

Article of the Week for the Week of Monday, October 30

Due Friday, November 3

_____/18 points

1. Skim the article and **diffuse** the text. (2 pts)
Diffuse = Underline unfamiliar words, use context clues to help find the meaning, write two possible substitutions (synonyms) for at least two unfamiliar words.
2. Read the article. Circle **at least 3 transitions** used by the author to link ideas and paragraphs. (3 pts)
3. Write **3+** thoughtful comments (*connect, question, paraphrase, summarize*) in the margins. (3 pts)
4. Read the writing prompt at the end of the article. Read the article again and underline or highlight information you will use to help you answer the prompt. (10 pts)

Catalonia referendum: Who are the Catalans?

Newsela Staff, Newsela, 10.04.17

The Catalans are the people who live in the Catalan Countries. This might seem confusing, because the Catalan Countries are not actually countries.

Most countries have several levels of geographic division. These are usually states or provinces, counties and cities. In Spain, the largest and highest geographic division is called an autonomous community. Each autonomous community is made up of several provinces. Each province is split up into even smaller geographic divisions, including cities.

Catalans live in the autonomous communities of Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Islands and some parts of the autonomous community of Aragon. Catalans also live in Roussillon, which is in southern France.

Catalans voted in favor of splitting from Spain on October 1, 2017. However, this vote for independence does not cover the entire Catalan Countries. It is just for the autonomous community of Catalonia, an area in northeastern Spain with a population of 7.5 million people. The area accounts for 15 percent of Spain's population. Catalonia also accounts for 20 percent of Spain's economic output, which is the total value of all goods and services that are produced.

The Catalans have long been part of Spain. However, they have a distinct history, culture and language. Artists Salvador Dali, Antoni Gaudi and Joan Miro as well as chef Ferran Adria and soccer star Pep Guardiola are among the most famous Spanish Catalans.

Catalonia's autonomy throughout history

Catalonia is thought to have been its own defined region long before Spain was a unified country. By 1716, Catalonia was under direct rule from Madrid, which is the capital city of Spain.

However, Catalan independence has been a recurring theme throughout the country's history.

Spain became a republic in 1931 and Catalonia was given greater political independence. The Spanish Civil War lasted from 1936 to 1939. It began when military general Francisco Franco led an uprising against Spain's elected government. It was a bloody conflict in which Franco and the Nationalists fought against those loyal to the Spanish government, known as Loyalists or Republicans. Franco and the Nationalists emerged victorious, and the end of the war marked the beginning of a dictatorship that lasted 30 years. Franco ruled Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975.

Franco turned out to be a brutal dictator. Not long after the war ended, he revoked Catalonia's autonomy. During Franco's rule, Catalan culture was heavily suppressed. Symbols of Catalan identity such as the castells, or human towers, were prohibited. Parents were forced to choose Spanish names for their



children and speaking the Catalan language was not allowed in public.

As democracy in Spain developed in after Franco's rule ended, Catalan autonomy re-emerged and flourished. In 1979, a new rule of autonomy for Catalonia was issued to restore the Catalan parliament. Elections for the 135-member body were held the following year.

Protecting Catalan culture

Catalonia has its own police force and is in charge of its own affairs such as education, health care and programs for those in need.

There are also rules in place to protect Catalan culture, including accepting the Catalan language. There is a law that requires teachers, doctors and others to use the Catalan language in their places of work.

However, a push for full independence has become more popular in recent years. It has grown stronger since Spain's 2008 financial crisis. Spain's economy was growing quickly before 2008. Many people were buying houses, which meant the government was earning more tax money. The governments of the autonomous communities took on many new projects, like building airports.

The price of property rose faster than peoples' salaries. Many people in Spain lost their homes because they could not afford their loans. People had taken out loans from the banks to pay for their homes. When they could not pay off those loans, the banks became poorer. Spain went into a financial crisis.

Since Spain's financial crisis began in 2008, banks have provided fewer loans to businesses. Many people have lost their jobs. As a result, Spain has a very high unemployment rate.

Catalonia has a strong economy

Many tourists visit Barcelona to see the work of famous artists, such as the iconic architecture of Catalan artist Antoni Gaudi. Barcelona makes a lot of money from tourism, which some think is a sign that Catalonia can be its own country.

Catalonia is one of Spain's wealthiest regions. Those who support its independence say Catalonia offers more financial support to Spain than it receives.

Many view the region's strong economy as a sign that it would be able to be independent from Spain. About 1.6 million people live in Barcelona, which is Catalonia's capital and also a major tourist destination.

The October 1 vote is Catalonia's second vote for independence in three years. Catalonia voted in favor of independence with 90 percent voting "yes," the region's officials have said.

The Catalan government said the turnout for the vote was 42 percent. The vote opened the door to an official announcement that Catalonia is separate from Spain.

"The citizens of Catalonia have won the right to have an independent state in the form of a republic," said Carlos Puigdemont, the leader of the Catalan government.

Writing Prompt: Identify two different groups of people that were affected by the event described in the article. Choose one group and write an explanatory paragraph explaining how the group was affected by the event using details from the text.

Your paragraph must:

- Be at least 5 sentences long
- Start with a clear topic sentence that answers the prompt
- Use information from the article to support your central idea