LETTER PROJECT -- 100 POINTS

Our effectiveness in preserving the planet and the quality of life upon it will depend in large part upon our ability to become knowledgeable about the problems and our skill in presenting rational and appropriate alternatives to the public. The purpose of this assignment is to help you to become an effective advocate for an environmental issue which concerns you.

PROCEDURE AND TIME TABLE:

1. In preparation for the project, do some reading on a number of environmental topics. For example, check the MCC Library for environmentally oriented periodicals. Use the internet search resources available in the library to locate periodicals related to topics of interest to you. Read newspapers and look for articles on environmental issues. Check out the websites of organizations and agencies that report on environmental issues. Also, a number of journals and other periodicals can be checked out from the lab (7-315).

2. Choose a topic and decide on a person or an organization to whom you will write. Your final letter will be sent to one of the following:
   a. the Editor of the Democrat & Chronicle (or other newspaper) as a Letter to the Editor
   b. to an individual or group that has some responsibility for the topic you have chosen.

   Examples of appropriate individuals to receive letters could include - Gov. George Pataki, your NYS legislator or senator, your U.S. senator or member of the House of Representatives, President George Bush, the administrator of EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), the Secretary of the Interior, the administrator of NYS DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation), officials of your town or city, the CEO of a company with involvement in the topic you have chosen, etc.

   If you are unsure about what topic to choose, make an appointment to come and see me!

3. **Week of March 8-12 (in lab)** - hand in your letter topic - and the name and address of the person to whom you are writing – on an 8½ x 11 sheet of paper. Be sure to include your name, lab section and the date.

4. Research your topic by finding current information from periodicals, either from the library in print form or accessed on Internet. You may also use articles found in journals and other periodicals available in the lab. Make copies of relevant articles. You will need to include three articles with your project when you hand it in.

5. The three articles used as reference materials should meet the following criteria:
   1) Articles must be from periodicals (i.e., magazines or newspapers, but not books), and should be dated 1998 or later (check with instructor for exceptions).
      Full text internet periodical sources are acceptable, though they will generally not include illustrations found in the original article.
   2) Articles may be obtained from other Internet sources - but those ending with .com must be approved in advance by instructor. Check the list of Suggested Websites attached for possible sources of information.

6. **Week of April 5-9 (in lab)** - hand in a rough draft of your letter, typed in proper business form.

7. Wait until I have returned the draft of your letter to you, then make any necessary changes and do the final typed draft. Make a copy of the finished letter.

8. **Week of May 3-7 - Letter Project Due** – bring either to lab or to instructor’s office.
Final Letter Project should include the following items when handed in:

a. Final typed letter - be sure you sign it and include your home address and the current date

b. A copy of the final typed letter

c. Long business envelope (4" x 9"), stamped and addressed

d. Rough draft of letter

e. Photocopies of three articles you used to research information on your topic
   1) Write a summary for each article.
   2) Include bibliographic data for each article – title of article, name of periodical, date published, author, if given.
   3) Article summaries and bibliographic data are to be typed.

Put all of the above items in a folder or large envelope and hand in.

8. Grading for this project will be based on your successful completion of items below, handed in on the dates they are due:

   Project topic .................................................. 5 pts
   Rough draft of letter............................................ 15 pts
   Final letter (in correct business form, with no spelling or grammatical errors) and stamped, addressed envelope .. 20 pts
   Copy of final letter............................................. 10 pts
   Photocopies of 3 articles..................................... 25 pts
   Summaries and bibliographic information for 3 articles..20 pts
   Lab summary of project (oral report in lab) ............... 5 pts

   Project Total ...........................................100 pts

Late assignments may be accepted, but will be penalized based on number of days late.

Suggested Topics: Any of a number of subject areas would be appropriate for this project. Some suggestions are:

   water quality/other water issues
   air quality
   solid waste disposal and recycling in Monroe County
   fossil fuel consumption and planning for the future
   disposal of radioactive waste
   alternative energy sources (solar, wind, geothermal, etc.)
   energy conservation
   drilling for oil in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge in Alaska
   human overpopulation
   bioengineered foods
   endangered species
   introduced plant and animal species
   ozone depletion
   global climate change