Activity 12: Annotations –"What Is a Life Worth?"
KEY

Where does Ripley describe valuing life in legal or financial terms? (examples)	Where does Ripley describe valuing life in human and emotional terms? (examples)
Flat $250, 000 for pain and suffering + $50,000 in pain and suffering for a spouse and each child p. 43	Parents and other family members have been left out of the equation— "You can't compare grief" (p. 47)
"Deduct life insurance, pension, Social Security death benefits, and workers' compensation. Now you have the total award the government if offering you for your loss." (p. 43)	Widow Cheri Sparacio with two year old twins and a baby on the way can't afford to go back to work unless she hires fulltime help, which the settlement money will not allow her to do. "'Please, come step into my shoes for a minute…I'm not asking to go to Tahiti."
Etc.	Etc.

Write a six-sentence summary of how the article describes how life is valued and people's response to it.

Answer the following "Thinking Critically questions:

1. Most news articles such as "What is a Life Worth?" try to take an objective, unbiased approach. Would you agree that this text is unbiased, or do you think it favors one perspective? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary and must be supported. Students may note that the article attempts to balance the perspectives of suffering families against the difficulties faced by the government in trying to do the "right" thing.

2. What kinds of evidence does Amanda Ripley, the author of the article, use to get across the key ideas and issues associated with the compensation of 9/11 victims and their families? Are any specific types of evidence more compelling to you as a reader? Less compelling?

Ripley provides evidence, including such things as personal stories of family members, statistics from public and private agencies, and narratives of events she has attended related to the issue of compensating victims' families. Students' personal responses determine whether they find the personal stories more compelling because of their highly charged emotional content or the hard figures and data (numbers!).

3. How well do you trust the accuracy of the information within the article? In other words, do you think that *Time Magazine* and/or Amanda Ripley are to be trusted? Why or why not?

Personal response. Students may discuss *Time Magazine's* longstanding reputation, the article's inclusion of facts and numbers as well as media biases, author biases and/or the influences of large corporations and the government.

4. Does the article use logic and/or emotion to make and impact on the reader? If so, please describe how, and compare the use to the way logic and emotion are used by Shakespeare and/or Armstrong.

The article highlights emotion when it quotes family members of victims and describes painful situations faced by victims and their loved ones. It uses logic in the facts and figures cited and when Feinberg articulates the rationale behind the government's plan for compensation. The two types of evidence tend to be at odds with one another. The writer is not attempting to persuade the reader to take a specific stance but rather to explain a messy situation and its surrounding contexts. In contrast, neither Shakespeare nor Armstrong was attempting to be objective; they provide single, individual perspectives.