

TOPIC: The Winter Olympics will open in February in Canada with venues in Vancouver and other sites in British Columbia. What types of sports are played at the Winter Olympics? Who is favored in them? When did the Winter Olympics start and with which sports? How are new sports added? How are venues chosen?

SEARCH TERMS: Winter Olympics

ARTS AND LITERATURE RESEARCH TOPICS

FILM AND TELEVISION: Golden Globe Awards

TOPIC: The big winners for this year's Golden Globe awards are Avatar and The Hangover. Who were the winners for best actor and actress and for what films? What is the significance of the Golden Globe Awards compared to the Academy Awards?

SEARCH TERMS: Golden Globe Awards

FILM AND TELEVISION: Academy Award Nominees

TOPIC: The nominations for the Academy Awards have been announced. What film got the most nominations? What category expanded the amount of nominations and why?

SEARCH TERMS: Academy Awards AND nominations

FILM AND TELEVISION: Eric Rohmer

TOPIC: Eric Rohmer, French film director, was part of the New Wave of filmmakers in the 1960s. What characterized their work? How was he similar to the other directors? How was he different?

SEARCH TERMS: Eric Rohmer

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Mona Lisa's smile

TOPIC: Mona Lisa has fascinated people since it was first painted by Leonardo da Vinci. Now Italian scientists want to exhume the painter to help to prove their theory that it is really a self-portrait. Why do they think da Vinci's remains will help prove their point? What other theories are there about the sitter for this portrait?

SEARCH TERMS: Leonardo da Vinci AND Mona Lisa

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Art Damage

TOPIC: A rare painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was damaged when a woman taking an adult education class lost her balance and fell into Picasso's The Actor. What are some of the more common security measures that most museums use to protect works of fine art? What are some procedures used to repair damaged art? What are some famous examples of art that have been damaged while on display?

SEARCH TERMS: Picasso AND The Actor AND Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art

FINE ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE: Old Portrait of Edgar Allan Poe

TOPIC: A portrait by the artist A.C. Smith of Edgar Allan Poe is being shown publicly for the first time in Baltimore. What is so startling about the portrait? Why was his portrait not shown before?

SEARCH TERMS: Edgar Allan Poe

LITERATURE: J.D. Salinger

TOPIC: J.D. Salinger was the author of the famous book The Catcher in the Rye. What is rumored to be in a safe at his home in Cornish, New Hampshire? What else has he written?

SEARCH TERMS: J.D. Salinger

LITERATURE: The Booker Prize

TOPIC: Changes in the rules of how the Booker Prize should be awarded meant that no prizes were given for novels written in 1970. This year they will award a "Lost Booker Prize" for novels written back then. Will the 40-year perspective alter the results? How is the prize being decided?

SEARCH TERMS: Lost Booker Prize

PERFORMING ARTS: German Musical

TOPIC: A musical about the 2008 election of Barack Obama has opened in Germany. How has it been received by audiences? By critics? Do you think only one year after the event is enough time to make it into a musical? If not, how long after the fact should arts start portraying them?

SEARCH TERMS: Obama AND musical AND Germany

PERFORMING ARTS: Grammy Awards

TOPIC: This year's Grammy Awards saw Beyonce and Taylor Swift as big winners. Why was this year's Grammy Award ceremony scheduled earlier than any in history? What popular recordings fell out of consideration because of the timing?

SEARCH TERMS: Grammy Awards

PEOPLE RESEARCH TOPICS

PEOPLE: Ben Bernanke

TOPIC: Ben Bernanke has been voted another term as Chairman of the Federal Reserve with the fewest votes ever on record. Why was his nomination so divided? What praise has been given to his performance?

SEARCH TERMS: Ben Bernanke AND confirmation

PEOPLE: Tuskegee Pilot Lee A. Archer

TOPIC: Lee A. Archer was the ace pilot of the Tuskegee Airman. Who were the Tuskegee Airmen? What are some of the most impressive military operations that he was involved in?

SEARCH TERMS: Lee Archer

PEOPLE: Miep Gies

TOPIC: Miep Gies helped shelter Anne Frank and her family. What one action of hers brought the Franks to international notice? How did she feel about her actions?

SEARCH TERMS: Miep Gies AND Anne Frank

PEOPLE: Freya von Moltke

TOPIC: The late Freya von Moltke was part of the Kreisau Circle with her husband, a group that planned for a post-Hitler government. What did they plan? What was her husband's fate? What did she do after the end of the war?

SEARCH TERMS: Freya von Moltke

PEOPLE: Howard Zinn

TOPIC: Howard Zinn was an historian and author of the famous book A People's History of the United States. What political causes did he champion and what did he do in those efforts? What was his academic career like?

SEARCH TERMS: Howard Zinn

PEOPLE: Jay Leno and Conan O'Brien

TOPIC: Scheduling changes made by NBC for the Jay Leno Show and the Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien have caused discontent with both the hosts and the fans of both shows. What has been the reaction of the each host and the fans to the proposed changes? Why reasons did NBC give for making the changes?

SEARCH TERMS: Jay Leno AND Conan O'Brien AND NBC

PEOPLE: James O'Keefe

TOPIC: James O'Keefe, the conservative activist has been arrested for attempting to tamper with the phones of Louisiana Senator Mary Landrau. What other recent controversies has he been in the media for? What is his official career?

SEARCH TERMS: James O'Keefe