Article of the Week-Annotation Model

(Evaluation): The *New York Times* is a credible source. Is written in an objective point of view, so it doesn’t appear to be from the opinion section.

Directions:

1. Mark your confusion.

2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions and/or comments.

3. Write a one-page reflection on your own sheet of paper.

☹ Isn’t sophisticated supposed to describe a person?

**NASA Launches Sophisticated Rover on Journey to Mars**

Source: The Associated Press/*New York Times*/11/26/11

Immediate Occasion:

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The world’s biggest extraterrestrial explorer, NASA’s Curiosity rover, rocketed toward Mars on Saturday on a search for evidence that the planet might once have been home to microscopic life. It will take eight and a half months for Curiosity to make the 345-million-mile journey to Mars.

The rover, officially known as the Mars Science Laboratory, was hoisted into a cloudy sky on Saturday morning by an Atlas V rocket. More than 13,000 guests crowded the Cape Canaveral space center for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s first mission to Earth’s next-door neighbor in four years, and the first launching of a Martian rover in eight years.

(Speaker): Scientists at NASA- it makes the most sense to have them describe the rover. Most of their quotes aren’t have an overly technical tone, so they are “reader friendly” language. While the speaker is obviously credible, his humorous shirt makes the reader feel at ease and he seems more approachable to those who aren’t “rocket scientists”.

Pan Conrad, a NASA astrobiologist whose instrument seeking carbon compounds is on the rover, had a shirt made for the occasion. The blue blouse was emblazoned with rockets, planets and the words “Next stop Mars!” The one-ton Curiosity is a mobile, nuclear-powered laboratory holding 10 scientific instruments that will sample Martian soil and rocks, analyzing them on the spot.

Question: Why are they analyzing soil and rocks on Mars?

Predict: Since Mars was so much like the Earth at one time, I think they are analyzing the soil and rocks as a way to determine what led to Mars’ destruction in the hopes of finding a pattern to prevent Earth from ending up the same way.

It also has a drill and a stone-zapping laser machine. It is “really a rover on steroids,” said Colleen Hartman, assistant associate administrator for science at NASA. “It’s an order of magnitude more capable than anything we have ever launched to any planet in the solar system.”

The primary goal of the $2.5 billion mission is to see whether Mars might once have been hospitable for microbial life — or might even still be conducive to life. No actual life detectors are on board; rather, the instruments will hunt for organic compounds.

☹- Does this mean capable or able to

Question: How is the US government coming up with the money to fund this in a recession?

With Mars the eventual goal for astronauts, NASA will also use Curiosity to

measure radiation on the planet. The rover also has a weather station that will measure temperature, wind and humidity, and a computer application with daily weather updates is planned.

(Purpose and Subject)- The overall purpose is to promote the recent launch of the mission to Mars and describe the appearance and functions of the Curiosity Rover and the jobs that some of those will perform.

The world has launched more than three dozen missions to Mars, the planet most like Earth in the solar system. Yet fewer than half of those quests have succeeded. This month, a Russian spacecraft ended up stuck in orbit around Earth, rather than en route to the Martian moon Phobos.

(Text to World Connection)- This could pose a serious threat to the International Space Station and many communications satellites orbiting around the Earth if it crashed into them. Wonder if these would trigger any military satellites or affect ones that regulate airplane tracking. Could cause lots of in-air collisions if air traffic controllers can’t see them.

(Text to Self Connection)- Worries me that it might affect my cell phone service.

“Mars really is the Bermuda Triangle of the solar system,” Ms. Hartman said.

“It’s the death planet, and the United States of America is the only nation in the world that has ever landed and driven robotic explorers on the surface of Mars, and now we’re set to do it again.”

(Tone): The use of words like” *death planet”* , *hair-raising* and the reference to the *Bermuda Triangle* give the mission a desperate tone. On the other hand, words like *quest* and *Grail* give it a romantic and *adventurous*  tone.

Curiosity’s landing next August will be particularly hair-raising. In a protective “aeroshell,” the rover will be lowered onto the Martian surface via a jet pack and a tether system similar to the sky cranes used to lower heavy equipment

into remote areas on Earth.

**Curiosity is too heavy to use air bags, as its much smaller predecessors,** Spirit and Opportunity, did in 2004. Besides, the new method should provide for a more accurate landing. Astronauts will need to make similarly precise landings on Mars one day.

☹ I can’t picture what this looks like…I wonder it’s more like a construction crane or is it like a wench system on the back of a tow truck?

Curiosity will spend at least two years roaming around Gale Crater, chosen as the landing site because it is rich in minerals. Scientists have said that if there is any place on Mars that might have been ripe for life, that would be it.

Larger Occasion: Mentioning Russia and previous mentions evokes a similar urgency as the 1960’s Race to Space theme

“I like to say it’s extraterrestrial real estate appraisal,” Ms. Conrad said with a

(Tone): Light-hearted

laugh last week.

(Purpose and Subject) More details related to purpose and subject

Curiosity’s seven-foot robotic arm has a jackhammer on the end to drill into the rock, and a seven-foot mast is topped with high-definition and laser cameras. No previous Martian rover has been so sophisticated or capable.

The rover, about 10 feet long and 9 feet wide, should be able to go farther and work harder than any previous Mars explorer because of its power source: 10.6 pounds of radioactive plutonium. The nuclear generator was encased in several protective layers in case of a launching accident.

Text to World Connection: Reminds me of the nuclear accident in Japan last year. It was supposed to be encased in protective layers too, but it still leaked causing problems for the Japanese people.

NASA expects the rover to put at least 12 miles on its odometer.

This is NASA’s third space mission to be launched from Cape Canaveral since the retirement of the space shuttle fleet this summer. The Juno probe is en route to Jupiter, and the Grail mission’s twin spacecraft are set to arrive on the Moon on New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day.

Audience: Article appears to be written to appeal to the American citizen, especially those who were not part of the Great Race to Space generation

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_