

Sydney R.
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1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

Address to the Nation by the President

Source: Office of the Press Secretary, WhiteHouse.gov, December 6, 2015
(with a correction, marked by an *)

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. On Wednesday, 14 Americans were killed as they came together to celebrate the holidays. They were taken from family and friends who loved them deeply. They were white and black; Latino and Asian; immigrants and American-born; moms and dads; daughters and sons. Each of them served their fellow citizens and all of them were part of our American family.

Tonight, I want to talk with you about this tragedy, the broader threat of terrorism, and how we can keep our country safe.

The FBI is still gathering the facts about what happened in San Bernardino, but here is what we know. The victims were brutally murdered and injured by one of their coworkers and his wife. So far, we have no evidence that the killers were directed by a terrorist organization overseas, or that they were part of a broader conspiracy here at home. But it is clear that the two of them had gone down the dark path of radicalization, embracing a perverted interpretation of Islam that calls for war against America and the West. They had stockpiled assault weapons, ammunition, and pipe bombs. So this was an act of terrorism, designed to kill innocent people. What was their motive?

Our nation has been at war with terrorists since al Qaeda killed nearly 3,000 Americans on 9/11. In the process, we've hardened our defenses -- from airports to financial centers, to other critical infrastructure. Intelligence and law enforcement agencies have disrupted countless plots here and overseas, and worked around the clock to keep us safe. Our military and counterterrorism professionals have relentlessly pursued terrorist networks overseas -- disrupting safe havens in several different countries, killing Osama bin Laden, and decimating al Qaeda's leadership. We're doing all that we can.

Over the last few years, however, the terrorist threat has evolved into a new phase. As we've become better at preventing complex, multifaceted attacks like 9/11, terrorists turned to less complicated acts of violence like the mass shootings that are all too common in our society. It is this type of attack that we saw at Fort Hood in 2009; in Chattanooga earlier this year; and now in San Bernardino. And as groups like ISIL grew stronger amidst the chaos of war in Iraq and then Syria, and as the Internet erases the distance between countries, we see growing efforts by terrorists to poison the minds of people like the Boston Marathon bombers and the San Bernardino killers.

For seven years, I've confronted this evolving threat each morning in my intelligence briefing. And since the day I took this office, I've authorized U.S. forces to take out terrorists abroad precisely because I know how real the danger is. As Commander-in-Chief, I have no greater responsibility than the security of the American people. As a father to two young daughters who are the most precious part of my life, I know that we see ourselves with friends and coworkers at a holiday party like the one in San Bernardino. I know we see our kids in the faces of the young people killed in Paris. And I know that after so much war, many Americans are asking whether we are confronted by a cancer that has no immediate cure. I can't imagine the day we get rid of terrorism for good, which is sad.

Well, here's what I want you to know: The threat from terrorism is real, but we will overcome it. We will destroy ISIL and any other organization that tries to harm us. Our success won't depend on tough talk, or abandoning our values, or giving into fear. That's what groups like ISIL are hoping for. Instead, we will prevail by being strong and smart, resilient and relentless, and by drawing upon every aspect of American power. We are the strong USA. We will get through this.

Here's how. First, our military will continue to hunt down terrorist plotters in any country where it is necessary. In Iraq and Syria, airstrikes are taking out ISIL leaders, heavy weapons, oil tankers, infrastructure. And since the attacks in Paris, our closest allies -- including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom -- have ramped up their contributions to our military campaign, which will help us accelerate our effort to destroy ISIL.

Second, we will continue to provide training and equipment to tens of thousands of Iraqi and Syrian forces fighting ISIL on the ground so that we take away their safe havens. In both countries, we're deploying Special Operations Forces who can accelerate that offensive. We've stepped up this effort since the attacks in Paris, and we'll continue to invest more in approaches that are working on the ground. That is great news! Are we making progress?

Third, we're working with friends and allies to stop ISIL's operations -- to disrupt plots, cut off their financing, and prevent them from recruiting more fighters. Since the attacks in Paris, we've surged intelligence-sharing with our European allies. We're working with Turkey to seal its border with Syria. And we are cooperating with Muslim-majority countries -- and with our Muslim communities here at home -- to counter the vicious ideology that ISIL promotes online.

Fourth, with American leadership, the international community has begun to establish a process -- and timeline -- to pursue ceasefires and a political resolution to the Syrian war. Doing so will allow the Syrian people and every country, including our allies, but also countries like Russia, to focus on the common goal of destroying ISIL -- a group that threatens us all.

This is our strategy to destroy ISIL. It is designed and supported by our military commanders and counterterrorism experts, together with 65 countries that have joined an American-led coalition. And we constantly examine our strategy to determine when additional steps are needed to get the job done. That's why I've ordered the

safe, we need to work together in order to defeat ISIL for good!

Were these random victims or did they all have something in common that made them easy targets?

What an awful place or our nation's history, it was a life-changing day that it seems many people have never moved on from.

They are trying to make people believe that murdering someone in cold blood is okay and they are doing it for God. But how could they possibly be doing it for God when all God wanted was to get rid of sin and make this a world of peace, not war?

These are some good strategies, but what about our home land? What is being done to stop these mass shootings?

We need to stop them from communicating with the US all together, that's how they are recruiting more fighters!

US also needs to do a
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home.

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: muslim religion!

Departments of State and Homeland Security to review the visa *Waiver program under which the female terrorist in San Bernardino originally came to this country. And that's why I will urge high-tech and law enforcement leaders to make it harder for terrorists to use technology to escape from justice.

Now, here at home, we have to work together to address the challenge. There are several steps that Congress should take right away.

To begin with, Congress should act to make sure no one on a no-fly list is able to buy a gun. What could possibly be the argument for allowing a terrorist suspect to buy a semi-automatic weapon? This is a matter of national security.

We also need to make it harder for people to buy powerful assault weapons like the ones that were used in San Bernardino. I know there are some who reject any gun safety measures. But the fact is that our intelligence and law enforcement agencies -- no matter how effective they are -- cannot identify every would-be mass shooter, whether that individual is motivated by ISIL or some other hateful ideology. What we can do -- and must do -- is make it harder for them to kill.

Next, we should put in place stronger screening for those who come to America without a visa so that we can take a hard look at whether they've traveled to warzones. And we're working with members of both parties in Congress to do exactly that.

Finally, if Congress believes, as I do, that we are at war with ISIL, it should go ahead and vote to authorize the continued use of military force against these terrorists. For over a year, I have ordered our military to take thousands of airstrikes against ISIL targets. I think it's time for Congress to vote to demonstrate that the American people are united, and committed, to this fight. This could result in thousands of American casualties...

My fellow Americans, these are the steps that we can take together to defeat the terrorist threat. Let me now say a word about what we should not do.

We should not be drawn once more into a long and costly ground war in Iraq or Syria. That's what groups like ISIL want. They know they can't defeat us on the battlefield. ISIL fighters were part of the insurgency that we faced in Iraq. But they also know that if we occupy foreign lands, they can maintain insurgencies for years, killing thousands of our troops, draining our resources, and using our presence to draw new recruits.

The strategy that we are using now -- airstrikes, Special Forces, and working with local forces who are fighting to regain control of their own country -- that is how we'll achieve a more sustainable victory. And it won't require us sending a new generation of Americans overseas to fight and die for another decade on foreign soil.

Here's what else we cannot do. We cannot turn against one another by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam. That, too, is what groups like ISIL want. ISIL does not speak for Islam. They are thugs and killers, part of a cult of death, and they account for a tiny fraction of more than a billion Muslims around the world -- including millions of patriotic Muslim Americans who reject their hateful ideology. Moreover, the vast majority of terrorist victims around the world are Muslim. If we're to succeed in defeating terrorism we must enlist Muslim communities as some of our strongest allies, rather than push them away through suspicion and hate.

That does not mean denying the fact that an extremist ideology has spread within some Muslim communities. This is a real problem that Muslims must confront, without excuse. Muslim leaders here and around the globe have to continue working with us to decisively and unequivocally reject the hateful ideology that groups like ISIL and al Qaeda promote; to speak out against not just acts of violence, but also those interpretations of Islam that are incompatible with the values of religious tolerance, mutual respect, and human dignity.

But just as it is the responsibility of Muslims around the world to root out misguided ideas that lead to radicalization, it is the responsibility of all Americans -- of every faith -- to reject discrimination. It is our responsibility to reject religious tests on who we admit into this country. It's our responsibility to reject proposals that Muslim Americans should somehow be treated differently. Because when we travel down that road, we lose. That kind of divisiveness, that betrayal of our values plays into the hands of groups like ISIL. Muslim Americans are our friends and our neighbors, our co-workers, our sports heroes -- and, yes, they are our men and women in uniform who are willing to die in defense of our country. We have to remember that.

My fellow Americans, I am confident we will succeed in this mission because we are on the right side of history. We were founded upon a belief in human dignity -- that no matter who you are, or where you come from, or what you look like, or what religion you practice, you are equal in the eyes of God and equal in the eyes of the law.

Even in this political season, even as we properly debate what steps I and future Presidents must take to keep our country safe, let's make sure we never forget what makes us exceptional. Let's not forget that freedom is more powerful than fear; that we have always met challenges -- whether war or depression, natural disasters or terrorist attacks -- by coming together around our common ideals as one nation, as one people. So long as we stay true to that tradition, I have no doubt America will prevail.

(Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America.)

Possible Response Question:

- Pick a part of President Obama's speech and respond to it.

Yes, what will we
do to stop things
in the us?

What is this?

My belief
is that nobody
should be a loud
to buy a gun
without a
certain license
or background
check. That
would not
stop violence
for good but
it would
take away
95% of it!

How do
airstrikes
work exactly
we should have
taken if
ISIL leaders
if they
were that
precise and
accurate by
now...

We as
everyday
people have
the responsi-
bility to
keep the
peace and
not discrim-
inate, there
is no use
in causing
more caos and
violence
because the
more we can
focus on this war
the sooner we
can defeat ISIL
for good!

AOW number 13

In this response, I will be replying to the part of the article when Barack Obama states "As a father to two young daughters who are the most precious part of my life, I know that we see ourselves with friends and coworkers at a holiday party like the one in San Bernardino. I know we see our kids in the faces of the young people killed in Paris. And I know that after so much war, many Americans are asking whether we are confronted by a cancer that has no immediate cure."

I am a 15-year old girl undergoing my first year of High School, something that is so new to me, at the beginning of the year, I never thought I would get used to. I relate this feeling to the war going on with ISIL. I had never heard of such violence until ISIL started attacking innocent people world wide. Likewise, I was born one year before 9/11 happened here in the country I call home, which means I was too young to understand it, much less know that it even happened. But the older I get, the more I learn about terrorism in our country and the negative effects it brings to everyday lives. I had always thought 9/11 was the worst terrorist attack of American History. That holds true to this day, however, recent events have me thinking that that could change very soon, occurring when we least expect it just like the horrific day 14 years ago.

Just as Obama said, my friends and family are the most precious thing to me. I would do anything for any of them on any given day and they know that, but I cannot always be there holding their hand or standing in front of them, and that is what scares me the most. It seems like everyday I come home from school, ISIL has attacked yet another major city or a mass shooting has occurred in yet another public facility. I live in fear everyday that the next ISIL attack or mass shooting will be on small town Oregon Wisconsin and I won't be there to protect the ones I love. I'm not worried about myself, despite everything that is happening and has happened in our country. I believe it is everyone's duty to

put themselves aside in a time of war like this one, and look at the bigger picture. With ISIL's weaponry, we are all in danger. It is our job as American citizens to look out for and protect our neighbors. As the ISIL group poses more and more of a threat to the United States, it is important to keep this philosophy in mind, everyday, no matter where you are.

It has become a great tragedy, maybe one of the greatest in our history, but think again about the country this tragedy has most targeted. I am talking about a country who persevered through a ten year depression, multiple wars, and hundreds of mass shootings. 9/11 may be the most devastating day of all time, but it also signifies the day the United States came together more than it ever had before, to grieve and celebrate the lives lost. We have done it before in the worst possible circumstances and Barack Obama and I believe we can do it again. This is our home and it is our fight, one that will not stop being fought until ISIL is defeated and another victory is our hands.

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

8 Fascinating Things We Learned About The Mind In 2015

Memory erasing is just the beginning.

Source: Carolyn Gregoir/huffingpost.com, December 26, 2015

As the New Horizons spacecraft made its historic flight to Pluto and some scientists explored the far reaches of our solar system, others were making some incredible advances in their exploration of the inner workings of the mind. Studies published this year shed light on the mysteries of the brain and human behavior, and began paving the way for new treatments to mental and neurological health problems, ranging from addiction to autism to Alzheimer's disease.

Here are eight fascinating things we learned about the human mind in 2015:

1. Smartphones are wildly distracting.

Americans are spending more time than ever looking at screens, and we're only beginning to learn how this is affecting our brains.

Just hearing your smartphone vibrate is enough of a distraction to significantly impair focus and productivity, according to a Florida State University study published in August.

Another recent study found that heavy smartphone users are more prone to experiencing "cognitive failures" arising from forgetfulness, inattention and a lack of awareness of one's surroundings, including things like missing appointments, walking into people and forgetting things.

"The Internet is great, mobile phones are great, but there is a point at which we need to sit back, log off and really start to think about how technology is impacting on our capacity to focus," said Dr. Lee Hadlington, a psychologist at England's De Montfort University and the latter study's lead author. "We are always eager to get the new piece of tech -- but not to think about its underlying consequences to our cognitive capabilities."

There are so many good things about smartphones but there are also so many bad things. What is right and what is wrong?

2. Psychedelics may be the next big thing in mental health care. We witnessed a renaissance in psychedelic research this year. A review of studies on the therapeutic applications of psychedelic drugs, published in September in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, showed that psychotherapy assisted by substances such as LSD, psilocybin (hallucinogenic mushrooms) and MDMA (the active ingredient in Ecstasy) holds promise for treating mental health issues including post-traumatic stress disorder, addiction, end-of-life anxiety and depression.

"The studies are showing big effects," Dr. Matthew Johnson, a behavioral pharmacologist at Johns Hopkins University and one of the study's authors, told HuffPost. "The exciting thing isn't just that these drugs work for something that we already have treatment for. It's that they're getting big effects on disorders for which we have very poor treatment."

3. Pollution is worse for the brain than we realized. What kind of pollution and what effect does it have on the brain?

Just months before the world looked on in horror at Beijing's "dirpocalypse," research found that exposure to air pollution can speed up brain aging, and may contribute significantly to neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

The study showed that small increases in exposure to pollution were associated with decreases of white matter in the brain -- in other words, exposure to environmental toxins was "shrinking" the brain.

"The evidence so far suggests that pollution could be the most pervasive potential cause of brain disease that scientists have ever discovered," science journalist Aaron Reuben wrote in Mother Jones in May.

4. The brain and immune system are actually linked.

This year, University of Virginia neuroscientists uncovered a previously unknown direct connection between the brain and the immune system -- a network of lymphatic vessels that previously had only been found to exist below the base of the skull, but were observed for the first time in the brain.

What do these vessels do?

That does not sound good.

How are screens distracting? I can definitely understand things!

That is awesome! Finding a cure to these kind of mental diseases would be a huge accomplishment no one should have to live with such horrible things!

and relate to this. I can remember running errands times when I forgot I had basketball practice or another HW assignment. Could these consequences be any more severe depending on how often one is on their phone?

us these diseases are going to become more common because there really is no way to get rid of this kind of pollution!

"When we discovered the lymphatic vessels, we were very, very surprised, because based on the textbooks -- these vessels do not exist," the study's lead author, Dr. Jonathan Kipnis, told HuffPost in June.

The finding could have significant implications for the treatment of brain disorders involving inflammation, such as Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis and autism.

5. Erasing memories could be the future of addiction treatment. → support

Scientists hacking into the brain to erase or transplant memories is no longer just the stuff of science fiction. Memory erasure may soon be a reality, and it could help us better treat drug addiction by targeting drug-related memories. → That could be a very good thing and not just for drug addiction,

Landmark research from the Scripps Research Institute that was published in the journal Molecular Psychiatry identified a new drug that has the potential to selectively erase dangerous addiction-associated memories in people addicted to meth.

"When the person is in-patient, they'd use this treatment once and it would target those drug-associated memories that could be triggers for them," Dr. Courtney Miller, one of the study's authors, said in August. "Later on, when they're back in the real world, the memories wouldn't serve as triggers because they'd be gone."

6. Nature does the mind good. → support

We already knew that spending time in the great outdoors comes with significant physical and mental health benefits, but this year, researchers found that the psychological benefits of nature extend even further than we realized.

Research from Stanford University that was published in July found that outdoor strolls reduced the sort of obsessive, negative thoughts that characterize depression.

Another study published last month found that spending time in nature could also have therapeutic applications for addiction, and linked exposure to nature with reduced impulsivity and improved self-control.

"A nature-based treatment component may be a valuable addition to standard therapies for individuals struggling with substance abuse," Dr. Meredith Berry, a psychologist at the University of Montana and the study's lead author, told HuffPost. Nature is like another friend convincing you to get away from drugs! → support

7. To boost your mood, boost your bacteria. → support

The brain-gut connection has been another major theme in neuroscience and psychology research over the past couple of years. This year, research found that increasing the balance of healthy bacteria in the gut can help to reduce anxiety and also to lessen symptoms of depression.

One study showed that people who have more fermented foods in their diet -- which are filled with healthy bacteria known as probiotics -- exhibit less neuroticism and social anxiety.

"It is likely that the probiotics in the fermented foods are favorably changing the environment in the gut, and changes in the gut in turn influence social anxiety," Dr. Matthew Hilimire, an assistant professor of psychology and one of the study's authors, said in a statement in June. "I think that it is absolutely fascinating that the microorganisms in your gut can influence your mind."

8. Good sleep is critical to a healthy emotional life. (yogurt dark chocolate)

It's well-established that good sleep is crucial to psychological well-being -- and that sleep deprivation, on the other hand, raises stress levels and has been linked with anxiety, depression and other mental health problems.

A landmark study published in July in the Journal of Neuroscience found that good sleep is also a key component of emotional intelligence. The researchers showed that losing sleep dulls our ability to read facial expressions, which is an important component of emotional intelligence. On the bright side, dreaming actually boosts this ability, the researchers found. This is so interesting!

"It's almost as though, without sleep, the brain... was unable to put emotional experiences into context and produce controlled, appropriate responses," Walker said in a statement when the study was published.

"Emotionally, you're not on a level playing field."

Possible Response Questions:

- Which of the brain discoveries discussed above do you find most interesting? Explain.
- Pick a passage from the article and respond to it.

AOW number 15

The brain is the most fascinating organ in the body, it works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and never stops from the moment we are born to the moment we take our last breath. It controls our deepest emotions and stores our fondest memories. It can enslave us or it can empower us. It is the one part of the body that ceases to amaze us everyday, and that is why none of the discoveries found in this week's article of the week surprise me. However, the discovery I found most interesting about the mind is that it actually works with our gut.

We all know what it is like to have a "gut feeling." Everyone is different, so everyone's gut feeling will naturally be different in various situations. It is our instinct, what our body is telling us is right or wrong in that scenario. Well, based on this certain mind discovery, if humans are to intake and maintain a balance of healthy bacteria in the gut, it can help to reduce anxiety and lessen symptoms of depression.

We as humans can keep this balance by consuming more foods that are filled with healthy bacteria known as probiotics. These probiotics lead to less neuroticism and social anxiety. It is said that these healthy bacteria are changing the environment in the gut which in turn influences our mind in a positive way. Some foods that contain a high amount of probiotics range from yogurt to dark chocolate.

In my opinion, all of this makes perfect sense. The mind controls an individual's emotions and actions and we all know that a person's gut is not just used to process food. The gut is also known as the second brain when dealing with decisions socially or internally. Individuals rely on their gut feeling when being tested or put in tricky situations such as making new friends. Many people find this task very hard and uncomfortable. However, if that person were to consume a good amount of probiotics each day, the anxiety they get while interacting with people and having to open up, will lessen and lessen.

It's absolutely incredible how these two organs go hand in hand. If you have a healthy gut which contains a lot of probiotics, then you are to also have a clear mind, that makes it less difficult do all of the things we are scared or anxious about doing.

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

Anger at Paris attacks takes a toll on America's Muslim community

Thesis

By McClatchy Washington Bureau, December 11, 2015

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After the massacre in Paris, France, last month, Lena Badr Abdelhamid's husband sat her down and warned her that the top suspect in the attack happened to share a name with the couple. Even the spelling of Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the alleged mastermind of the attack, was the same.

Abdelhamid said she instantly recognized the likelihood that fellow Americans might target her just because she shared a name with a suspected terrorist.

"Crimes That We Haven't Committed"

I wonder often how long will we have to pay for crimes that we haven't committed. I immediately began to dread the hate crimes that were sure to follow," said Abdelhamid, 25, who works for a refugee agency in Washington, D.C.

Everyone is innocent until they are proven guilty, yes it is not fair that people are going to give her hate but she can't blame us for questioning every muslim, you alone person who lives in the US or is coming in from other countries. The anti-Muslim hate speech that followed the Paris attacks has had a chilling effect on Muslims in the United States, according to interviews this week with Muslims across the country. Some women say they face a wrenching dilemma over whether to remove their headscarves. Students avoid walking across campus alone. And commuters in big cities say they have begun standing back on subway platforms for fear that a revenge-seeker will push them into the path of an oncoming train.

And this is not right, it's not right for people to be giving hate speeches against one religion and it's not right that some muslims are questioning their morals because of this. Older Muslims sense a depressing return to the days after the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. It reminds them of hateful voicemails, vandalized mosques and slurs shouted at the grocery store. Members of a younger generation who do not remember that era are getting a jarring introduction to a world where some presidential candidates call for bigotry, and social media platforms are plastered with calls for the death of an entire faith.

More Tension After California Shooting

The voice calls and vandalism were very unnecessary, but you can't blame US citizens for being a little frightened by this kind of faith. Things have gotten even more tense for U.S. Muslims. A Muslim couple in California went on a shooting rampage in California, killing 14 people and wounding 21 others. Before they went on their killing spree, the woman made a Facebook post pledging allegiance to the extremist group Islamic State. The group is trying to set up its own country governed by extreme Islamic law. The couple died in a shootout with police on Wednesday.

It's a normal muslim couple could do this, what does it mean for the rest of them? Aysha Khan, 20, said she has been dismayed over the years to see anti-Muslim attacks move from isolated incidents to the mainstream, fueled by anger over the rise of extremist groups such as the Islamic State. The group's fighters have taken over parts of Iraq and Syria, and were responsible for the Paris attacks.

The longer they exist, the more hundreds of muslims join their group everyday! Recently, Khan called her parents to tell them about a job interview that would require her to travel from Baltimore to Washington. Her father warned against taking the subway and offered to drive her. She refused. "Ordinarily, I would feel like they were being paranoid, but they are actually not," she said.

Fears Are Justified

Muslim advocacy groups and hate crime trackers say that those fears are justified. Agreed.

The FBI's latest roundup of hate crime statistics, released recently, shows that only anti-Muslim incidents are on the rise; incidents involving other minorities declined in 2014. The number of anti-Muslim incidents grew from 135 in 2013 to 154 in 2014, according to the FBI's figures. Advocacy groups consider them on the low side because many more incidents go unreported. That number is expected to increase this year, as attacks by the Islamic State and other extremists stoke anti-Muslim sentiment.

Does this mean that the only big crimes are being committed by Muslims?

what do normal muslims think of ISIL and all the crimes they have been committing?

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has compiled lists of apparent revenge attacks. They include terror threats to Florida mosques, vandalism at a Nebraska mosque and shots fired at a Muslim family's home in Florida. The group also recorded hate graffiti targeting a Connecticut Muslim student, an arson attack on a Canadian mosque, a tweet threatening Michigan Muslims, and countless hate messages.

Some Non-Muslims Are Supportive

CAIR reported that not long ago, "Middle Eastern" passengers were also removed from a flight because the crew felt "uncomfortable."

Muslims say they have been grateful to non-Muslims who have offered their support in interfaith services and in phone calls and emails of solidarity. The story of Jack Swanson went viral. The Texas boy donated the piggy-bank money he was saving for an iPad to a mosque vandalized in Pflugerville, Texas. Arsalan Iftikhar, a prominent Muslim magazine editor and human rights lawyer, mailed Jack an iPad with a note of thanks signed, "Love, The American Muslim Community."

But the feel-good stories are easily forgotten when politicians suggest a Christians-only refugee policy or that all Muslims should register with the government. Badi Ali is the religious leader, or imam, of a mosque in Greensboro, North Carolina. He said he tells nervous members of his congregation that the best approach for now is to keep a low profile.

"Become Like The Palm Tree"

You have to become like the palm tree. When the wind comes, you have to bow down a little bit until the wind goes away," Ali said.

By now, American Muslim groups have gone through the post-attack period enough times to have developed a playbook. First, they immediately issue a statement of condemnation. Then they sponsor an interfaith program. And finally they hold a news conference or go on TV to reinforce the teaching that Islam is a peaceful, tolerant religion.

But that approach just does not cut it anymore for many young Muslims. They argue that condemning deadly attacks as Muslims only reinforces the idea that there's something in common between the extremists and ordinary believers. They favor condemning the attacks as Americans, as human beings. They say the Muslim community should not go out of the way to "apologize" for behavior that's just as foreign to them as a violent white supremacist is to the majority of white Americans.

"Guilty Until Proven Innocent"

"I saw an immediate trend of Muslims condemning the terrorist attacks," said Uzma Hussain, 23. Hussain herself has changed her routines since the Paris attacks. She has not been to the gym, because her hijab, the headscarf some Muslim women wear, just makes her too conspicuous. She said she's "received a few looks at work." She pours out her feelings in journal entries.

Here we go again, guilty until proven innocent. We might as well have every Muslim sign an affidavit stating that they are not a terrorist.

Possible Response Questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with the statement, "... the Muslim community should not go out of the way to 'apologize' for behavior that's just as foreign to them as a violent white supremacist is to the majority of white Americans." Why or why not?
- Pick a passage from the article and respond to it.

Just like ISIL attacks are wrong, this is wrong. We are just as bad as ISIL if we keep this up. Revenge attacks and discrimination against normal muslims is wrong and needs to be stopped. The aren't the ones US citizens need to fear. ISIL is!

That is a bit extreme but also understandable, no one knows who they can trust anymore...

Americans are angry and though I don't think all Muslims should have to maintain a low profile, I think it is probably best!

couldn't have said it more perfectly, I think Badi Ali hates that this is what he has to do but he is going to do it anyway

Plus, ordinary muslims should not have to apologize for other, more violent muslims who are the ones committing these crimes, it's kind of pathetic!

the angry Americans and at an attempt to keep his friends and family safe from anymore of these "revenge attacks."

There is no need for that but "guilty until proven innocent" applies to every religion and every kind of person. She may be the victim of unfair treatment from US citizens but the US citizens including Hussain, is a victim of her faith's actions against our country!

AOW number 14

"The Muslim community should not go out of the way to 'apologize' for behavior that's just as foreign to them as a violent white supremacist is to the majority of white Americans." This is a very controversial statement merely because it is all based on one's moral beliefs and values. Neither agreeing nor disagreeing to this statement is right or wrong to me because I happen to believe it could go both ways. However, when it comes down to the very gist of things, I would have to say that this statement is morally right and agreeable.

The United States is the land of the free and home of the brave. We are advanced in almost everything yet there still remains one huge problem, violence. Recently, the United States has witnessed more violence than ever before in history and to this day, it still shocks the nation. Killing innocent people is not 'foreign' to this country, but of course there is going to be heartbreak and shock when an armed white male shoots up a school or movie theater. Tragic events like these happen, though they are greatly unfortunate, I believe no US citizen is naive enough to think that incidents like these are ever going to stop. I say this because after every one of these events, we want to believe the best and tell ourselves that this is the worst it could ever get, but each time we say this, we end up proven wrong and the tragedy of it all sets in just like every other terrorist attack or mass shooting.

United States citizens have a right to be living in fear based on the tragedy everyone has endured these last couple months. Though, it is not right to make assumptions and judge people based on appearances like how we have been treating the Muslim community. There is a group named ISIL who has killed more people than one can count who happen to be of the Muslim religion. I believe it is okay to question what Muslim US citizens can trust and which ones they can't because of this, but just like any crime committed by a white, that person does not represent the whole white community, which is

very similar to how we are classifying all Muslims. The ISIL group does not represent the worldwide Muslim religion even though we want to think that. In reality, most muslims, especially those living in the US, are just as scared as any other US citizen and have dealt with horrific loss just like every other person.

It is very crucial to everyone's safety in the US to not dwell on the stereotype of Muslims. Someone, anyone, needs to take charge and get everyone to look at the greater picture which is that we are all in danger of the ISIL terrorist group, and the more we sit around judging one another, the more time they have to plan and pursue even more deadly crimes. The Muslim community and people of the US need to come together as one big community if anyone ever hopes to end ISIL for good.

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading.
3. Write a 1+ page reflection.

New U.S. Dietary Guidelines Limit Sugar, Rethink Cholesterol

Source: Jen Christensen, CNN.com, January 7, 2015

Thesis

Just in time to help with your New Year's resolution to eat more healthily, the government announced its latest dietary guidelines on Thursday. The 2015 guidelines recommend a "healthy eating pattern" with limited sugar and saturated fat, less salt and more vegetables and whole grains.

You might remember the food pyramid poster from your grade school classroom, or the "My Plate" icon from your child's cafeteria. Those earnest posters are a boiled-down version of a complicated food science discussion between government-appointed experts and all the other players in this food fight, including dietitians, scientists, doctors, medical associations, the food industry and the public. The guidelines are revised every five years, and the draft version of this year's guide came in months ago at more than 500 pages.

In the end, there are some breadcrumbs -- whole-wheat, of course -- of advice to follow. The guidance affects everything from what's served in school and prison lunches to how food labels work. It helps dietitians guide their clients. Experts say it also puts pressure on manufacturers and restaurants about what they put in their food.

Here are nine things you should know about the 2015 guidelines:

1. Extract that sweet tooth

For the first time, the government put a limit on sugar, saying added sugar should make up only 10% of your daily calories.

The guidelines are based on Americans eating a 2,000-calorie-a-day diet, so 10% of that diet is about 50 grams of sugar. Drinking more than one can of full sugar soda maxes out the limit. This guideline isn't as strict as what the American Heart Association suggests -- it recommends about half that -- but the limit is significant.

Eating a diet with a lot of sugar increases your risk for heart disease, studies show, and can lead to obesity and all the diseases associated with that, including cancer and Type 2 diabetes.

If you have a sweet tooth, dietitian Lisa Drayer suggests you budget for it. Look for less-sweet substitutes. Replace full-sugar sodas with seltzer and a splash of cranberry, for instance. Also keep in mind that sugar comes in more than cookies and candy form. Sauces and dressings can trip you up, too. "I was in the supermarket the other day and picked up a salad dressing that had more sugar than four doughnuts," Drayer said. Check the label for sugar that goes by other names like fructose, sucrose, corn syrup or honey.

Look to replace food items with a lot of sugar with ones that don't contain as much, and don't be tricked, there are a lot of foods we would not expect to have large amounts of sugar that do!

2. The Easter bunny is all over this one. If you are of a certain age, your doctor might have told you to watch the cholesterol in your diet. At your next appointment, that advice could change. Past guidelines suggest a 300-milligram daily limit of dietary cholesterol. That means a two-egg breakfast, rather than three.

Now, the government has removed the limit on cholesterol. It did add that "individuals should eat as little dietary cholesterol as possible" because "foods that are higher in dietary cholesterol, such as fatty meats and high-fat dairy products, are also higher in saturated fats." But what that means is eggs are back for most diets. Egg yolks are high in cholesterol, but not high in saturated fat. They make the list of suggested sources of protein.

"If you connect the dots together scientifically, we don't believe there is a strong influence between dietary cholesterol and blood cholesterol," Drayer said. "Even when I was training to be a dietitian, we knew that eating eggs didn't increase your cholesterol as much as saturated fat does. So the government advice is catching up to the science."

Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

These are the kinds of foods they recommend for people, but why? What about these foods will keep us a healthy diet? These food guidelines are a bigger deal than I thought!

What can happen if we intake too much sugar?

That's awful, I better start watching the amount of sugar I eat!

That is good to know, does cholesterol do anything good for the body?

the types of foods put in "My Plate" determine each of these groups? they all argue, an attempt to get the foods they recommend in "My Plate"

this is more than I have been taking way too much sugar, have at the last one soda day and we n't forget about the amount of candy and desserts kids like me consume!

they not only did me this, it I had to get a shot, not tested my levels of cholesterol!

3. Something's fishy and bacon hasn't totally left the building

Support

The guidelines emphasize eating protein-rich food, which helps retain muscle mass as we age and "plays a role in keeping our metabolism running smoothly," Drayer said. The new guidelines continue to emphasize eating protein from seafood, lean meat and poultry. There is a specific mention of eating at least 8 ounces of seafood per week. The guidelines single out men and boys for eating too much protein.

The summary does not suggest a limit on processed or red meat, as was hinted at in discussions of the draft version of the report, but it does mention there is evidence that a lower intake of meats overall, as well as eating less processed meat and poultry, does reduce the risks of cardiovascular disease. Processed meats like bacon and hot dogs have been linked to an increased cancer risk and in 2015, the World Health Organization suggested people avoid them. These guidelines do not. Instead, the guidelines say they "can be accommodated as long as sodium, saturated fats, added sugars and total calories are within limits in the resulting eating pattern."

This does not sit well with the American Cancer Society. "By omitting specific diet recommendations, such as eating less red and processed meat, these guidelines miss a critical and significant opportunity to reduce suffering and death from cancer," Dr. Richard Wender, chief cancer control officer of the American Cancer Society, said in a statement released Thursday responding to the new guidelines.

If you eat meat, it is suggested for the meat, poultry and eggs subgroup -- eat 26 ounce-equivalents per week based on a U.S.-style and 2,000-calorie diet. It's the same suggestion from the 2010 guidelines.

If you are a vegetarian, you have options, too: soy products, beans, lentils and seeds are good protein sources, the guidelines say.

How can protein be bad for the body?

But not eating enough meat seem to have a more drastic, negative effect.

Being a vegetarian is the way to go in this one can avoid all of the health risks that come with eating meat!

Are there specific fruits or vegetables that are better for you?

4. Your mother was right about fruit and veggies

Support

Your parents were right to tell you to eat your fruits, especially whole fruits, vegetables and grains, at least half of which are whole grains. The guidelines recommend eating 2½ cups of a wide variety of vegetables from all the subgroups of colors and starches a day. A hidden advantage of this suggestion is that it can make you feel full without eating a lot of calories. The suggested two cups of fruit a day, with half coming in the form of whole fruit, provides many essential vitamins and some have high fiber, which helps with digestion. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables helps prevent heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, too. That's awesome!

The committee noted in the draft guidance that whole grains are a "shortfall nutrient" in American diets. Brown rice, quinoa, and oats are rich in fiber, calcium and vitamin D and can help with digestion. When eating 6 ounce-equivalents of grains, half of them should be of the whole grain variety. Studies show that eating cereals can help you live a longer life.

That's great for me because I eat cereal every morning for breakfast!

5. Raise a glass (or a cup) to this breakfast!

The guidelines don't suggest you start drinking, but if you do, not to worry. Alcohol consumed in moderation is OK. For women, that means no more than one drink a day. For men, it's two. Why is it only one for women and two for men?

Drinking a daily glass of wine has been associated with a benefit to your heart. Moderate coffee drinking is also highlighted in the suggested menu. Moderate coffee drinking is defined as drinking three to five cups a day. Coffee has been shown to possibly reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease and it may even protect against Parkinson's disease.

6. Fat is back, kind of

Support

The 2010 dietary guidelines allowed for 10% of your calories to come from saturated fat. This time, the guidelines keep the same recommendation, but also expanded upon the concept of "good" fat. Some fat is vital to your health. "Good" fat includes heart-healthy Omega-3 fatty acids like the kind found in some fish. Fat from oils, about 5 teaspoons per day, is also OK.

Saturated fat, or the "bad" kind that comes from meat, poultry and dairy can raise blood cholesterol, which might increase the risk for cardiovascular disease, weight gain, Type 2 diabetes and cancer.

I've always heard that some fats are a must in a human's daily diet. It's nice to have this reassurance because use so often we hear that fats and sugars are so bad for a person's health when the truth is we need a little of each of these to survive!

Food is good for body, I absolutely love seafood like crab, lobster, fish and shrimp!

I've heard it in these specific meats makes them bad for a person's body!

Love fruits and vegetables and the great thing is that they are so good for you! I feel good after eating these foods mostly because I know they are having positive impact on my body!

Wine is great! My parents drink it and there it's nice to know that it's not going to have negative health effects long term.

Trans fat, which the guidelines suggest you consume as little as possible, is harder to find after the Food and Drug Administration told manufacturers to eliminate it from food. Eating trans fat increases unhealthy cholesterol, LDL, and lowers the good kind, HDL. Fat-free and low-fat dairy found in yogurt, milk and cheese is within the guidelines, but how much you can eat depends on your age.

Trans fat must be the worst kind of fat then...

Why does it depend on your age?

7. Eat less salt

Eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day. That's about a teaspoon, which is not a lot, especially when many Americans get much of their sodium from packaged and processed foods. It's not as restrictive as the American Heart Association's recommendation, which is less than 1,500 milligrams. Too much sodium can make your heart work too hard and lead to high blood pressure. If you're looking for an alternative, sprinkle allspice on your food or use other spices like thyme or turmeric.

I have heard that salt makes your heart beat faster which is not a good thing especially for elders at risk of a heart attack!

8. Eat American, Mediterranean or vegetarian

This version of the guidelines is supposed to be more user-friendly. It models three different types of diets at the 2,000-calorie level: the healthy American diet, Mediterranean diet and vegetarian diet.

"I think if you want to mix and match and say to yourself, 'Today, I feel like an American-style diet' or you want a vegetarian day or a Mediterranean day, there are ideas on what you should have for each," Drayer said. "It's a little more approachable."

9. Eat what is right for you

These are general suggestions on what you should eat to avoid disease and to maintain a healthy weight. As the guidelines said, this is a "healthy eating pattern" rather than a "rigid prescription" and "an adaptable framework in which individuals can enjoy foods that meet their personal, cultural, and traditional preferences and fit within their budget." If you have a chronic condition or special dietary restrictions, you'll need to see what works best for you.

"Of course, keep in mind, half of all Americans have some kind of chronic disease already, so people will need to take a closer look at what works on an individual level," Drayer said. "In other words, talk it over with a health professional and see which parts of this advice you should be listening to."

Dr. Steven Nissen, chairman of cardiovascular medicine at the Cleveland Clinic, said the science behind the guidelines is weak and that these are really a best guess. "They [the guidelines] give broad recommendations and broad ranges," he said, calling the science inadequate and calling on the government to conduct well controlled studies that ask the right questions.

"Diet is essential to health ... we are really left with no solid advice for most people," he said.

Possible Response Questions:

- What are your reactions to the government's new dietary guidelines?
- How might you move toward a more healthy diet? Explain.
- Pick a passage from the article and respond to it.

I definitely agree with this claim, it is important that we maintain a healthy diet and balance between the good foods and the bad. However, eat what pleases you, it is not the end of the world to eat a food that may not be the best choice for your diet!

I am guessing this is one of the more difficult guidelines based on the fact that salt is so common in human's every day life!

AOW number 16

A healthy, well balanced diet is the key to long term health and happiness. Everyone is unique when it comes to an everyday diet. There are those who do not eat meat, there are people who eat only organic, whole wheat foods, and then there are people who just eat whatever is in front of them or easiest to access. It is important to eat foods that are going to positively affect your body, especially if you are a person who does not exercise very often. Personally, as a 15 year old girl who is involved in 2 sports year round, I have a particularly normal diet. I could be eating healthier foods but I am not too worried based on how much exercise I get during the week. However, this does not mean I am not going to work towards a healthier diet, especially after reading about the 2015 dietary guidelines.

The first way I am going to work towards a healthier diet is shrinking my very large sweet tooth. These new guidelines recommend that individuals consume 50 grams of sugar a day. Drinking more than one full can of soda maxes out that limit. This is not good news for me because I drink a full can of Dr. Pepper on a daily basis, sometimes even more on the weekends. Adding on to that all the candy and desserts I eat being how I love sweets. I am going to improve this part of my diet by cutting back on how much soda I drink. From now on, my limit will be 5 sodas a week and I will only allow myself to have a dessert after dinner 2 times a week.

Cholesterol is also a huge part of my diet being that eggs are one of my favorite foods. These new guidelines have taken away limits to this nutrient which I am very happy about. A couple months ago I had to go into the doctor for a checkup. Part of this checkup required me to get a shot regarding my cholesterol levels. A couple weeks later I received news back that my cholesterol levels were outstanding. Therefore, I am not too concerned with this part of the guidelines.

The next part of the guidelines emphasize the need to eat foods containing high amounts of protein like seafood and lean meat. I am very pleased with this guideline because it recommends that we eat at least 8 ounces of seafood per week, which in my household, is very easy to accomplish. I absolutely love seafood and I love the fact that it is so good for you. My mom makes lobster, crab, shrimp, and cod which are just a few of my favorite types of seafood. This guideline also points out that we should reduce or even eliminate processed foods like bacon and hot dogs from our diet. This is going to be a challenge for me because I love bacon, but in order to improve my diet I will look for healthier options such as sausage.

Growing up, I could always find fresh fruit and vegetables in my fridge. My parents were always sticklers about eating our fruits and vegetables but over the years, these two food categories have become my favorite of the food groups. I eat at least one fruit or vegetable for every meal and I love to snack on things like strawberries or broccoli with ranch. There is no room for improvement in this part of the guidelines because I am already exceeding the recommended amount of 2 to 2 and a half cups of different fruits and vegetables each day.

The next way I will look to improve my diet is by eating less foods that contain high amounts of salt. It is recommended that one should eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day. For me, this is going to be a difficult task because when I eat at home, I put salt on almost everything I eat. I can look to improve on this by sprinkling alternative spices on my food such as allspice, thyme, or turmeric. Another reason this is going to be difficult is because I eat out a lot. I eat fast food mostly when traveling for sports. I know most, if not all fast food contains some sort of sodium so it is important that I try to cut back on stopping at these places. A way I can improve this is by packing a lunch or dinner from home. This way I can be sure to pack foods containing little to no sodium.

The last part of the 2015 dietary guidelines is to eat what is right for you. These are all recommendations given based on scientific discoveries and common knowledge. It is important to eat foods that please your diet personally, culturally, and traditionally all while staying within your budget. Also, it is not the end of the world to eat something that may not be the best for our health. Foods containing high amounts of sugar and fat are actually essential to a human's life and should be consumed occasionally. It is called "your diet" for a reason, eat foods that please you and your body and long term health will be in your future.