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Sustainability Assignment for Bridge 115: Critical Reading

Bridge 115 is a class designed to help readers become skilled in analysis. It teaches skills such as highlighting and annotation of text, summary, and consideration of multiple perspectives. My two fall sections of this class are blocked, so the assignment I have provided allows for up to 2 ½ hours of actual class time. The theme of the class is sustainability with a focus on the food supply and social justice. We are using a text from the Northwest Earth Institute.

The class will be assigned Eric Schlosser's essay, "Cheap Food Nation," which originally appeared in *SIERRA*, the magazine of the Sierra Club, in November 2006. Each class member will read the essay as well as highlight, and annotate it for homework. The annotation should include the location of Schlosser's thesis or provide a sentence that captures the thesis. The annotation should also indicate the various ways Schlosser supports this thesis. From these notes, the student will word-process a summary that follows a rubric for summary. The word-processed summary and highlighted and annotated text will be the student ticket into group work at the next class meeting. The summary will be turned in as a critical reading homework assignment and I will do a book check during the group session for highlighting and annotation.

Any student who comes to class partially or totally unprepared will spend the remainder of class completing the homework assignment. The summary will be word-processed at home, and the student will lose some points. The student will have to complete the remainder of the group project on his/her own as an individual project.

Groups will be formed by counting off by fours as there are four tasks within the group. The first task is recorder. The recorder will not only take notes for the group, he/she will also be required to log group member names, assignments, and attendance. The second task is facilitator. The facilitator will monitor time and assignment completion, but will also be responsible for getting all members of the group to participate. The third task is presenter. The presenter will be responsible for presenting the group project to the class. Additionally, the presenter will work with the writer to produce the final product. The fourth task is the writer. The writer will be responsible for writing all drafts with the help of the presenter and will type the final draft after the instructor has commented on it.

To provide context for the group task, the instructor will note that the recent focus on healthcare reform has not focused on any of the issues Schlosser brings up in his essay. Schlosser points out that our "cheap" food has a direct link to the increase in life-altering and life-ending illnesses in our country. The group will discuss Schlosser's article and create a letter that will be sent to Representative Jay Inslee, Senator Patty Murray, and Senator Maria Cantwell. The letter will ask our representatives to investigate the role that food production and packaging may play in healthcare and to consider legislation that would take their findings into consideration. Moreover, the letter should also acknowledge the dilemma of "cheap" food for low income families and individuals since those with low income often cannot pay more for food that is safe and provides adequate nutrition with low fat. Student letters should address this dilemma and ask the representatives to consider how all Americans

might these have better health through better diet. Where appropriate, the letters should cite Schlosser's essay using standard MLA citation. The instructor will provide groups with addresses and correct letter formatting. When the letters are turned in at the end of the class session, the instructor will comment on them and help the writers work on the final draft after the next class session. The instructor will then mail the letters.