

Introduction

The Power of the Task

Please follow the directions and complete the Iconic Event Task below:

Below is a series of seminal, historical, and influential events that have happened in the United States during the 21st century. If you are American, it is likely that the events have had an impact on your life. Once you have identified/clarified each event below, rank the events from greatest impact in your life to least impact in your life by placing the number for each event on the continuum below the list. Be prepared to justify your rankings. If you need some assistance (or validation) that you are working with the “correct” moments in time, smartphones are excellent tools for acquiring facts quickly. Since acquiring the information is not the goal of this task, but just a precursor to transferring the knowledge of the facts to a new context, we encourage you to use your device or any technology at your disposal.

A digital version of the Iconic Event Task is also available on the companion website at <http://resources.corwin.com/powerfultask>.

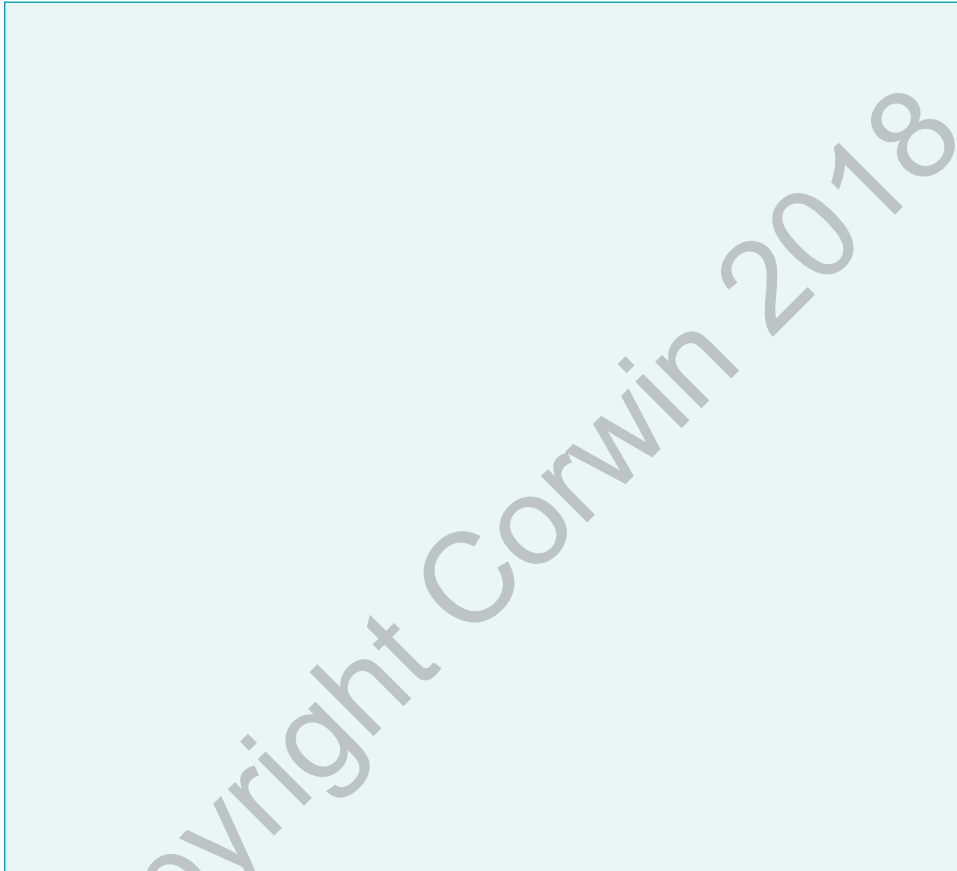
1. A historical election in 2008
2. A series of four coordinated terrorist attacks on the United States
3. An explosive finish in 2013
4. The costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States
5. Mark Zuckerberg changes the meaning of *friend*
6. Everyone survives US Airways flight 1549
7. Death of the “King of Pop”
8. Steve Jobs’s announcement in 2007



After ranking the events, it's time to make your thinking visible by writing the following:

State your opinion on which is the event of greatest impact.

Support your opinion with the reasons you made the choice you made.



This exercise will become more meaningful and powerful if you share your personal response (opinion and reasoning) with others. If you are reading this text as part of a book study, we would encourage you to have a full discussion about which event had the most impact on you and why. While thoughtfully listening to each individual's point of view, feel free to make notes, capturing others' reactions and thoughts that are both similar to and different from your own response. Once everyone has shared, revisit your original thinking, and decide if you want or need to make any revisions to your work.

If you are reading this book alone, we encourage you to share your thoughts with a family member or colleague. Do they see the events in the same order of impact?

If you are reading alone and do not have access to another opinion, please go to this book's companion website, <http://resources.corwin.com/powerfultask>, to hear two other thoughts in Video 0.1. You can access the companion website via the QR code below.



Before moving on. . . Did you actually do the activity? If you chose not to, you may be reading the wrong book. The design of the book is based on the premise that if we do not experience a learning task as a student (or at least from the learner's viewpoint), we cannot truly reflect on its value for the learner. True, we can probably still reflect on the task from an educator's perspective, but this book is about shifting the perspective from the teacher and lesson planning to the learner and task design and implementation.

Seriously, if you did not complete the Iconic Event Task, please return to the instructions and complete the task.

Ok, you're back. Congratulations and thank you. We cannot force you to complete the tasks in the book, but we will assume compliance. (Is compliance in a task necessary for engagement in a task? We'll consider this question later.)

Reflect on Task Design and Value

What did you like about the Iconic Event Task? Why?

What did not like (or like least) in the Iconic Event Task? Why?

What did you find challenging about the Iconic Event Task? Why?

Would the task have been the same if the eight events had been explicitly named? Why? Why not?

If the following standards represent the learning targets of the Iconic Event Task, please consider the task through these two lenses:

D2.His.4.3-5.

Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.

(Continued)

(Continued)

CCR Writing Anchor Standard #1

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Do you feel that the task demanded that you perform the social studies standard?

Why or why not?

Do you feel that the task demanded that you perform the writing standard?

Why or why not?

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Please consider taking the following task design suggestion back to your classroom.

Task to Try

A continuum can be a powerful tool to organize, expand, and quantify thinking when learners are asked to consider complex concepts. Any time you want to get your students to the evaluation level of thinking, ask them to place concepts on a continuum. The most important part of the task is that students must be able to explain the particular placement of items on the continuum.

The design of the Iconic Event Task captures the inspiration for our work as well as the reason we wanted to write this book: A well-designed task allows learners to make meaning even if the curriculum is based upon a known set of accepted facts, dates, and ideas. While technology is most helpful in retrieving information about the actual eight events (or at least clarifying them), it is the actual design requirement of what to do with this information that provides the powerful learning. Let's take a deeper look at the design of the Iconic Event Task.

The Iconic Event Task is predicated upon the learner clarifying and accurately naming an event, which is a low-level, cognitive-demand task that asks for compliance but no engagement. It simply asks the student to recall information. It has been our experience, in over 20,000 classroom observations, teachers spend lots of time on such tasks. If a student doesn't recall the events, the student is finished and unable to perform the task. Through thoughtful design, our task incorporates the efficient use of technology to allow students to secure the knowledge-level information they need to then move that information into a higher-level task of making meaning. Our learning intention is not to have students name the events; rather it is to have them personalize and process the impact of the events in their personal lives, which requires them to find patterns, compare patterns, and ultimately evaluate and justify their decisions. The Iconic Event Task is a highly engaging and rigorous task made possible by the use of technology.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

We have carefully chosen to chunk the information in this book into manageable pieces, building the Powerful Task Rubric one chapter at a time, pausing frequently to allow the reader opportunities to interact with the text. Also, we have filled this book with a plethora of powerful tasks, representing a variety of content areas as well as grade levels (prekindergarten to high school).

In many cases, we ask you, the reader, to be an active participant and do the tasks. This allows you the chance to experience the learning as your students might. At the same time, you may choose to do a group book study, in which case doing the tasks with colleagues will likely spark ideas and lead to rich discussions about how to improve learning experiences for students. Regardless of how you approach the text, we encourage you to interact with all of the resources and materials included. Do the tasks, watch the videos on the companion website, access and analyze the student work samples, and make use of the tools included throughout the book.

At the end of each chapter, you will find a QR code to the companion website, where you will find all of the videos.

It is our hope you will consider sharing your learning journey with others, including us! You will find us both on twitter at

@JohnAntonetti

@tstice

#PowerfulTaskDesign

<http://resources.corwin.com/powerfultask>

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