# World on Wi-Fire by Niall Ferguson (2011)

As you read, answer the following questions.

1. What is the thesis statement? Why do you think he placed his thesis statement where he did? Was it effective or ineffective?

Answer: No, I mean the possibility that the global computer network formed by technologically unified human minds is inherently unstable—and that it is ushering in an era of intolerable volatility.

1. According to Ferguson, who are the “Lords of the Internet”? What additional title does Ferguson mention? Which title do you think fit them better? Why?

Answer: Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google /the Netlords and the Four Horsemen

Answer will vary.

1. What two forces did he identify as great forces that have driven the communications revolution?
2. The number of transistors that can be placed inexpensively on an integrated circuit doubles approximately every 18 months.
3. The exponential growth of human networks.

Looking Closely at Language

1. In paragraph 8, Ferguson states, “That’s the kind of sci-fi scenario that gets a true nerd out of bed in the morning. But is it just a bit too utopian?”. What does he mean by that? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment?

Answer: He feels that people only focus on the positive aspect of the explosion of technology. Answer will very.

1. Find all the terms that he uses that can have negative connotations. Then make a list of terms that have positive connotations. Based on the number of these terms, what can you infer about his attitude toward technology? Is he being positive or negative? Why or why not?

Answer: Answer will vary.

Sample - He feels conflicted because he sees the positive aspect of the technology, but he is also worried about it overtaxing human capacity and how it will destabilize the society.

Summarizing and Responding

1. After reading the article, summarize Niall Ferguson’s main point by using the rhetorical précis format.

Questions about Logic

1. Does this article convince you? Why or why not?
2. Are there claims in the article that are weak or unsupported? What are they?
3. Has the author left out an argument on purpose?

Questions about Ethos

1. What does the author’s style and language tell you about him or her?
2. Is this author knowledgeable? Smart? Successful?
3. Do you trust this author? Why or why not?

Questions about Pathos

1. Do you think the author is trying to manipulate your emotion? How?
2. Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?
3. Does the author use humor? How does this affect your acceptance of his or her ideas?