**Opinion Editorial**

100 possible points

Due:

**Introduction**

Members of a community such as a nation, city, university, school district, neighborhood, or family must communicate with each other in order to do their business, whether it’s campaigning for office, discussing a zoning issue, negotiating family chores, or expressing political opinions in the newspaper. Among the ways members of a community can express themselves on various issues is the “letter to the editor,” a well-known outlet for citizens to employ their powers of persuasion. This assignment will provide such an opportunity for you. You will need to thoroughly study an issue that you and your audience care about, formulate your opinion concerning it, and utilize rhetorical techniques to persuade readers to accept your position, perhaps even to act on it in some way.

**What is an Opinion Editorial?**

Letters to the editor come in all sizes and shapes. Some are brief statements of a biting insight, observed irony in a given issue or a politician’s handling of it, or even praise for a certain person or program. On the same page as the letters to the editor are usually newspaper-staff editorials and opinion essays (“op-ed columns”) reprinted from major newspapers and wire services. Sometimes in the midst of these varieties of expressions of opinion are longer columns written by local citizens on a pressing issue, often concerning something of local concern. It could be placed in a special box, sometimes appearing as a weekly feature as the best of such pieces. Something of this type is what you will be writing for this assignment—what we will call an opinion editorial. In the *Daily Universe* you’ve probably noticed this kind of article on the editorial page under the heading, “Viewpoint.” Like these “Viewpoints,” your opinion editorial should be addressed to readers of the *Daily Universe.*

**Preparing to Write**

To successfully complete this assignment, you will need to study the issue and then write an effective opinion editorial that has the potential to persuade a range of readers. How you express your opinion makes all the difference. If you learn anything from this assignment, and this course, it will be that being “right” is never enough; communicating clearly and powerfully why others should agree with you is just as important. That is, this assignment assumes—and you should as well—that you are trying to reach beyond the known circle of those already inclined to agree with you. To do that requires at least three things:

1. an understanding of the “rhetorical situation” (your audience, your purpose, and the

issue);

2. a profile of various audiences who will read your piece, including their values and needs;

3. and the ability to use rhetoric effectively.

**Understanding the Issue and Your Purpose**

Before writing, you will want to read and analyze other arguments and opinions on the issue. In addition, you may want to talk with those who disagree with you to gain further, more personal, insights into the ways others approach the issue.

Once you have a clear sense of the full range of opinions, you will want to decide what your goal in writing your opinion editorial will be. Do you want to change the way people think about the issue? Do you want to motivate them to action? Do you want to promote some kind of campus awareness?

Understanding your rhetorical objectives will be key as you begin to write your editorial