

Assignment on Subject and Theme

Under "Readings for Assignment 2" are two op-ed length articles, one anonymous and one by New York Times columnist Paul Krugman.

For **each** of these articles, please do the following:

Identify the op-ed's subject and theme, stating the subject as a word or short phrase and stating the theme in the form of a complete, grammatical sentence.

In no more than 300 words, explain why you think your formulation of the subject and theme is accurate, citing evidence from the editorial. Do not discuss whether you agree or disagree with the theme; discuss what you think the theme *is*.

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Subject: Sweet red cherries

Theme: Sweet red cherries are gross.

Notice that the subject is a short noun phrase and that it is *exactly the same* as the noun phrase that is being used as the grammatical subject of the sentence stating the theme. This is the form in which I want you to state your subjects and theme.

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Rebecca Winkelstein**

Reading 1

Subject: Tea party protests and Atlas Shrugged.

Theme: Tea party protests and Atlas Shrugged share principles.

I think the subject covers "Tea party protests" and "Atlas Shrugged" because we can see that in the first three paragraphs the author explains what the tea party protests were, their difficulties and what they are based on; also commenting on the impact of the original tea party. Then he explains how the Atlas Shrugge book is related to this phenomenon. In paragraph number four, the author tells how conservatives use Rand's ideas to support their points of view, but in the fifth and sixth paragraphs he explains why she is neither conservative nor liberal, but rather denounces them both. So we can see how all the main ideas cover the relationship between tea party protests and Atlas Shrugged. In the last paragraphs what is sought is to delve into and argue the nature of this relationship. In paragraph number seven, it is explicitly stated that "The principle behind the political philosophy offered in Atlas Shrugged is the same principle that directed the original tea party: the principle of individual rights". Then, in paragraph eight, the difference between the two is marked, the original tea party protesters knew what was wrong: the government; Atlas Shrugged shows why. Paragraphs nine and ten discuss this, and paragraph eleven concludes by mentioning again the relationship between the two phenomena and the need to complement them.

Reading 2

Subject: G.O.P. evolution

Theme: G.O.P. evolution at the tea parties

In the first place, the text seeks to show how little the Republican party has really changed. In paragraph four the author mentions that "the G.O.P. looked as crazy 10 or 15 years ago as it does now", and then in paragraph five is explained that one way to get a good sense of this is to look at the "tea parties" that have been held across the country. Examples of things that representatives of the Republican Party have said or done, especially in these parties, that support the author's position are given in the following paragraphs. After showing and explaining these examples, the author remarks that Republicans are refusing to grow up because they are still behaving the same way they did when history seemed to be on their side, a fact that is good for Democrats. The article concludes by arguing that since the G.O.P. is one of the great parties in the United States, it could still return to power and that is why it is expected that the Republicans will have advanced by the time that happens. So we can see clearly how the whole text revolves around to the current state of the G.O.P and how this is exemplified through the speeches delivered at the tea parties.

Word count: 475

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Answer by **Louis Varilias**

Subject: Political philosophy in Atlas Shrugged

Theme: The political philosophy in Atlas Shrugged is one of individual rights, and therefore provides a principled approach to taking political action.

211 words

The article begins by describing the tea party movement and its failure to offer a principled response to frustrations caused by the government. Atlas Shrugged has been associated with the movement because of how Rand denounces government regulation. However, the book cannot be simply thrown aside as part of the usual dichotomy between liberal and conservative. Rather, the book aims at rejecting force of all kinds, in favor of individual rights; violations against individual rights is the source of where the government is going wrong, not a vague sense of frustrations. The book goes even further: individual rights are the only moral option for the government. For a movement like the tea party to achieve lasting success, a moral case for individual rights is required.

All sentences in the article contribute to the theme. Although the tea party is mentioned, few details beyond its existence are not offered. More details are not required about the tea party, because the article is pointing out why individual rights matter. The article does not go into explaining precisely what the government is doing wrong, emphasizing that whatever the state of affairs, individual rights are always going to be the only moral answer. In other words, the scope is limited exactly to this one theme.

Subject: Republican Party

Theme: The Republican Party is intellectually bankrupt.

173 words

The article immediately begins by stating that the subject is Republicans. More than that, Krugman makes clear in the third paragraph that specifically, he is saying that Republicans are crazy and embarrassing to watch. The concrete example of this is in the tea party and the associated Republicans. They might cavalierly throw around the term socialist to describe Obama, or go as far as to say that he is a Muslim. This is similar to crazy claims that the Clintons are murderers. This intellectual shallowness is even present in the way that some prominent Republicans don't believe in evolution. Furthermore, the spontaneity of the tea party is not accurate. They receive funding and support from existing Republican organizations. Ultimately, Republicans have no credibility and seem clueless.

The article is a series of jabs at Republicans, each hit directed at the way Republicans appear to be unthinking. Mentioning Limbaugh might at first seem to be a tangent, but Krugman is giving an easy to remember individual that is characteristic of the intellectual style of Republicans.

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Answer by **Andrew McClay**

Subject: The Tea Party

Theme: The Tea Party should listen to Ayn Rand.

The first three paragraphs introduce the Tea Party and the essential issue facing the longevity of their movement: that they lack a consistent ideological base. The remaining paragraphs discuss Ayn Rand, her stature within the movement already, and why the Tea Party movement should embrace her ideas as a matter of principle. The article also demonstrates how Ayn Rand's ideas are a more consistent expression of the basic idea at the core of the Tea Party when stripped of all the fluff, that being the principle of individual rights.

Subject: The Republican Party

Theme: The Republic Party is as detestable as ever.

The first few paragraphs introduce the idea that the Republican party's present actions are obviously detestable, and then the article goes on to show through examples that this is nothing new and that this is in fact typical of the Republican party in essence and throughout history. Given this historical angle, the article is about the nature of the Republican Party itself, and not about the Republican Party in relation to any temporal or popular issue.

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Answer by **Shea Levy**

Does Atlas Drink Tea? (297 words)

Subject: *Atlas Shrugged*

Theme: *Atlas Shrugged* presents ideas crucial to understand to the issues at play in the tea party protests, but not because it is Conservative.

To justify this identification, it will be helpful to first identify the meaning of each section of the article:

- Paragraphs 1-3 introduce the tea party protests as a floundering response to contemporary frustration with government, in contrast to the original tea party's principled awareness
- Paragraph 4 introduces *Atlas* as being widely considered relevant to the protests as a representative of Conservative ideas, and introduces the claim that *Atlas* is not in fact Conservative.
- Paragraph 5 claims that mainstream thinkers are destroying the message of *Atlas*
- Paragraph 6 identifies the nature of Conservatism and Liberalism, explicitly foreshadowed as a step toward understanding *Atlas*'s relation to both
- Paragraph 7 discusses *Atlas*'s opposition to Conservatism and Liberalism as being rooted in its embrace of individual rights
- Paragraph 8 discusses how *Atlas*'s political ideas are rooted in a complete philosophy, which shows not just *what* government should be but *why* it should be that way
- Paragraphs 9 and 10 promote *Atlas* as the solution to the culture's contemporary issues
- Paragraph 11 exhorts the protesters to leverage the moral and political case of *Atlas*.

From this, it's clear that *Atlas* is the subject: after the introduction, *Atlas* plays a major role in every paragraph. From the payoff (in paragraphs 8-11) that *Atlas* gives the full principled view (identified as missing in paragraphs 1-3) needed to solve contemporary issues, we can see that the author aimed to present *Atlas* as helping understand the contemporary issues. That the article contrasts this claim to a view of *Atlas* as Conservative can be seen from the fact that this Conservative attribution is presented and denied in paragraph 4, that this denial is justified in paragraphs 5-6, and that paragraph 9 roots this denial in the very guiding ideas (individual rights) that the author thinks are needed.

Tea Parties Forever (298 words)

Subject: The Republican party

Theme: The Republican party's current ridiculous behavior is essentially the same as it was when it was last able to gain power.

To see the meaning of the article, let's analyze its parts and structure.

The first section introduces the issue: the Republicans are both out of power and ridiculous (§ 1-3), but are worth understanding because they were just as ridiculous 10-15 years ago when they last gained power (§ 4).

The bulk of the article is then spent on demonstrating the current state of the G.O.P., especially as revealed by the tea party protests, and how it's the same as it was in the past (§ 5-6). We're shown contemporary occurrences of bizarre claims about goals (§ 7-8) and conspiracies (§ 9), vicious party discipline (§ 10), evolution denial (§ 11), and

"AstroTurf" protests (§ 12-13), and see how they're just the same as past such instances on different issues.

Finally, the article concludes that the Republicans' childishness is (short-run) good for the Democrats but bad for the country if they regain power (§ 14-16).

The article is clearly about the Republicans. What is it trying to say about them? Most of the article, including crucially all of the concrete evidence and most of the arguments, is focused on the nature of the G.O.P.'s ridiculousness and how it is an echo of its past ridiculousness. In this light, the introduction serves to justify making this evaluation and comparison (the time we're comparing to is when they were last in power, so we can't dismiss them on the basis of ridiculousness) and the conclusion presents the implication of the evaluation on broader issues (crucially, without any significant elaboration or argument, thus this point is not directly involved in the theme). Thus, as a whole, the entire article is about the identification of the party's current behavior as ridiculous and essentially similar to its behavior when last able to gain power.

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Answer by **Austin Kilgore**

Does Atlas Drink Tea?:

Subject: The Tea Party Protests

Theme: The Tea Party Protests will be unsuccessful unless the protestors unite under a moral case for individual rights.

Justification: The first two paragraphs describe how all the protestors are dissatisfied with the government's overreach, yet they disagree on the principles as to why. This is different than the original, more efficacious Boston Tea Party (3). This opening clearly gives the point that unity in principles is necessary for the Tea Party Protests to succeed. In the mid-section (4-6), the author describes how the public has misidentified Ayn Rand and *Atlas Shrugged* as conservative, and then goes on to show how her political philosophy, based on the principle of individual rights, denounces both Conservatism and Liberalism (7). Paragraph 8 seals the theme, showing how both the Tea Parties, today and 250 years ago, needed both the principle of individual rights as well as a fully integrated philosophy that supported them. After quoting Rand, the first sentence of the final paragraph almost states the theme I gave.

(175 Words)

Tea Parties Forever:

Subject: The GOP's Policy

Theme: The GOP's Policy has not changed and should not be seen as insignificant.

Justification: The first four paragraphs say how, although the GOP seems crazy and insignificant in the moment, this is the same policy that has led to their success in the past. In the mid-section, Krugman goes over how various bizarre events today, such as the Tea Parties, are similar to past events, such as DeLay's evolution and Columbine comments. Another instance of this is how the strict party control over its members exerted by Limbaugh mirrors "The Hammer," DeLay, in the 90s (10). Paragraph 14 gives an evaluation of GOP Policy – that it is ultimately a negative – and that it needs more attention than is apparent (15-16). The entire article has compared GOP Policy in the current moment to previous times in history, showing that the underlying strategy is the same. Adding to that, Krugman constantly tries to warn the reader away from ignoring or disregarding the policies as *just* crazy, but rather to see them as crazy *and* relevant to modern politics.

(184 Words)

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Answer by **Ezequiel Eiben**

Article 1

Subject: The recent tea party protests

Theme: The recent tea party protests need the moral principles Atlas Shrugged provides

The subject focus on the recent tea part protests against government, as it is described in the first sentence of paragraph one. The protesters are tired of paying a big amount of taxes to support government spending on those who dont want to assume responsibility for their own well being.

In paragraph 3 there is a contrast between these current protests and the protesters from the original tea party. The latter were against had clear guidance of the source of the problems they were pointing at, and the solutions they offered; the first ones suffer lack of clarity because they dont identify the fundamentals of the problem and the principles needed to solve it.

The theme is introduced in paragraph 4, when describing the influence Ayn Rand's novel Atlas Shrugged has on Conservatives in order to fight liberals because it denounces government regulations, but it is clarified that Rand denounced both groups. In paragraphs 6 and 7 it is explained why the novel is incompatible with ideas based on force advocated by them: Conservatives want soul control; liberals want material control; and Atlas promotes the principle of individual rights to protect people from this coercion.

The theme is developed in paragraph 8 when it is said that the Tea Party know what is wrong, and Atlas explains why it is wrong based on the principle of rights; and it is clearly stated in paragraph 10: the novel identifies the problematic situation of government intervention; and offers the correct premises against that.

The conclusion comes in the last paragraph: the tea parties protesters need a moral case for individual rights, and they can find it in Atlas Shrugged. That is how they can achieve a real impact.

Article 2

Subject: Republicans

Theme: Republicans are to be mocked about.

Subject is stated in paragraph one: an article about Republicans. From there to paragraph 6 they are mentioned as Republicans or as G.O.P.

Theme comes up with explicit words in paragraph 5: the tea parties from Republicans are subject of considerable mockery, and rightly so.

Paragraph 6 introduces what is going to be described in the next ones as subject of mockery: "...everything that critics mock about these parties has long been standard practice within the Republican Party".

Mockery of Republicans is the central theme, not only because the given explanations and the explicit use of the term, but because of the language used in general through out the piece.

In paragraph 1 author claims he is not sure he should even be writing the column, in reference to how embarrassing the Republicans have become, as stated in paragraph 3, when they are called "crazy people".

In paragraph 7 they are criticized for calling Obama a socialist when his tax rates on the richest are lower than Reagan's, and this is described as "bizarre".

In paragraph 8 it is mentioned that some Republican figures were making "equally bizarre claims".

More examples of bizarre situations are quoted, like opposition to evolutionism because it leads to massacres.

As contrast, the position for Democrats is openly stated to support the mockery. While accusations against democrats are lightly discarded (like "the Clintons are murderers"), the internal discipline of Republicans is heavily pointed out like "Stalinist show trials".

The article concludes in paragraph 16 with a warning repeated from paragraph 4: Republicans could return to power.

The author says "We can only hope that Republicans have moved on by the time that happens". It is not a serious calculation or prediction, and mockery prevails, making clear is the main purpose of the piece.

616 words

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Answer by **Natan Galula**

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Article 1

Subject: Tea party protests against government

Theme: Tea party protests against government, to be effective, require the fundamental principles advocated in *Atlas Shrugged*

This theme is too broad and the article fails to deliver a single, central idea that corresponds with the theme. For example, the article begins in paragraphs 1-3 by discussing the frustration of the protesters with government overreach and the lack of principles to unite them for achieving favorable results. But it also states that they lack solutions and the identification of the problem, which is a different issue to begin with.

In paragraphs 4-7 the article mentions the association of *Atlas Shrugged* with the protests, which is logically understood, but takes too much time to distinguish the novel from conservatism and liberalism. This throws the reader off the main theme as he is now confronted with metaphysics, namely, materialism versus spiritualism.

These paragraphs can align with a theme distinguishing *Atlas Shrugged* from conventional political philosophies—not with the theme suggested at the outset of the article. Paragraph 7 mentions individual rights for the first time, and paragraph 8 states that *Atlas Shrugged* has a whole body of philosophy proving the need for individual rights; but again, this deviates from the original theme. We do not know if the fundamental principles missing are individual rights or if what is missing is the philosophical *proof* for individual rights.

A closing call for “a moral case of individual rights” is thus unconvincing.

Article 2

Subject: Tea party protests against government

Theme: Tea party protests against government are as crazy as their Republican influencers/sponsors

I think it important to state at the outset that Krugman's theme does not say anything from a philosophical perspective and is solely a smear piece of 788 words. Taking this into account, the theme is conveyed clearly and explicitly throughout the article, and is likewise integrated into a single, central message.

Paragraphs 1 through 4 explain the motivation for the article. Krugman says that Republicans are “crazy” and “embarrassing” but as members of a great political party they should be scrutinized.

In paragraph 5 he shifts his attention to the tea party protests, agreeing they should be mocked for their espoused views. In paragraphs 6-10 we go back to the G.O.P., as Krugman raises several conspiracy theories promoted by the party or its supporters.

Paragraphs 11 to 13 link the protesters to various right-wing organizations with Republican connections.

Krugman ends the article (paragraphs 14-16) with an ominous warning from the regaining of power by the G.O.P.

In summary, the article manages to clearly convey its juvenile, arrogant theme. The structure made sense and the content matched the central message.

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Answer by **Andres Fernandez**

Reading 1:

Subject: Tea party

Theme: Tea party, their premises and how Atlas Shrugged shows them

The subject of the first reading is "Tea party" and the theme is "Tea party, their premises and how Atlas Shrugged shows them." The article talks about the confusion the tea party protesters started to have when they thought the reasons behind their cause. This is shown in paragraph 8 where it says "The original tea party protesters grasped that man needed individual rights, but never grasped why." The author thinks this point is important for the movement to prevail in time and in a unified way. In paragraph 3 it says "Unless today protesters explicitly identify the source of their problem in fundamental terms, unless they unite under the correct principles, their momentum will fade." Now that the author has identified a problem and stated the importance to solve it and understand the principles behind it, he introduces Atlas Shrugged as a "hidden asset" that goes back to the basic principles. In paragraph 7 it says "The principle behind the political philosophy offered in Atlas Shrugged is the same principle that directed the original tea party: the principle of individual rights". Lastly, the author unifies the tea party and Atlas Shrugged by saying "I said that the original tea party protesters knew what was wrong, Atlas Shrugged shows why".

Reading 2:

Subject: Republican party

Theme: Republican party critique

The subject of the second reading is "Republican party" and the theme is "Republican party critique". The article starts by saying "This is a column about Republicans" and the title is "Tea parties forever". I choose the theme of "Republican party critique" because it talks about how the movement has been defending different causes that are not good to shape the country policy. Krugman states that "Republicans have become embarrassing to watch" and give various examples of why he says this. The intention behind stating this and showing the examples is to critique the Republican party and try to change the direction its taking. Since its one of the two more important parties, it needs to be serious on the causes they defend. This is shown in the last phrase of the article where Krugman says "We can only hope that Republicans have moved on by the time that happens".

Word count: 385

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Answer by **Teodor Gluza**

1.

Subject: tea party

Theme: if tea party wants to succeed, then it must understand the principle of individual rights.

Explanation:

In the 1-st paragraph, the author openly states the subject: 'the recent tea party protests are an expression of America's frustration with government.'

In the 2-nd paragraph, he states that 'the tea parties have been unable to explicitly identify the solution let alone the problem. The tea parties lack direction, focus, and the principles that will guide them to results.'

Hence, the very beginning indicates the subject (the tea party) and the theme (why it's ineffective). The third paragraph points out to the reason behind that: the lack of the principles. From the 4-th paragraph till the 10-th, the writer explains what are these principles and why no party holds them, which causes ineffectiveness of the tea party.

In the 11-th paragraph, the writer summarises his theme: 'if the tea party protesters wish to leave a lasting impact and influence change, they need to use te what Atlas Shrugged offers them: a moral case for individual rights.'

2.

Subject: The Republicans' political status

Theme: The Republicans' political status is bad

Explanations:

The subject is frankly stated from the first sentence: 'this is a column about Republicans — and I'm not sure I should even be writing it.'

To make his case, Krugman points out to certain facts: the GOP is insignificant (the 2-nd paragraph), the GOP is mocking itself (from the 3-rd to the 6). Thereafter, he provides examples for that: the GOP uses absurdal strawmans (7-9), opposes the theory of evolution (11.), pretends that the protests are spontaneous when they are planned (12.-13.), etc.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

Under "Readings for Assignment 2" are two op-ed length articles, one anonymous and one by New York Times columnist Paul Krugman.

For **each** of these articles, please do the following:

Identify the op-ed's subject and theme, stating the subject as a word or short phrase and stating the theme in the form of a complete, grammatical sentence.

In no more than 300 words, explain why you think your formulation of the subject and theme is accurate, citing evidence from the editorial. Do not discuss whether you agree or disagree with the theme; discuss what you think the theme *is*.

Note: Please take the word or phrase you use to identify the subject and use it as the grammatical subject of your sentence identifying article's theme. For instance, if the article makes a case for the potentially controversial view that cherries are unappetizing, give the subject and theme as

Subject: Sweet red cherries

Theme: Sweet red cherries are gross.

Notice that the subject is a short noun phrase and that it is *exactly the same* as the noun phrase that is being used as the grammatical subject of the sentence stating the theme. This is the form in which I want you to state your subjects and theme.

Your discussion of each of the two articles should be 300 words maximum (for a total maximum of 600 words). Please report your word counts with your post.

DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Samantha Westmoreland**

Does Atlas Drink Tea? - Anonymous

Subject: The success of the Tea Party movement

Theme: The success of the Tea Party movement depends on uniting under the principles underlying individual rights as described by Ayn Rand in *Atlas Shrugged*.

Word Count: 298

I think the subject of this piece is the success of the Tea Party movement. The major clue that this is the case is in how the author motivates the piece. In the second paragraph, the author provides examples to prove that the movement is not united by any explicit principles, but only by a vague feeling of frustration with the government. And in the third paragraph, the author contrasts this scattered, modern movement with the original tea party its name invokes, claiming that their influence and success sprang from clarity and unification over broad principles, and by arguing that the modern movement is doomed to fade if it can't do the same.

The rest of the piece then all relates to the tea party movement's success—their attempts to use Rand to succeed against the Democrats, why these attempts will fail without other fundamental changes, and what they need to understand to actually have an impact.

I think the theme of the piece is that the success of the tea party movement depends on its members uniting under, not just any principles or even the principles of individual rights as outlined by the founding fathers, but the principles underlying individual rights as described by Ayn Rand in *Atlas Shrugged*. The first clue that this is the theme lies in paragraph 8 when the author stresses that the reason our rights have been eroded over time is that the founding fathers lacked Rand's ideas of *why* the protection of individual rights is necessary and, most importantly, moral. The author then concludes the piece by claiming that the modern tea party movement can have lasting success where the founders did not, by fully understanding and adopting Rand's moral case for individual rights that she first expressed in *Atlas Shrugged*.

Tea Parties Forever – Paul Krugman

Subject: The state of Republicans

Theme: The state of Republicans indicates that they continue to be fundamentally crazy, and have not learned from being relegated to a significant minority in congress

Word Count: 294

I think the subject of the Krugman piece is the state of Republicans. He states in the opening line that the column is about Republicans and motivates the piece in paragraph 4 by stating that it would be wise for Democrats to keep abreast of the state of Republicans because they could end up in power again despite being solidly in the minority at the current moment. The rest of the piece then centers on providing details about the current events and recent history of the Republicans. And the piece concludes with Krugman offering what he sees as the implication for their current state, both on the Democrats in the current moment, but also for the country as a whole looking toward the future.

I think the theme of the Krugman piece is: the state of Republicans indicates that they continue to be fundamentally crazy and have not learned from being relegated to a significant minority in congress. Krugman maligns the Republican as crazy, both in the opening and closing of the piece, declaring that they are embarrassing to watch and are refusing to grow up. Krugman spends the bulk of the piece outlining example after example of how the tea party is only a current manifestation of their fundamental craziness. He does this by describing things the tea party is saying and doing now that are crazy, and by connecting those statements and actions to similar or worse ones they've made or done in the last 10 or 15 years. By showcasing that the thread of insanity has remained consistent over the years and that this consistency hasn't changed despite the public's reaction in electing a majority of Democrats, Krugman establishes that the Republicans have not re-corrected and are as crazy as ever.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Lucas Cuadra**

Reading 1

Does Atlas drink Tea?

March 2009

Subject: Atlas Shrugged

Theme: Atlas Shrugged can provide the kind of philosophical guidance that the tea party protesters need.

Discussion (word count: 289)

Paragraphs 1-3 work as an introduction, raising the issue of the tea party protesters, their frustration with the American government, and their lack of philosophical guidance, as opposed to the original tea party.

Paragraph 4 brings in the subject of the article, Atlas Shrugged. Everything said in the article from this point on is about Atlas Shrugged, and about how it can provide the kind of philosophical guidance that the tea party protesters need. This is the theme of the article, what is argued for.

Now I shall offer evidence for my claim.

Paragraph 4 argues for the relevance of Atlas Shrugged regarding current issues at the time, and how it is as much against Conservatism as it is against Liberalism. This starts to hint at its importance for the tea party protesters, who were seeking a third option.

Paragraph 5 brings up an epistemological point about how Atlas Shrugged is being smeared by both Conservatives, who claim it as their own, and Liberals, who denounce it for being conservative.

Paragraph 6 is dedicated to disprove this smear, by examining the natures of Conservatism and Liberalism, and concluding that both are seeking to rule by force.

Paragraph 7 argues that Atlas Shrugged advocates for individual rights, the same political principle that inspired the original tea party. Here the connection between Atlas Shrugged and the tea party is no longer hinted at: it's made explicit.

Paragraph 8-10 offer some insight into how Atlas Shrugged offers a complete and integrated philosophy, and a moral basis for politics.

The conclusion in paragraph 11 drives home the point that what the tea party protesters need is a moral case for individual rights, and that such a case can be found in Atlas Shrugged.

Reading 2

Tea Parties Forever

By PAUL KRUGMAN

April 13, 2009

Subject: The Republican Party

Theme: ?

Discussion (word count: 295)

The first four paragraphs state that, while the Republican Party is a minority party with almost no power and an embarrassing track record, it could nonetheless still return to power if the Democrats fail to maintain theirs. Because of that threat, the author believes that it's necessary to take a closer look at the Republican Party, to see how really crazy and embarrassing it all really is. I don't understand why he thinks this will support the point he stated, but it really seems like he wants to show evidence for the fact that the republicans are crazy.

From this point on, the author offers a long list of "embarrassing facts" about The Republican Party. But that's what it is, a list, not an argument. No case is made for the negative evaluation of the facts he cites: he seems to think that his negative evaluation is self-evident, so he offers no explanation for them. But he also doesn't offer any argument for his initial assertion.

After he's finished with the list, he repeats his initial point that the embarrassing state of the Republican Party doesn't make it any less dangerous, and that they could be back in power if the Democrats stumbled.

In conclusion, I don't think that this article has a theme. The author makes an assertion that could be a theme, but he doesn't argue for it. If I had to boil down his whole case to a few words it would be this: "*the republicans are crazy, but they could return to power: look how crazy they are.*" It's not a logically connected argument adding up to an integrated theme. Everything he says after making his "thematic assertion", let's say, is not a development or an explanation of that at all.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Humairaa Tarsoo**

Subject: Ayn Rand's ideas in context of the tea party movement

Theme: Ayn Rand's ideas are presented as lessons to the tea party protesters.

The evidence for the subject and theme I presented are listed below. Paragraphs 2 and 3 explain why the tea party protests are inadequate, giving characteristics that will later be used to introduce Rand's ideas. These span paragraphs 4-10, showing that Rand's ideas are a prominent part of the subject and theme. However, the tone is not just descriptive; it tries to convince the reader of the validity of Ayn Rand's ideas to the current political affairs. The conclusion (paragraph 11) reiterates the comparison and takes it further, stating "if the tea party protesters wish to leave a lasting impact [...], they need to use what Atlas Shrugged offers them". This is a rephrasing of the theme.

There are subthemes developed in paragraphs 4-10, namely Conservatism and the smearing of Atlas Shrugged. However, they do not represent the main argument due to being sparsely developed.

167 words

Subject: Issues in the Republican Party (G.O.P.) of the US

Theme: The Republican Party (G.O.P.) of the US's issues are explained, as mainly illustrated by the tea parties.

The evidence for the subject is that the term Republican or G.O.P. is repeated from paragraph 1-6 and 14-16, and Republican politicians mentioned in paragraph 7-11. However, when spoken about, there is a negative connotation associated: "no ability to make or even significantly shape policy" (paragraph 2), "embarrassing to watch" (paragraph 3) and "crazy people" (paragraph 3) are just some of the initial criticism and judgment leveled against the Republican Party. In that sense, the subject is not just the Republican Party but a negative perspective on it.

This leads to the theme. The issues concerning the Republican Party are explained using a variety of examples ("10 percentage points less than [...] the Reagan administration" in paragraph 7) but the primary one from paragraph 5-6, 9, 11-13 is about the tea parties, making it a key part of the theme.

173 words

Total word count: 340 words

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Ujval Chauhan**

1. Does Atlas drink Tea?

Subject: The role of Atlas Shrugged

Theme: Atlas Shrugged can empower people frustrated with today's dysfunctional government.

Explanation (284 words):

The article begins with highlighting the ineffectiveness of the protest & activism by people who have realized that the government today is dysfunctional and immoral (paragraphs 1 & 2). The reason behind their ineffectiveness is a lack of understanding the problem at a fundamental level, which results in the lack of clear goals and convincing grounds to pursue them. Contrastingly, the original tea party was successful in manifesting change because their actions were informed by the correct principles that operate in a society fit for rational men (paragraph 3).

In this context, Atlas Shrugged has received a lot of attention, but largely because Ayn Rand clearly and loudly critiques government regulation, which the conservatives use as a way to fight the Democratic administration. The Liberals perceive Atlas Shrugged as being biased towards conservatism and don't work hard enough to understand it comprehensively (paragraph 4).

If people did make an effort to understand Atlas Shrugged honestly and fully, then they would realize that it gives them

access to an integrated view of the world, what is right and why. They would be able to reject Conservatism as essentially being an attempt to forcefully control material aspects of life, and reject Liberalism as essentially being an attempt to forcefully control the matters of one's spirit (paragraph 6 & 7). On reading Atlas Shrugged, they will be able to see how the principle of force being incompatible with rational men is valid, by gaining an understanding of the metaphysics and epistemology that this ethical principle is based on (paragraph 8).

Thus, the article demonstrates that Atlas Shrugged arms active minded individuals with a clear grasp of reality and a robust moral ground to begin reforming the government.

2. Tea Parties forever

Subject – The Republican Party

Theme – The Republican Party retains its heritage, but has become ineffective at making significant political impact.

Explanation (226 words) :

The article in almost all paragraphs is talking about the G.O.P., i.e. the Republican Party and is highlighting the oddity in its nature along with its lack of clear direction. The G.O.P. is referred to as “crazy” and yet effective in the past (paragraphs 3 & 4). They have organized “tea parties” with an intention to conjure up nostalgia from the past and hopefully, yet failing to, refresh the principles that the Boston Tea Party stood for (paragraph 5). But more recently, this eccentricity has manifested in absurd incidents such as mounting ad hominem attacks on opponents (paragraph 7 & 9). The party has resorted to using the term “socialism” to conjure up strong emotions against the Democratic party and resorting to .

Moreover, the party has failed to elicit authentic public responses and instead orchestrated an appearance of strong public sentiment through biased media, which has been an effective strategy once in the past (paragraphs 12 & 13). There is also a mention of a Mr. DeLay who has been operating by orthodox Republican values (paragraph 10 & 11). But a mere retention of eccentricity is not proving to be helpful for the opposition party (paragraph 14 & 15). Thus, it is demonstrated that the G.O.P., despite staying close to its roots, is presently making no inroads into having any noticeable change in American Politics, presently.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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Your discussion of each of the two articles should be 300 words maximum (for a total maximum of 600 words). Please report your word counts with your post.

DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Tom Nowak**

Reading 1

Subject: The 2009 tea party protests

Theme: The 2009 tea party protests lack a clear purpose; they should, instead, be advocating for individual rights using Atlas Shrugged as a guide.

Explanation of formulation:

This article uses the tea party protests as a topic relevant to a wide array of Ayn Rand's ideas, mostly ideas contained in Atlas Shrugged; though the protests, not the book, are the anchoring subject, since all the points made refer back to aspects of the tea parties. The writer is more specifically focused on the lack of clear purpose for the tea parties, contrasting them often with the original tea party protesters, who had a more clear, integrated reason for their protest. The writer spends a great deal of time distinguishing Conservatism (and Liberalism to a lesser extent) from Ayn Rand and Atlas Shrugged; the ultimate product of all this effort is to show that Atlas Shrugged stands as the sole proper guide for the tea parties, not Conservatism nor Liberalism, since neither of these ideologies are really true to the spirit of the original tea party. The writer goes so far to say that even the original tea party was lacking Atlas Shrugged in their fundamental premises. So, the main elements of the article are: the tea parties' lack of focus; the mixed ideas influencing them; Atlas Shrugged's integrated purpose; and how Atlas Shrugged's integrated purpose is an antidote to the tea parties' lack of focus.

Word count: 208

Reading 2

Subject: The 2009 tea party protests

Theme: The 2009 tea party protests are an embarrassing display of the GOP's usual follies, and show how weak the party is against Obama's administration.

Explanation of formulation:

Krugman discusses Republicans in general in this article, but he uses statements about the tea party to structure the piece. The article uses four examples from the tea party to point out the absurdity of the Republican party: calling Obama a socialist, the conspiracy claims made at tea party protests, the anti-evolution stance present at some tea

parties, and claims of astroturfing. Krugman's ultimate aim with each of these examples is to show that these antics are nothing new to the Republican party, which has demonstrated all of these behaviors in previous circumstances. Krugman ends the article by stating that Republicans are "refusing to grow up", questioning the credibility of the party.

Word count: 112

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Theme: The 2009 tea party protests lack a clear purpose; they should be advocating for individual rights using Atlas Shrugged as a guide.

Explanation of formulation:

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of the original tea party. The writer goes so far to say that even the original tea party was lacking Atlas Shrugged in their fundamental premises. So, the main elements of the article are: the tea parties' lack of focus; the mixed ideas influencing them; Atlas Shrugged's integrated purpose; and how Atlas Shrugged's integrated purpose is an antidote to the tea parties' lack of focus.

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Scott Wilson**

Reading 1

Subject: The Tea Party movement

Theme: The Tea Party movement needs Atlas Shrugged to have real impact

In paragraphs 1 and 2, the author identifies that the tea party movement is an expression of frustration with the government, but that it "lacks direction, focus and ... principles". In paragraph 3, he states the movement must identify the correct guiding principles in order to be successful - that without the right guiding principle the movement cannot have lasting impact.

Atlas Shrugged is introduced in paragraph 4. Paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 serve to distinguish AS from Conservatism and Liberalism. He explains that Conservatism is concerned with force in the realm of spiritual issues like abortion and gay marriage, and that Liberalism is concerned with force in economic issues like trade and wages. He offers AS as an alternative which rests on the principal of individual rights, which protect men from force.

Paragraph 8 attempts to indicate that AS doesn't simply offer individual rights as a principle, but explains why it's a correct principle.

In the final 3 paragraphs, the author motivates tea party protesters to read AS if they wish to have a lasting impact. He quotes a passage from For the New Intellectual which counsels that when a "society is approaching bankruptcy" (relating to the frustration in paragraph 1), they should "identify the situation, check their premises, discover their hidden assets", before suggesting reading AS can achieve these steps. The author explicitly states that the tea party protesters need AS if they want to have a lasting impact, which the rest of the article has been building towards.

Reading 2

Subject: The Republican Party

Theme: The state of the Republican Party and its similarities to the tea parties

The subject is stated explicitly in the first paragraph.

In paragraphs 2-4, Krugman argues that the Republicans are currently impotent in their political power, weak in that they are "embarrassing to watch", and yet this hasn't stopped them being voted into power in the recent past. He's indicating why the subject of the article is worth writing about.

In paragraph 5, he introduces the tea party movement, indicating that something about the Republican Party can be learned from the tea parties ("One way to get a good sense of the current state of the G.O.P. ... is to look at the "tea parties" ") and claims they deserve mockery.

He makes his intent to compare the two clear in paragraph 6, implying the Republican Party deserves the same mockery.

In paragraphs 7-9, he compares tea party attacks on Obama with past examples of Republican attacks on Democrats, presenting the attacks as outlandish or crazy in both cases.

In paragraph 10, he discusses Rush Limbaugh, as a bridge to discuss Tom DeLay, who he then discusses in paragraph 11 as being opposed to the theory of evolution, similarly to some within the tea party movement.

In paragraphs 12-13, he claims that the tea parties do not represent any real public sentiment, but are manufactured or "AstroTurf events", supported by 'the elite' ("the usual group of right-wing billionaires"). He makes the comparison of these tea parties to a riot during a vote recount in 2000 "orchestrated by G.O.P. strategists".

In paragraphs 14-16, he relates his theme to the contemporary politics - that it is good for Democrats, but that in the long run it is dangerous should the Republicans gain power without change.

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Derek Sutherland**

Reading 1: "Does Atlas drink Tea?" By Anonymous, March 2009

Subject: The connection between moral principles and the tea party protests.

Theme: The connection between moral principles and the tea party protests must be strengthened by adopting the moral case for individual rights presented in Atlas Shrugged.

Discussion

The author begins the article with the contrast between the tea party movement, which lacks the "direction, focus, and the principles that guide them to results," with the original tea party in 1773, which is argued to be "a manifestation of the principles guiding its participants." In contrasting historical and current tea parties, the author accentuates the article's subject as the relationship between moral principles and the tea party protests

After defining the subject, the author motivates the article's theme by stating, "Unless today's protestors explicitly identify the source of their problem in fundamental terms, unless they unite under the correct principles, their momentum will fade." The author is interested in the long-term efficacy of the tea party protests and subsequently offers suggestions for improvement. The author states that "the political philosophy offered in Atlas Shrugged is the same principle that directed the original tea party: the principle of individual rights." In comparing principles presented in Atlas Shrugged and those held by participants in the original tea party — a success in helping advance the formation of the United States, the author argues that the most productive protests are those based on principles. Specifically, Atlas Shrugged offers the key moral principle needing adoption: "the principle of individual rights." The author ends the article with a clear re-statement of its theme, in that the tea party protestors "need to use what Atlas Shrugged offers them: a moral case for individual rights" as a basis for their movement to ensure it "leaves a lasting impact."

Discussion word count: 253

Reading 2: "Tea Parties Forever" by Paul Krugman, April 13, 2009

Subject: The State of the Republican Party

Theme: The State of the Republican Party is crazy and has changed little in the past ten to fifteen years before 2009.

Discussion

The author begins the article with statements regarding its theme alongside defining its subject by stating that "Today's G.O.P. is, after all, very much a minority party" with "no ability to make or even significantly shape policy." It is clear that the author is interested in the current state of the G.O.P. and immediately offers an assessment of it as ineffective in shaping public policy. The author continues building the theme by stating, "Republicans have become embarrassing to watch. And it doesn't feel right to make fun of crazy people" and "the G.O.P. looked as crazy [ten] to [fifteen] years ago as it does now." The author not only believes the current state of the G.O.P. is crazy but also that it hasn't changed much in the past ten to fifteen years.

After the introductory paragraphs, the author then reinforces the subject and theme of the article in the fifth paragraph by stating, "One way to get a good sense of the current state of the G.O.P., and also see how little has really changed, is to look at the "tea parties...". The author then provides examples of tea-party event claims that he argues are crazy spanning the past ten to fifteen years, such as "Mr. Obama wasn't born in America, which follow claims that he is a secret Muslim. Crazy Stuff — but nowhere near as crazy as the claims, ..., that the Clintons were murderers." Lastly, the author reinforces the part of the theme that the Republican Party has not changed with an analogy of the public support for the tea party movement as being "Astroturf (fake grassroots)," which "is nothing new, and Astroturf worked well for Republicans in the past" with an example of the 2000 election.

Discussion word count: 299

Assignment on Subject and Theme

Under "Readings for Assignment 2" are two op-ed length articles, one anonymous and one by New York Times columnist Paul Krugman.

For **each** of these articles, please do the following:

Identify the op-ed's subject and theme, stating the subject as a word or short phrase and stating the theme in the form of a complete, grammatical sentence.

In no more than 300 words, explain why you think your formulation of the subject and theme is accurate, citing evidence from the editorial. Do not discuss whether you agree or disagree with the theme; discuss what you think the theme *is*.

Note: Please take the word or phrase you use to identify the subject and use it as the grammatical subject of your sentence identifying article's theme. For instance, if the article makes a case for the potentially controversial view that cherries are unappetizing, give the subject and theme as

Subject: Sweet red cherries

Theme: Sweet red cherries are gross.

Notice that the subject is a short noun phrase and that it is *exactly the same* as the noun phrase that is being used as the grammatical subject of the sentence stating the theme. This is the form in which I want you to state your subjects and theme.

Your discussion of each of the two articles should be 300 words maximum (for a total maximum of 600 words). Please report your word counts with your post.

DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Alex Bakker**

Op-ed 1: Does Atlas drink Tea?

Subject: The Tea Party

Theme: The Tea Party does not advocate Atlas Shrugged's fundamental ideas.

When I look at almost every paragraph in the op-ed it refers to, or says something about The Tea Party, directly or through an intermediary point. I think a subject like politics, or political movements is too wide, The op-ed focuses specifically on The Tea Party, not political movements in general or any different sub-slices contained in political movements. This is why I think the subject is The Tea Party

I think in this case the theme can be read off from the title. The op-ed offers an answer to the question posed in the title; Are the ideas in Atlas Shrugged the same as those advocated by the Tea Party. It answers this question by making the case that they are not, and that the Tea Party does not advocate the fundamental ideas that one can see at work in the world of Atlas Shrugged.

146 words.

Op-ed 2: Tea Parties Forever

Subject: The current Republican Party

Theme: The current Republican Party is pathetic and embarrassing for Republicans, but still might be a slight threat.

Almost every point made is there to say something about the the current state of the Republican Party, directly or indirectly. It's not about the Tea Party specifically, for example; in paragraphs 5-9 the Tea Party is mentioned, but only as a means to make a broader point about the current Republican party. It is also not about a broader subject like Republicans vs. Democrats, or even current American politics. The Democratic Party is only named to make the point that Republicans have bad ideas, are silly, etc. I think that the last two paragraphs, which seem to serve as a conclusion, also indicate what the theme is; The current Republican Party is pathetic and embarrassing for Republicans, but still might be a slight threat.

125 words

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Jakob Maridakis**

Total Word Count: 309

Reading 1

Subject: The tea party protests.

Theme: The tea party protests need Atlas Shrugged.

In the first two paragraphs the writer introduces the tea party protests and he states that they lack solutions and principles. In the third paragraph he contrasts the current tea party with the original one which had fundamental principles. In the later paragraphs he introduces Atlas shrugged and makes the point that it goes against both Conservatism and Liberalism because it stands against force and embraces individual rights. The writer also mentions that Atlas Shrugged offers a complete philosophy which shows why man needs individual rights, something that the original tea party hadn't grasped. In the last paragraph, the writer clearly states that the tea party protesters need to use the moral case for individual rights that Atlas Shrugged offers. It is clear that the writer discusses Atlas Shrugged for the purpose of making clear that the tea party needs it to be successful.

Word Count:144

Reading 2

Subject: The Republican Party.

Theme: The Republican Party is crazy.

In the first four paragraphs, the writer states that the Republican Party is crazy and that we should pay attention to it because it may still return to power. He then brings up the "tea parties" in order to reinforce the point that the Republican Party is crazy. He says that everything to mock about the tea parties has been standard practice for the Republicans. To show that, he gives some examples of claims made about Obama and the Clintons that he clearly regards as ridiculous. He also states that the tea parties are not actually grass roots events, but that they are linked to Republicans. He ends by warning that, even though the Democrats may gain from the fact that their opposition is not credible, it will be bad for the country if the Republican Party comes back in power. The purpose of all the examples and points that the writer brings up is clearly to show the low state of the Republican Party.

Word Count: 165

Jakob Maridakis

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Morgan Carter**

1. "Does Atlas drink tea?"

Subject: none

Theme: none

I remember there being no subject for this article from starting this course previously. As to why there is no subject (and therefore no theme), the article starts by discussing the tea party movement until paragraph 3. This discussion is somewhat unfocused, but then moves in paragraph 4 to Atlas Shrugged (with no clear reason why it is brought up), and a discussion of Liberal and Conservative perceptions of Atlas Shrugged. These are disparate subjects, which perhaps could be linked, but in this article they are left separate and therefore the article seems to lack a subject. This is most clear to me in a paragraph 10 and 11, where the return to the Tea Party in paragraph 11 came as a surprise since it was something forgotten for most of the article.

2. "Tea Parties forever"

Subject: The Republican Party

Theme: The Republican Party is unfit for office and has been unfit for a long time

The subject of this article would clearly seem to be The Republican Party. This subject is consistently referred to throughout and even when paragraphs like paragraph 9 and 10 have digressed from this subject, it is still The Republican Party which is being referred back to and which is then returned to. The theme that The Republican Party is unfit for office, because they are "crazy", is then the issue with the Republican Party which is referred to throughout and which is returned to after digressions. Indeed, the paragraphs which digress slightly still only make sense as having been included in the context of this theme. It is the way the article finishes which makes the subject and theme most clear. Since these are Krugman's subject and theme he makes sure to clearly return to talking about The Republican Party and that they could return to power but, "We can only hope that the Republicans have moved on by that time".

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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Subject: Sweet red cherries

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Your discussion of each of the two articles should be 300 words maximum (for a total maximum of 600 words). Please report your word counts with your post.

DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Vadims Dvornikovs**

Word count 380

Subject: Tea Party protests

Theme: Tea Party protests in order to succeed need the moral and political principles contained in Atlas Shrugged.

The author is sympathetic to the frustration with the statist government that found expression in the tea party protests. However, he predicts that no reining in of the government power will result because the protesters are failing to “explicitly identify the source of their problem in fundamental terms”.

The contrast with the original tea party is shown and their explicit motivation by “the principle of individual rights” is asserted.

The author then uses Atlas Shrugged as an illustration of bankruptcy of both traditional sides of the political spectrum “both the Liberals and Conservatives are obliterating the real message of Atlas Shrugged” and as a solution that both sides are in need of. The book establishes “principle of individual rights” and rests it on a “complete and integrated philosophy”. The protesters “need to use what Atlas Shrugged offers them: a moral case for individual rights”.

Subject: the current Republican Party

Theme: The current Republican Party is acting irrationally and, as such, is a threat to the wellbeing of the country.

The structure of the article is fairly straightforward. The Republican Party has become incapable of shaping the policy, however, “they could return to power if the Democrats stumble”.

After starting out with some jabs like “Republicans have become embarrassing to watch” and “it doesn’t feel right to make fun of crazy people”, Krugman offers the following evidence of the irrationality.

1. “Obama was called a ‘socialist’ who seeks to destroy capitalism... because he wants to raise the tax rate” that would still keep it within the historical range.
2. Karl Rove said “Liberals wanted to offer ‘therapy and understanding’ to the 9/11 terrorists”, which is probably taken out context, but on its face, could be a sign of misrepresenting the political opponents’ views.
3. Obama wasn’t born in the US, is a Muslim, Clintons are murderers. These assertions are “crazy stuff”.
4. Both the party officials and its supporters in the media wield their power to promote their agenda.
5. Opposition to evolution

6. Presence at representing themselves as the voice of the people, while they create AstroTurf events. Thus, if the Republicans continue acting irrationally and return to power, the US would suffer.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Francis Elcaron**

Reading 1—"Does Atlas Drink Tea?":

Subject: The tea party

Theme: The tea party needs the moral principles offered in *Atlas Shrugged*.

This essay is about the tea party protests of 2009, and the author is trying to convince the reader that if the protestors want to achieve lasting change, they need to adopt the moral principles that Ayn Rand offers in *Atlas Shrugged*. He begins by introducing the subject and indicating the cause of the protests to be the people's frustration with the government and their desire for change. But, he argues, they lack the "direction, focus, and the principles that will guide them to results." The success of the original tea party was a product of its fundamental principles, and the contemporary protestors can emulate that success only if they "identify the source of their problem in fundamental terms" and "unite under the correct principles."

The author then brings in *Atlas Shrugged* as the vessel of those principles. In paragraphs 4-7, he explains that contra the prevailing cultural position, *Atlas* is a denunciation of liberals and conservatives both: each side wishes to rule by physical force the realm of its concern, but the political philosophy of *Atlas Shrugged* is based on the principle of individual rights, which repudiates coercion—and which guided the original tea party. The author elaborates that the ideas offered in *Atlas* constitute an integrated philosophy, which the original protestors lacked; they knew that man needed rights, but not why. “*Atlas Shrugged* shows why.”

The theme is captured in the last paragraph: “If the tea party protestors wish to leave a lasting impact and influence change, they need to use the [sic] what *Atlas Shrugged* offers them: a moral case for individual rights.” Without that base, implies the author, even if the protestors were to achieve a degree of political success, it would not last, just as the system established by their forebears could not.

(Word count: 298)

Reading 2—“Tea Parties Forever”:

Subject: The Republicans

Theme: The Republicans are still crazy.

Krugman’s opening sentence makes his subject unmistakable: “This is a column about Republicans . . .” The second half of that sentence—that he isn’t “sure I should even be writing it”—indicates his theme. Krugman is trying to show not that the Republicans are mistaken, immoral, or evil, but that they are *crazy*—to be ridiculed, not to be taken seriously. (Notice that there are no economic or philosophic arguments anywhere in the article, only assertions and name-calling.) Krugman makes it clear that he regards the Republicans’ ideas basically as beneath rational discussion and thinks the only reason to even pay attention to them is that they might, by some accident, win political victories as they did a decade previously, when they “looked as crazy . . . as [they do] now.”

In contrast to the author of the first essay, Krugman brings in the tea parties only as one manifestation of the Republican “craziness” that should be ridiculed. In his paragraphs 7-11, Krugman lists various (alleged) examples of past and present Republican “craziness,” such as his attempt to characterize the tea party protestors as evolution deniers. Overall, his style brings out his theme remarkably well: the Republicans are “embarrassing to watch”; they are “crazy people” who are “refusing to grow up”—and while “events” might still bring them back to power one day, one can only hope that they’ll have reached adulthood by then.

I also can’t help but note Krugman’s title—“Tea Parties Forever.” Although he doesn’t say it explicitly, I wonder if he is alluding to *Alice in Wonderland*: Alice encounters the Mad Hatter and the March Hare as they are in the middle of a tea party—and both characters are very much insane. The message: the Republicans were, are, and will likely continue to be crazy.

(Word count: 295)

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Roberto Briones Hernandez**

Tea party protests:

The article delves into the emergence and motivations behind the Tea Party protests. It begins by highlighting the protests as "an expression of America's frustration with government". This frustration is developed with the claim that people are exasperated by paying taxes that apparently support the "irresponsibility of others". The emotions of the protesters are described as feelings of being "cheated and angry". All of these statements focus on the main idea that the Tea Party movement is a product of widespread discontent with government.

However, as the article progresses, the lack of "direction, focus and principles" of the movement is asserted. This is clear when it is pointed out that various affiliations attempt to exploit the Tea Party protests for their personal agendas: conservatives seeking public support, religious factions seeking spiritual control, and so on. The author contrasts the current Tea Party protests with the original Boston Tea Party, arguing that the latter was powerful because its participants had clear principles and goals.

At the end, the article highlights Ayn Rand's "Atlas Shrugged" as a possible philosophical guide for protesters. It emphasises that for a movement to have lasting influence, it needs sound principles, in this case, advocating "individual rights".:

Republican Party:

Paul Krugman's article offers a perspective that assesses the Republican Party's tactics, suggesting a certain consistency in its approaches over the years. He begins by defining the GOP as a "minority party" but immediately warns against underestimating it by recalling the party's past successes. The past is used as a reference to suggest that it is possible for the party to re-emerge.

The tea parties are used as an example to illustrate and to assess the state of the GOP. Krugman argues that the practices and beliefs ridiculed at these events have long been part of the party's identity. His assertion is backed up by instances in which President Obama was labelled a "socialist" and earlier allegations against liberals that they supposedly wanted to offer "therapy and understanding" to the 9/11 terrorists.

Moreover, the presence of conspiracy theories (such as that Obama was not born in the US) is juxtaposed with older conspiracy theories from previous Democratic administrations, suggesting a pattern in GOP tactics. It highlights the role of prominent right-wing figures, such as Rush Limbaugh, in demanding strict party loyalty, indicating the GOP's emphasis on party discipline.

Krugman also highlights the "AstroTurf" nature of certain GOP events, implying a history of orchestrated demonstrations. Finally, he cautions against complacency in the face of the GOP's apparent irrationality.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Alicia Lu**

Subject: the American tea party

Theme: The tea party needs the moral case for individual rights offered by Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged to effectively advance its political cause of reducing the government's role in the economy.

Evidence:

The subject of the first article is on the tea party because that is the topic from the beginning to end. The writer opens up with a statement about the tea party's frustration with the government, therefore the attempt to call for political changes, and the writer concludes with a suggestion of what the tea party protesters would need in order to accomplish their political agenda.

I think the writer in article 1 argues that the tea party needs the moral case for individual rights offered by Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged to effectively advance its political cause of reducing the government's role in the economy. Paragraph 1 to 2 describes the dilemma that the tea party faced; frustrated with the government regulations in the economic realm, the tea party wanted to push for political changes, but the protesters were not able to identify the best strategy. Paragraph 3 alone identifies the problem underlying the tea party's dilemma is the lack of principles in guiding the party's political actions. After identifying the problem that the subject faced, the writer spends the rest of the paragraphs on advocating for a proposed solution—Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged eloquently presents a moral case for individual rights, which can be the principle that guides the tea party protesters.

Subject: the American republicans

Theme: The American republicans have struggled to gain political influence over the Democrats today, likely because they have not evolved from their past standard approaches.

Evidence:

The subject of Krugman's article is explicitly stated in the first sentence: "This is a column about Republicans." The article's theme revolves around the inability of the American Republican Party to gain political dominance over the Democrats today, largely because they haven't learned from their past. In paragraph 1 to 4, the writer highlights the present-day embarrassments of the G.O.P. and questions why the party once held significant influence but struggles now, despite employing similar tactics. The writer suggests, "one way to get a good sense of the current state of the G.O.P. is ... to look at the 'tea parties'". Paragraphs 5 to 13 provide a detailed account of how the tea parties, the political advocates for the G.O.P., have seen little change in their standard practice. Lastly, paragraphs 14 to 16 present the writer's predictions and hopes for the future of American republicans.

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Ray Schram**

Subject: The Tea Party

Theme: The Tea Party should be directed by the ideas of Atlas Shrugged

The author begins by explaining that the Tea Party is currently an ideological vacuum. Paragraph 1 states that the Tea Party is angry with the government and elaborates in paragraph 2 that it is a directionless anger that various groups are attempting to take advantage of. In paragraph 3, this is contrasted with the ideologically focused original tea party.

Paragraphs 4-8 then attempt to show that unlike what is widely thought Atlas Shrugged is not a conservative novel. This section is long enough that I am tempted to say that it is off-topic, but it would be necessary to spend to clarifying the misconception that Atlas is a conservative novel, because otherwise the audience would think "But the Tea Party is conservative and Atlas is the fountainhead of conservatism, so of course the Tea Party is guided by Atlas Shrugged."

The remaining paragraphs 9-11 argue that Atlas should be the guiding force of the modern Tea Party, because it provides a depth of intellectual guidance that even the original Tea Party lacked.

Word Count: 172

Subject: The Republicans

Theme: The Republicans are just as crazy now as they were 10 years ago

Paragraphs 1-4 serve the function of snidely apologizing for talking about the "embarrassing" and "crazy" Republicans, but motivating the audience that despite their craziness, they are a genuine political force that we need to address.

In paragraph 4, he states explicitly the theme "the G.O.P. looked as crazy 10 or 15 years ago as it does now." In paragraphs 1-4, he explains that even though this craziness is so "embarrassing" that he feels hesitant to write an article about the Republicans, they dominated the government when they are equally crazy in the past.

Krugman then proceeds to offer several comparisons between the "craziness" today and that of a decade ago. In paragraphs 7 and 8, he compares the way that Republicans call Obama a socialist to the way that Karl Rove criticized liberals for supposedly sympathizing with terrorists. In 9, the birther conspiracy theory is compared to the allegation that the Clintons were murderers. In 10, the power of Limbaugh on Republicans is compared to the vengeful Tom "The Hammer" Delay and in 11, the anti-evolution claims of DeLay are said to echo similar such attitudes in the Tea Party. Finally in 12 and 13, Krugman claims that the Tea Party is just as much as AstroTurf as the riot over Florida's Miami-Dad County. All of these examples demonstrate that none of the "craziness" is in any meaningful way new.

Paragraphs 14-16 state that even though this insanity is in some way good for the Democrats, but that the Republicans are still a genuine threat which we should guard against.

Word Count: 260

Assignment on Subject and Theme

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DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Gilad Herzfeld**

Word count : 599

Reading1

Subject: The tea parties

Theme: The tea parties should use the moral case offered in Rand's Atlas Shrugged.

The article begins with a description of the tea party protests and in the 2nd paragraph he adds an evaluation that they "have been unable to explicitly identify the solution let alone the problem". In the 3rd paragraph he compares the modern protestors to the original tea party and identifies the lack of clarity of fundamental principles in the modern movement as the essential difference. He adds that unless the modern movement will "unite under the correct principles, their momentum will fade."

In paragraphs 4&5 he brings up Atlas Shrugged as related to the movement and identifies both the conservatives and the liberals as misunderstanding the messages from Atlas. In paragraphs 6&7 he explains how both sides of the political map believe in the usage of uninitiated force, and how the original movement understood that the leading principle should be individual rights. He then continues to claim that Atlas is about individual rights, and that unlike the original movement it also has the justification for why individual rights are so important.

After showing the reader that there is a problem with the lack of principles leading the modern tea parties movement, and after demonstrating that Atlas Shrugged has the right principles he concludes "Atlas Shrugged identifies the situation, offers the correct premises, and is the hidden asset." This makes it clear that this entire article is about the tea

parties and that the theme is that "If the tea party protesters wish to leave a lasting impact and influence change" they should use the moral case offered in Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. Everything brought up in the essay was to set the context and support the theme.

Reading 2

Subject: Today's Republican party

Theme: Today's Republican party is clueless, and despite not having meaningful political power today, all of America should hope the Republican party will become coherent.

The author begins with stating clearly that the article is about Republicans, and indeed I agree that the subject is the Republican party. In P2 he identifies the GOP as politically not meaningful and in P3 he raises the issue of the GOP acting crazy and clueless, a combination that can make reasonable people (presumably the liberal reader) think that it's ok not to follow or worry the GOP.

In P4 he continues to observe that when the Republicans had political power 10-15 years earlier, they were also acting crazy, thus making the point that they can win political power once again.

In paragraphs 5-13 the author brings various examples of how crazy the republican party is. He starts by describing the tea party protests and continues to describe a few different crazy behaviors of Republicans, he even has a full paragraph about the media figure Rush Limbaugh. I believe the function of these paragraphs is to show the liberal reader that the author is well aware of how clueless and crazy the Republican party is.

In P12 the author talks about the tea parties protests and claims they are Astroturf events, and in P13 he determines that it isn't new as well. In the last 3 paragraphs, after showing us that the GOP is clueless but that it has always been clueless, he states again that this is exactly the reason that should make the reader realize that this is bad for the country. He concludes by stating once again that the GOP may be back in power and that this is the reason we should hope they become more coherent.

Assignment on Subject and Theme

Under "Readings for Assignment 2" are two op-ed length articles, one anonymous and one by New York Times columnist Paul Krugman.

For **each** of these articles, please do the following:

Identify the op-ed's subject and theme, stating the subject as a word or short phrase and stating the theme in the form of a complete, grammatical sentence.

In no more than 300 words, explain why you think your formulation of the subject and theme is accurate, citing evidence from the editorial. Do not discuss whether you agree or disagree with the theme; discuss what you think the theme *is*.

Note: Please take the word or phrase you use to identify the subject and use it as the grammatical subject of your sentence identifying article's theme. For instance, if the article makes a case for the potentially controversial view that cherries are unappetizing, give the subject and theme as

Subject: Sweet red cherries

Theme: Sweet red cherries are gross.

Notice that the subject is a short noun phrase and that it is *exactly the same* as the noun phrase that is being used as the grammatical subject of the sentence stating the theme. This is the form in which I want you to state your subjects and theme.

Your discussion of each of the two articles should be 300 words maximum (for a total maximum of 600 words). Please report your word counts with your post.

DUE: Sunday, 11:59pm your local time.

Answer by **Nadav Perlman**

Reading 1

Subject: Atlas Shrugged

Theme: Atlas Shrugged offers guidance that the tea party must adopt in order to succeed.

As for the subject, 8 out of the 11 paragraphs of the articles deal mainly with Atlas Shrugged. The other contestant for the subject here is the 2009 tea party protests, but only 4 paragraphs deal with it, all of them leading to the theme that has to do with Atlas Shrugged. It is important to note that paragraphs 4-6, 4 and 6 being the longest paragraphs, deal with exclusively Atlas Shrugged as it relates to contemporary politics with only a very remote connection to the protest.

As for the theme, I think it emerges from some but not all points made in the article. The beginning of the article makes the point that the protestors are angry with the government, but they don't know to specify what is wrong and what is the root cause of it and therefore they lack direction and are destined to fail. Then paragraphs 4 to 6 introduce Atlas Shrugged and then go on a tangent about Atlas Shrugged and current politics, retaining the subject but losing the theme. Paragraphs 7 and 8 say that Atlas Shrugged contains the principle of individual rights that the Boston tea party espoused and gives the proper justification for it, then 9-11 say that Ayn Rand offers the identification that the protestors need, and the justification and the moral principles. The article is clearly about what Atlas Shrugged has to offer, and it gives many different components to what that is, including explanation and identification and the cause and justification and principles to abide by, so I named it generally "ideas".

Reading 2:

Subject: Republicans

Theme: Republicans keep doing the same shameful things for decades.

As for the subject, Krugman outright writes that it is about Republicans. It isn't about the tea party protests because they constitute only half of the scope, the other half being the past decades.

As for the theme, most of the article consists of examples of such shameful behaviors. These show up in the middle of the article after Krugman establishes the motivation and, in the end, he lists some implications but the implications are only briefly mentioned.

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Answer by **Emil Yusifov**

Subject: Tea party protests as an expression of America's frustration with government.

Theme: Tea parties must identify their problem in fundamental principles of human rights.

The author first focuses on explaining why modern tea party protesters need fundamental principles as such. Thus, paragraphs 1 and 2 present the description of the current situation with the tea party protests showing that the contemporary protesters, being frustrated by the government, are united only by this very frustration. They cannot define the source of their discontent in fundamental principles, as opposed to the original tea party that only had such an impact because the participants knew what was wrong fundamentally, and what they had to do about it.

The author then demonstrates how the lack of principles leads the contemporary political spectrum to being just two sides of the same coin: aiming either to control one's mind or one's wallet – by force. Showing how the anti-concept of conservatism (and liberalism to this extent) obliterates one's understanding of the essential meaning of Atlas Shrugged, the article presents why it is important to understand clearly what one stands for. The stated theme, therefore, goes across the whole article as the idea uniting the train of the author's thought.

Finally, the author states how Atlas Shrugged offers the fundamental principle protesters need, which is the moral case for individual rights (par. 11). The concept of individual rights is the central theme for paragraphs 7, 8 and 11, while par. 9 and 10 lead the reader to appreciating the importance of the idea. Overall, the article concentrates on presenting the need for a fundamental principle to correctly define the causes of the problem at stake and its effects. Once the need is briefly established, the author defines the principle explicitly, although it does not go in depth into proving or elaborating

on it.

(281 words).

Subject: The Republicans

Theme: Republicans have been crazy and can present no credible opposition in shaping policy.

The article explicitly states its theme in paragraphs 3, 4 and 6. The paragraphs following par. 6 elaborate on the examples of the asserted craziness of the Republicans, so the point the author is aiming to make becomes obvious. Paragraph 15 unites the preceding par. By saying that the Democrats have no credible opposition from the Republicans. This aligns with what author states earlier in par. 2 where it is said that “[The Republican party] has no ability to make or even significantly shape policy.” The author concludes by claiming that such “craziness is good for Democrats but sad for the country” which only summarizes the theme of the article.

(110 words)

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Answer by **Joey Caso**

"Does Atlas Drink Tea?"

Subject: The Tea Party Movements

Theme: The Tea Party Movements are ineffective at fighting for individual rights.

The Tea Party Movements are a political phenomena the author uses to point out a movement that lacks “direction, focus and principles” is one destined to fail. He contrasts the 2008 Tea Party Movement to the original, stating that the original was more successful due to it being more principled. But where the subject and theme are made most explicit are in his summary when he states, “If the tea party protestors wish to leave a lasting impact and influence change, they need to use what Atlas Shrugged offers them: a moral case for individual rights.”. He shows what is required of the Tea Party if they are to be effective, which are the abstract ideas.

116 words.

“Tea parties forever”

Subject: The Tea Party Movements

Theme: The Tea Party Movements show republicans have gone mad.

The author uses the Tea Party Movements as a concrete to show what he finds to be “bizarre” and “crazy stuff” being said and done by republicans in those movements. Citing the tea parties’ accusations that Obama is a socialist, a secret Muslim and wasn’t born in this country. As well as, their figureheads who had denounced evolution. And lastly, arguing their events being a result of strategy and funding by donors not a result spontaneity and passion amongst citizens. All to point towards the one theme, republicans have gone mad and continue to go mad.

96 words.

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Answer by **Medha Valluri**

Assignment 2:

1. Does Atlas Drink Tea?

Subject: The Tea Party Protesters

Theme: The Tea Party Protesters lack a principled argument or moral justification for their criticisms of government.

The subject of the article states the pitfalls of the Tea Party's methods (and observations) about what's incorrectly done by the government. Its criticisms are only united by a "vague frustration with government" (2), without a clear argument for what precisely is wrong, and what actions are necessary for amelioration. Furthermore, the divide of the party to either the Conservative or Liberal side exacerbates these differences, as neither faction appears to "grasp the why" of why individual rights and freedom are truly important. The party is unable to provide a moral justification for any of their viewpoints, which is what essentializes not only the reason behind the confusion and debate going on within the party, but also the differentiating factor between the modern day tea party as compared to the original. For these reasons, I felt like the theme of their lack of a good argument against the government's actions was appropriate. Furthermore, the description of *Atlas Shrugged* and how the book is misunderstood provides the author's solution for the problem, claiming that "Atlas Shrugged identifies the situation, offers the correct premises, and is the hidden asset" (10). The in depth analysis of *Atlas Shrugged* shows a secondary connection to the theme of the lack of cohesiveness in the party's protests.

2. Tea Parties Forever

Subject: The GOP

Theme: The GOP's actions have caused the party to be taken less seriously.

The perspective the author takes points out the absurdity of the GOP in two ways: in its specific choice of events to mention, and in its tone and diction. Krugman begins his article by stating that he's "not sure [he] should even be writing" the article about Republicans in the first place. He mentions how the GOP has been "crazy" for the past 10 to 15 years, and throughout the passage peppers in his own reactions, like saying "Bizarre" in reference to the claim that Obama was a socialist, and calling the conspiracy that he wasn't a true American "Crazy stuff" (Krugman 7-9). The entire theme of the passage paints the party out to be incompetent and ridiculous, although not necessarily specifically due to the author's style completely. Still, specific and purposeful references add credibility to the author's claim; for example, the sentence, "Going back to those tea parties, Mr. DeLay, a fierce opponent of the theory of evolution — he famously suggested that the teaching of evolution led to the Columbine school massacre — also foreshadowed the denunciations of evolution that have emerged at some of the parties" shows a clear distaste and distrust for the GOP and its prominent members.

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Answer by **Adam Smith**

Does Atlas Drink Tea?

Subject: (none)

Theme: (none)

I don't think that this piece has a single subject, and as such, there can be no theme. It is clear that the author's *intended* subject was the Tea Party, and his intended theme was something along the lines of "the Tea Party's ideological roots are those of Atlas Shrugged." However, several failures of execution prevent that subject and theme from being realized in the piece.

First is the disparate amounts of treatment of the Tea Party and Atlas Shrugged. The author discussed the Tea Party briefly (four short paragraphs out of eleven total) at the beginning and end of the article. But the majority of the article was spent discussing Atlas Shrugged. We can't say that the Tea Party was the subject of the piece when most of the piece was spent discussing something else.

Second, Atlas Shrugged was discussed in a way that was mostly unconnected to the Tea Party. Indeed, the author's point in bringing Atlas Shrugged up (that it would serve well as an intellectual foundation of the Tea Party) didn't become clear until the end of the discussion about Atlas. Throughout the middle of the article, the reader is left wondering why the author is talking about this book. The discussion of Atlas is further disconnected from the Tea Party because one of the author's main subpoints about Atlas (that it's neither liberal nor conservative) is not a point that he made about the Tea Party.

If the author had either spent more time discussing the Tea Party, or had brought up Atlas Shrugged in a way that it was more clearly connected to the Tea Party throughout the article, then we could say that the Tea Party was the author's subject. As it stands, we cannot.

Tea Parties Forever

Subject: Republicans

Theme: Republicans have been irresponsible hacks for years.

Krugman's first line of the article begins, "[t]his is a column about Republicans." The author's assessment of his own subject is not dispositive, but it lends itself to a presumption that the assessment is indeed the subject. In this case, Krugman is correct. The entire article is spent discussing Republicans. Krugman discusses various examples (e.g., Rush

Limbaugh, the Miami-Dade County vote riot in 2000), but they are all tied into the G.O.P as a general topic. Republicans are Krugman's theme because they are the focus of the article and form the basis of his theme.

Krugman's theme is that the Republicans have been irresponsible hacks for years. He begins by criticizing the Tea Party's perceived craziness, and then discusses how Republicans have been just as crazy for the last 10-15 years. Additionally, Krugman's examples support this as the central theme. That is, he discussed instances where Republicans *were* guilty of outrageous conduct (like the accusation that Obama was a secret Muslim).
