

- 1) Sustainability Workshop SSP201
- 2) Daniel Grafton, GEO 101
- 3) Journal Prompt #3: Environmental Racism
- 4) Course Learning Outcomes: investigate the cultural problems that result from the depletion, destruction, and inefficient use of the world's resources
- 5) Assignment Learning Outcomes: critical thinking, writing skills
- 6) Assignment Details: I have already used this journal prompt in my GEO 101 courses this semester. In class, I show a BBC video called "[Computer recycling West Africa style](#)" in relation to a concept we discuss called environmental racism. Environmental racism is that concept that environmental contaminants and pollution are located where minority/unwanted populations live. I give my students several examples of possible environmental racism from the textbook and then ask them whether the example from the video would also constitute environmental racism. We then discuss this as a class. I then go over the following BBC article called "[West Virginia chemical spill creates water warning](#)" and ask them if this challenges the textbook's concept of environmental racism. They then take the final ten minutes of class to respond to the following prompt in their journals:

- Do you think environmental racism is a reality? Does the West Virginia chemical spill challenge your textbook's definition of environmental racism?

There is no right or wrong answer to these questions. I assess the students on the quality and quantity (3-4 paragraphs) of their response. This assignment has special significance for me since I am originally from West Virginia and am able to share first-hand account of how West Virginians dealt with the chemical spill. I also try to increase the relevance to students by asking them if they can think of examples of environmental racism in Illinois, which most classes do.