**SAMPLE INTRODUCTIONS**

**Sample #1: Black Holes**

Space is something that has always interested me throughout my life. When I was a kid, I would always go out and stare at the stars, wanting to be an astronaut. As I got older, I would learn more and realize just how little we know about the universe. One of the biggest examples of this would be our understanding of black holes. Black holes are one of the most mystifying things we’ve ever encountered, often becoming the most entertaining part of sci-fi and space movies/books/comics/games. Movies like Interstellar and people like Stephen Hawking have recently popularized the topic in the past 15 years. I’ve always had preconceived ideas of how black holes appear and disappear, but I’ve decided to now learn what the actual science is behind it, expecting to find a lot of different theories and learn information I’ve never expected.

There are a lot of uncertainties when it comes to black holes, but we do have theories on how they appear and disappear. From what we know, when a star collapses into itself and dies it will create a supernova explosion which will either produce a neutron star or a blackhole depending on how massive the star was (about three times the mass of our sun). The entire mass of the core will collapse into itself creating a black hole, where we will only be able to see the event horizon. The event horizon is impossible to escape, even if you’re moving at the speed of light, meaning all we see is a black sphere reflecting nothing. We have no idea of what the inside of a black hole may look like beyond the event horizon, but we call this part the “singularity” where we hypothesize that all its mass is concentrated into a single point in space, with no surface or volume. So how do black holes die? Well, black holes evaporate through a process called Hawking radiation, named after Stephen Hawking. In empty space (which is not really empty), virtual particles will constantly collide with each other annihilating each other. When this happens right at the edge of a black hole, where one particle will be inside the black hole and one outside. One of the particles will be drawn into the black hole, and the other will escape becoming a real particle. This deals with quantum mechanics, but in general, this just means the black hole is losing energy. This is slow at first but becomes faster as the black hole becomes smaller. In the last second of its life, the black hole radiates away from the energy of billions of nuclear bombs in a huge explosion. However, as said before, this process is incredibly slow and will occur long after we are gone. This reflection and research process has taught me a lot, and it’s enjoyable to now know how a black hole appears and disappears.

**Sample #2: Native American Residential Schools**

"Remains of More Than 1,000 Indigenous Children Found at Former Residential Schools.” As I was casually scrolling through social media, this vivid headline struck me with horror. With such news echoing in my mind, I became curious about how this tragedy came to be. At this time, I’d already begun researching injustices towards different ethnic groups to help design social campaigns for equality and justice. In the midst of the global pandemic, I had specifically taken the time to learn about how involved, or uninvolved, the government has been when it came to supporting Black and Asian communities facing systemic injustice, such as police brutality and Covid-19 scapegoating.

When I came across that horrific title, my sheer lack of knowledge compelled me to learn more about government-sponsored injustices towards Native Americans. I realized that, throughout my education, I had not gathered much information about Native Americans from the last century, other than the fact that reservations were parcels of land granted to various tribes. Most of my knowledge that I had received was limited to the 1700’s through the late 1800’s, when America was still forming. I decided that, if I chose not to address this gap in my knowledge, I would not only be ignorant, but also hypocritical in my campaigns for social justice. Every group has a story that needs to be heard. How could I choose to ignore this bizarre case?

In my research, I hoped to uncover some historical and contemporary policies that apply to Native American reservations. More specifically, I wanted to learn about the policies that led to these conditions in the Native American education system, and what else the government might do to further improve the state of America's reservations. It’s no secret that historically, the U.S government established policies that fueled bias against non-white or non-European groups: to name just a few, one thinks of the Jim Crow laws, the Japanese internment camps, the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the Indian Treaties and Removal Act. Native Americans were one of the very first groups in America to deal with this pattern of injustice. As a result, I expected to find some questionable policies that have aided the persecution of Indigenous people. However, if I came across information that counters my expectations, I decided I would use it to help develop my perspective on the topic, as well as my ideas for practical solutions.

Some genres I thought might provide valuable information included historical articles, documentaries from survivors, scholarly articles, and government established pages. Scholarly articles not only provided credible information, but also allowed me to gain some perspective from an expert in the field. Documentaries from survivors enabled me to get a firsthand glimpse at the opinions of people who suffered under these government policies. Finally, government pages allowed me to gain the state’s “official” perspective on this issue.