Task:

Your technology club is ready to launch its website. Your English teacher is making the website into a class project. For your part in the project, you are assigned to write a story that is several paragraphs long about what happens when you get a drone of your own.

In your story, you have just received your new drone. You are excited to turn it on and see how it works. Write a story about what happens next. When writing your story, find ways to use information and details from the sources to improve your story. Make sure you develop your characters (s), the setting, and the plot, using details, dialogue, and description where appropriate.

In Part 1, you will answer questions about the reading passages. In Part 2, you will write a story using the information you have read.

Directions for Beginning:

You will now review two sources. You can review these sources as often as you like.

Research Questions:

After reviewing the research sources, use the rest of the time in part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the information you have read and reviewed which should help you write your informational article.

Answer the questions in the spaces below the items.
More drones in the sky spells trouble for airplanes

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff

11.18.14

Word Count 583 (820L)

In this March 12, 2014, file photo, Brian Wilson launches a small drone equipped with a video camera to fly over the scene of an explosion that leveled two apartment buildings in the East Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Photo: AP/Mark Lennihan, File

WASHINGTON — More than a million drones have been sold in the past few years. The small pilotless planes are also called unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Some are piloted by onboard computers. Others are controlled by a person on the ground with a remote control.

A growing number of the unmanned planes are turning up in the skies near airports and airliners. The risk of a crash is getting higher also.

Drones have been seen near planes, helicopters and airfields. Air officials receive reports each day.

The number of reports have shot up since two years ago. Drone reports were still unusual then.

They Can Be Trouble

Many of the reports are filed with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) by airline pilots and airport workers. The FAA is in charge of the nation's skies.

The reports show how hard it is for the FAA to control drones. They can cause a crash if they hit a plane or get sucked into a plane's engine. Drones are difficult for air traffic controllers to see on radar. They can be especially hard to see if they are made out of plastic.

The FAA does not allow drones to be used by most businesses. The rules have been ignored. Real estate agents use drones to take overhead pictures of houses for sale. Farmers fly them to check their crops. Rules to let more businesses use drones are being talked about.

"It should not be a matter of luck that keeps an airplane and a drone apart," said Rory Kay. He is a pilot and expert on air safety. "So far we've been lucky."

Hard To Chase Down
The FAA requires that people flying drones and model aircraft must fly under 400 feet in altitude. They must keep the drone in sight and fly it at least 5 miles away from an airport.

Jim Williams heads the FAA drone office. In March, he caused a stir. He told a group of drone makers that an airplane nearly crashed into a drone over Florida. The pilot reported a camouflage-painted drone at about 2,300 feet. The FAA has not been able to find the drone or the person flying it.

Some Other Recent Near-Misses

— Pilots flying at 10,000 feet saw a drone less than 500 feet above their plane. It was moving toward an airport in Pennsylvania. The drone was about 5 feet to 6 feet long.

— Air traffic controllers in California received a report from a helicopter pilot. The pilot spotted a camera-equipped drone flying near the giant Hollywood sign in Los Angeles.

— Controllers in Florida received a report from pilots who spotted a drone below their plane. The drone was described as being red and blue. It was not seen on radar.

— Pilots reported spotting a drone up to 1,000 feet away while landing at a South Carolina airport. The drone was described as the size of a large bird.

— A 5-foot-long drone with a camera crashed near Dallas Love Field airport in Texas. Police are looking for the person who was flying it.

Pay Attention Or Pay A Fine

The FAA plans to teach drone owners about safety. Some people flying drones may have to pay a fine.

Michael Toscano is president of a group in favor of drones. Some people will always misuse drones, he said. They do not understand the safety risks or simply do not care.

A crash would be bad, Toscano said. However, it would not stop people from flying drones, he said.
The following article is about the safety issues regarding drones.

A drone can be a cheap, safe eye in the sky, but you need a license

By CQ Roll Call, adapted by Newsela staff
10.21.14
Word Count 606 (950L)

Film directors, sports teams, farmers, oil companies and many other businesses are hoping the government will allow them to use a high-flying technology: drones.

Drones are small airplanes or helicopters that are flown by remote control, without a pilot. They are often used in situations that would be too dangerous for a plane with a pilot.

The U.S. military has been using drones for years to drop bombs on targets overseas. Now, many different kinds of companies hope to experiment with drones.

Drones could be used for almost anything in the future, said drone expert Rachel Stohl.

Show Me A License

Today, almost no companies are using drones. The U.S. government hasn’t allowed them to. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the government group that controls flying in the U.S., including airplanes, helicopters and airports.

So far, the FAA has mainly allowed police and research groups to use drones. It hasn’t given out many permits to businesses that want to use the unmanned aircraft.

The FAA is working on a plan to deal with drones. Right now, drones are not allowed in U.S. airspace. Because of this rule, drones cannot fly too high or go into certain areas. The FAA’s plan is supposed to be finished by 2015, but it may take longer, a government official said.

Drones are a challenge for the FAA. Traditional aircraft — airplanes and helicopters — come in standard shapes and sizes. They are used for common jobs. Drones can come in any shape and size. They can also be used for almost anything.

“[The FAA] is having a really hard time understanding the technology,” said Mary Louise Cummings, who teaches at Duke University.

Smaller And Cheaper

Drones can solve problems for many different types of companies. Drones are often smaller and cheaper than traditional aircraft. They can go into areas that are too dangerous for people.
Difficult terrain, such as mountains or desert, are a good place to use drones, Stohl said. They are also useful when conditions on the ground are dangerous, such as during a riot or a volcano eruption. Drones could also be used to rescue people or fight fires, Cummings said.

Many industries need high-quality photos taken from the air, Cummings said. Some of the industries include farming, entertainment, mapmaking, mining and wildlife conservation. Drones could fly above bridges and into tunnels to check on safety issues.

“Anywhere where you think you need to see something from high up, it’s going to be not only cheaper but safer,” Cummings said.

**Send In The Drones!**

Some businesses have begun using drones and many more are considering it.

Insurance companies in particular have a need for drones. When disasters hit like earthquakes or floods, people can lose their homes or cars.

In order to begin rebuilding, people need payments from insurance companies. These companies help people recover from disasters. To get the payments, insurance workers must look at the damage. Sometimes, after an earthquake or flood, the area can be too dangerous for the workers.

Drones would allow the insurance workers to get information without putting themselves in danger.

Insurance is not the only type of business that wants drones. Movie companies want to use the remotely operated planes to film scenes from the sky. Large oil companies want to use drones to search for oil off the coast of Alaska. Golfers want to use drones to film golf events. The Washington Nationals baseball team used a small helicopter-like drone to take pictures of the team.

Even college football players have been using drones in practice. Clemson University uses one to film football practices, which can help the players improve.
Part 1: ASSESSMENT ITEMS

1. Explain what source #1 and source #2 say about how people are using drones by paraphrasing the information while avoiding plagiarism.

2. Drones were first designed for military use; now they are used by regular people, however, they can be dangerous. Provide two pieces of evidence from different sources that support this idea and explain how each example supports the idea. Cite evidence for each piece of information and identify the source title or number.
Part 2: Drones Narrative Performance Task

You will now review your notes and sources, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your writing. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your writing will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment:

Your technology club is ready to launch its website. Your English teacher is making the website into a class project. For your part in the project, you are assigned to write a story that is several paragraphs long about what happens when you get a drone of your own.

In your story, you have just received your new drone. You are excited to turn it on and see how it works. Write a story about what happens next. When writing your story, find ways to use information and details from the sources to improve your story. Make sure you develop your characters (s), the setting, and the plot, using details, dialogue, and description where appropriate.

In Part 1, you will answer questions about the reading passages. In Part 2, you will write a story using the information you have read.

Narrative Story Scoring:

Your story will be scored using the following:

1. Organization/purpose: How effective was your plot, and did you maintain a logical sequence of events from beginning to end? How well did you establish and develop a setting, narrative, characters, and point of view? How well did you use a variety of transitions? How effective was your opening and closing for your audience and purpose?

2. Development/elaboration: How well did you develop your story using description, details, dialogue? How well did you use relevant details or information from the sources in your story?

3. Conventions: How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

Now begin work on your story. Manage your time carefully so that you can

1. Plan your multi-paragraph story.
2. Write your multi-paragraph story.
3. Revise and edit the final draft of your multi-paragraph story.

For Part 2, you are being asked to write a story that is several paragraphs long, so please be as thorough as possible.

Remember to check your notes and your prewriting/planning as you write, and then revise and edit your story.

(Students will be provided with space to answer this question.)