

1. Full citation:

Spencer, Jane, and Cynthia Crossen. "Why Do Americans Believe Danger Lurks Everywhere?" *The Wall Street Journal*. The Wall Street Journal, 24 Apr. 2003. Web. 4 Feb. 2013. <<http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB10511345011532400-search,00.html>>.

2. Where did/does the author work, what else has s/he written about, and what are her/his credentials:

Jane Spencer and Cynthia Crossen are Staff Reporters at *The Wall Street Journal*. In terms of credentials, I could not find other credentials but, *The Wall Street Journal*, being a credible publication, can be considered as giving the authors a level of credibility.

3. What are the topics of the text:

This article from *The Wall Street Journal* discusses the perception of risks from those who live in the United States of America.

4. What is the main argument of the text:

The main argument of this text is that Americans' perception of risk is high for things that are statistically not likely and low for things that are statistically likely.

5. Describe at least three ways that the argument is supported:

- a) The authors show examples of risky behaviors that a businessman engages in while worrying about less likely things that might lead to him cancelling a business trip.
- b) The authors also give examples of evolutionary history of the cognition behind risk.
- c) The authors give an example of how the most risky things that we have are actually being made by humans.

6. What three quotes capture the message of the text:

- a) "Scott Jordan is not averse to risk. He has flown a small plane, tried bungee jumping and skied on glaciers. He once drove his sports car on a public highway at 152 miles an hour, and he is lax about fastening his seat belt on short trips. He only sometimes wears his helmet when cycling. But terrorism and severe acute respiratory syndrome have him worried. Mr. Jordan, chief executive of a small Chicago apparel company, is likely to cancel his business trip to South Korea next month. "If I go ... and some crazy person decides to bomb the Hyatt, I'm dead," he says."
- b) "Fear is an evolutionary survival technique -- early humans who worried about other carnivores were more likely to be on guard against them. "We are hard-wired in our brains to fear first, think second," says David Ropeik, director of risk communication at the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis."

- c) Perhaps the most terrifying aspect of risk now is that humans are actually manufacturing it -- with nuclear power plants, the ozone hole, toxic waste, global warming, nuclear weapons, even terrorism.”

7. What three questions about environmental risk and precaution does this article leave you with:

- a) What are the risks of a nuclear power plant melting down?
- b) How many motor vehicle deaths are there in the US?
- c) What are some specifics in regards to how the brain processes risk?

8. What three points, details or references from the text did you follow up on to advance your perspective on environmental risk and precaution:

- a) I looked more into the probability of a nuclear meltdown and it is 1 in 30,000 years. (<http://www.ippnw-students.org/chernobyl/meltdown.pdf>)
- b) In 2011, there were 32,367 motor vehicle deaths in the United States. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_motor_vehicle_deaths_in_U.S._by_year)
- c) I looked more into how the brain processes risk and an article in *The New York Times* confirms what the article said. I found it nice to have the same conclusion come from more than one source. (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/opinion/sunday/why-smart-brains-make-dumb-decisions-about-danger.html?_r=0)