**What’s the Connection?**

Often, fiction writers discover ideas for stories in real events. Isabel Allende based her short story “And of Clay Are We Created” on actual news accounts about a girl trapped in floodwater after a volcano eruption in Colombia. The news article you are about to read reports what happened to the girl, Omaira Sanchez, who was the inspiration for Allende’s fictional Azucena.

**Standards Focus: Analyze a News Article**

A news article is a factual account of a real-life event. The author’s purpose for writing a news article is to inform or explain. News articles typically provide the following elements:

- **a headline** summarizing the article
- **photographs with captions**, or lines of explanation
- **a lead**—the first few sentences of an article, which are meant to grab the reader’s attention. The lead often contains the story’s central idea, or main idea, as well.
- answers to the questions **who, what, when, where, why, and how**, the story’s most important details.
- less important details arranged in order of decreasing importance

As you read the following news article, note the information it provides, and record the information on a chart like the one shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of News Article</th>
<th>Information Provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Headline</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Photos and Captions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lead</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Answers to who, what, when, where, why, and how questions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Additional details</strong></td>
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Girl, Trapped in Water for 55 Hours, Dies Despite Rescue Attempts

Armero, Colombia—Omaira Sanchez, a 13-year-old girl trapped up to her neck for more than 55 hours in floodwaters, died yesterday morning despite rescuers’ frantic efforts to free her.

Omaira’s legs were pinned in the ruins of what was once her home by a cement slab and by the body of an aunt who drowned in the avalanche of mud that rolled over Armero Wednesday night.

Trapped in the chilly water the little girl shivered violently and her hands turned a deathly white. Finally her blood pressure dropped so low she suffered a heart attack, according to Alejandro Jimenez, 23, a medical student volunteer at the disaster site who attended the child.
ANALYZE A NEWS ARTICLE
What information does this photograph convey to you?

ANALYZE A NEWS ARTICLE
How is Alejandro Jimenez involved in the events?

“You can imagine how I feel,” said Jimenez, looking drawn and exhaust-
ed yesterday morning. “We stayed up all night trying to save her.”

About a dozen rescuers from the Colombian Air Force, the Red Cross, and fire departments of
towns near Armero radioed increasingly desperate pleas since Thursday for an electric pump to keep the fetid waters from rising above the girl’s chin. They called for picks, shovels, and winches to clear away rubble trapping her.

At 2 p.m. yesterday, four hours after Omaira died, a Colombian radio station announced that 18 water pumps had just arrived in a town 45 miles from Armero. To the end, rescue workers dug with their bare hands at the cement slab leaning on Omaira’s numb legs, and bailed the water with tin cans.

Someone stretched a dirty blue-and-white checkered tablecloth over the scene of tragedy, a scene that, displayed in newspapers around the world yesterday, came to represent the horror of the disaster.

Mudflow covering the fields after the Nevado del Ruiz eruption

COMMON CORE RI 4
Language Coach
Etymology A word’s etymology is its history. The Latin word foetere means “to stink.” Use this Latin root to figure out the meaning of a word in line 38.
Comprehension
1. **Recall**  What caused Omaira Sanchez to be trapped?
2. **Summarize**  What efforts did rescue workers make to try to save Omaira?

Text Analysis
3. **Read a News Article**  What details are provided by Alejandro Jimenez? What would have been the effect if he had not been mentioned or quoted?
4. **Analyze Details**  What do the details about the pumps’ arrival and the checkered tablecloth contribute to the article?
5. **Evaluate Graphic Aids**  Explain what each photograph adds to your understanding of the events. Which of the two photographs has greater emotional impact? Give reasons for your answer.

**Read for Information: Compare Accounts**

**WRITING PROMPT**
A news article and a short story are very different forms of writing, with different purposes and different strengths. Compare and contrast the article about Omaira Sanchez with Allende’s story about Azucena. What elements do the pieces have in common? What elements are specific to each form, and what is their effect on you as a reader? Ultimately, which piece affected you more strongly? Why?

To respond to this prompt, you will need to compare and contrast, following these steps:
1. Create a large Venn diagram like the one shown.
2. On one side, note elements found only in the short story, such as the inner thoughts of the characters.
3. On the other side, note elements found only in the news article, such as photographs of the scene.
4. In the middle, note elements the two pieces have in common.
5. Weigh the elements on each side, and decide which piece affected you more strongly.