What is a case study?

“Case study” research is when a writer works to deeply examine the experience of a particular person or group of people. The purpose of a case study is to build a deep understanding of one specific way that an issue impacts people in real life. Case studies help writers explore how big ideas and questions impact individual real people in the real world.

For the next week, you will work as journalists conducting case study research about on specific story of environmental racism and the fight for environmental justice.

The purpose of this assignment is to practice discussing a case study. Our goal is to explore how a case study helps us build empathy for a person or group of people we might not have otherwise sought to understand, and how this empathy allows us to more deeply understand an issue.

Assignment:
We will be watching a film about the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and their fight to protect their land from the Dakota Access Pipeline. Below are the two questions you will need to answer after the film.

FILM NOTES
**Question 1:** How does the film support the claim that environmental racism is a problem in America? Give specific details from the film to support your thinking. Be sure to explain how those details prove the existence of environmental racism.

**Question 2:** One of the reasons journalists use case studies is to build their audience’s empathy for the people most impacted by the topic they’re writing about. People are more likely to feel empathy for personal stories than data and facts. They are simply more likely to care.

How do the film writers use the Standing Rock case study to build empathy in their audience? How do they use the case study to make their audience care about the topic of environmental racism? Think back to your work in humanities about the power of storytelling. What gives this film its power?
Question 1

Focus
- Claim fully responds to the prompt
- All information included in response meaningfully builds towards the claim. No repetitiveness or “fluff”
- Context provided if/ when necessary. Give some background info about information in the topic and in the film

Supporting Evidence
- Sound evidence that directly supports the claim; clearly an effort to choose the strongest and most relevant details from the film; evidence clearly shows environmental racism is an issue
- Details from the film are specific; doesn’t need to be in quotation marks, but paraphrase key details as specifically as possible

Analysis
- Provides thoughtful analysis about events in the film and evidence provided
- Original thought and insight gives more meaning to evidence

Language
- Appropriate style and voice
- Grammar
- Flow/ formatting/ structure; one idea flows into the next

___________ / 10

Question 2

Focus
- Claim fully responds to the prompt
- All information included in response meaningfully builds towards the claim. No repetitiveness or “fluff”
- Context provided if/ when necessary. Give some background info about information in the topic and in the film

Explanation of how the filmmakers use case studies to build empathy from the audience

Explanation how this film can make the audience care about environmental racism by citing specific details from the film including dialogue, images, personal anecdotes, etc.

Connection to humanities: what makes this story powerful?

Use of at least two different details/ pieces of information from the film

Language
- Appropriate style and voice
- Grammar
- Flow/ formatting/ structure; one idea flows into the next

___________ / 10

Total: __________ / 20

18- 20 → 4  14-17 → 3  11-13 → 2  less than 12 → 1

Scaffold for Question 1:
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- Restate the question
  - By detailing…
  - By including…
  - By illustrating…
  - By providing information about…

- Strong detail from the film that proves that environmental racism is a problem:
  - Explanation of that detail. 1-2 sentences connecting that information in the film to environmental racism

- Another strong detail from the film that proves that environmental racism is a problem:
  - Explanation of that detail. 1-2 sentences connecting that information in the film to environmental racism

- Concluding Sentence: