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**Using DailyChatter to Enhance Creativity in a
Freshman Composition Class**

By

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ABSTRACT



- ◆ When the AUN promoted *DailyChatter*, I identified a learning resource to enhance reading, writing and creativity skills.
- ◆ Students subscribed to the digital newsletter, and then over 4 weeks they selected ten stories (from 3 sections) to respond to through activities that demonstrated engagement with text, identification of the main idea, critical thinking, summarization, relatability and paragraph development. Response options ranged from short essays, poetry, and video commentaries, to songs, artwork and photo diaries.
- ◆ The main takeaway is how the students embraced this exercise to express themselves in a variety of exciting ways while meeting expectations for the class assignment.

An overview of the course

- ◆ Freshman Composition I is the introduction to the writing process and the initiation into academic writing in the English language.
- ◆ The learning outcomes of this academic literacy course reflect the need to acquire or enhance specific transferable and measurable skills that are applicable in all disciplines.

Expectations

Expectations include the ability to:

- ◆ **produce grammatically correct simple, compound, and complex sentences, avoiding fragments, comma splices, and run-ons;**
- ◆ **make audience-appropriate choices in vocabulary and other writing strategies based on genre or writing purpose;**
- ◆ **organize ideas effectively (through the development of thesis statements and topic sentences and the use of appropriate supporting details);**
- ◆ **use appropriate transitions between sentences and paragraphs;**
- ◆ **use accurate punctuation, capitalization, and spelling in a sentence - and paragraph-level writing;**
- ◆ **and demonstrate familiarity with strategies for a summary, paraphrase, critique, synthesis, and quotation in preparation for research paper writing.**

Course Outcomes

At the end of the course, students should be conversant with:

- ◆ the conventions and mechanics of the English language,
- ◆ the nuances of skimming, scanning, summarizing and paraphrasing to enable them to
- ✓ write clear, logical, and grammatically correct academic texts which demonstrate referencing skills (where required), and an ability to think critically and provide new ideas through thoughtful analysis.

A typical class

- ◆ Preparing ahead for a writing style
- ◆ Reading related narratives and understanding how elements in the writing process unfold
- ◆ Discussing relatable or different themes; and
- ◆ Practicing questions that discuss the writer's craft or working with practical exercises which combine a variety of skills.

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Newsletter



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Goal

- ◆ Share international news “to enlighten you on some of the most important developments taking place around the world so you will be smarter and better informed.”

www.daily chatter.com

- NEED TO KNOW
- WANT TO KNOW
- DISCOVERIES

Assignment

- ✧ Class reflections usually comprise responses to either prompts, videos or talks. These are to encourage self-interrogation, objective inquiry, creative thinking, vocabulary building and enhanced writing skills.
 - ✧ For this exercise, we'll focus on (global) news because these daily occurrences shape the way we view not only others, but ourselves.
 - ✧ As explained in class, the reliable student-friendly medium that we will work with for this task is DailyChatter, the free, non-partisan newsletter which delivers the world to your inbox. It's a 2-minute read and there's an audio version if you prefer listening instead.
 - ✧ If you haven't already done so, subscribe to DailyChatter [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and over the next 4 weeks, you will choose 10 different reports in DailyChatter to respond to in your own way. Expressions include:
 - ✓ short essay (2 well-written paragraphs only),
 - ✓ photo diary or photo essay (do not exceed 5 images and attribute correctly if the photos used are not yours),
 - ✓ poster/drawing (imagine that your image told the story and include a summary of what it represents),
 - ✓ video commentary (a 2-minute upload about what you think),
 - ✓ artwork (showcase your creativity as you represent the story in art form),
 - ✓ poetry (do not exceed 28 lines) or
 - ✓ song (compose a song and share both the lyrics and audio).
 - ✓ You will choose any 10 reports (from either the NEED TO KNOW, WANT TO KNOW or DISCOVERIES sections) and then save your 'reflections' in one folder on Google Drive. Mixed media is welcome as there are different ways you can respond to a text but note that everyone must have at least two short essays. It is very important that you do not take credit for other people's works.
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Student's Response

Daily Chatter of 4th February 2021

DISCOVERIES

The Janitors of the Sea

Around [eight million tons](#) of plastic end up in the oceans every year even as humans spend millions of dollars cleaning up the mess.

Meanwhile, it turns out that nature has its own janitor – the so-called “Neptune balls,” Smithsonian Magazine [reported](#).

These spherical objects are created when fibers of the *Posidonia oceanica* – a type of Mediterranean seagrass – get tangled up and form balls that look a bit like brown clumps of steel wool.

Despite their corny name, marine scientists discovered that the puffy spheres – including loose blades of seagrass – can trap small fragments of plastics and then wash ashore during storms.

In their [study](#), a research team assessed the plastic collected in seagrass on four beaches on the Spanish island of Mallorca between 2018 and 2019. Their results showed that half of the loose seagrass leaf samples they collected contained up to 613 plastic items per one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of loose leaves.

However, a kilogram of Neptune balls collected nearly 1,500 pieces of plastic.

Lead author Anna Sanchez-Vidal [told](#) New Scientist that the seagrass has the potential to collect nearly 870 million pieces of plastic annually.

Therefore, “Strict measures should be taken to protect these systems,” she said.

Student

Natural Brooms.



I think it is quite fascinating how the ocean has its own way of cleaning itself. The Neptune balls above are made up of little balls of tangled grass. These balls can collect more than eight hundred million pieces of plastic yearly and wash them ashore. Let's be kinder to our environment and what nature has put in place to protect us.

Images : Google

Daily Chatter of April 15th, 2021

Discoveries – **Jabs For Paws**

The coronavirus has infected more than 130 million people even as vaccination efforts have provided a glimmer of hope around the world – albeit with slow rollouts in some nations.

Alongside those fears of infections for humans have come worries over pets – infected cats and dogs are on the rise.

But last month, ‘Carnivac-Cov’ the world’s first coronavirus vaccine for animals was unveiled by the Russian agriculture safety watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor, [reported](#) Sky News.

Agency officials said clinical trials for the inoculation began in October and involved various domestic and wild animals, including cats, dogs and minks.

The new jab is harmless to animals and provides immunity for six months while preventing mutations.

“The results of the trials allow us to conclude that ... all the vaccinated animals developed antibodies to the coronavirus in 100 percent of cases,” said watchdog’s deputy head Konstantin Savenkov.

Savenkov added that mass production could begin in April, although researchers are continuing to test the jab’s effectiveness.

The Carnivac-Cov follows multiple incidents of animals being diagnosed with Covid-19. In November, the Danish government culled millions of minks after a mutated version of the virus was found at more than 200 Danish mink farms.

Student's response

More than 130 million people were infected,
With the coronavirus across the globe.
But many people are getting vaccinated.
Which brought the world a glimmer of hope.

But now the fear in people's hearts,
Is truly rapidly rising.
Because of the news coming from different parts,
That pets are also contacting.

Then Carni-Vac was produced,
By a Russian agricultural watchdog,
To ensure all the infected animals are not marooned .
Especially beloved cats and dogs.

But the vaccine seemed to have been flawed!
That has proven to be quite disastrous.
As 200 million minks were culled,
After they discovered a mutated version of the virus.

Now, I am a big pet lover,
As I've got a dog at home too.
So, I would be filled with great horror,
If I'm informed that our friendship is through.

I really hope they improve the vaccine,
And save a lot of pets.
So that the world can give a sigh of relief,
And focus on their main targets.

By Lilibel Ezenwa

Daily Chatter of 27th April 2021

Want To Know – Fire & Graft

More than 80 people died in a hospital fire in Baghdad this week in an accident that underscores the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on a country plagued by corruption and mismanagement of its public services, the New York Times [reported](#) Monday.

Officials said the fire at the Ibn al-Khatib Hospital, which was dedicated to treating patients with severe Covid-19 symptoms, began when a cylinder filled with oxygen caught fire and exploded, causing a chain reaction that engulfed the intensive care ward.

The hospital lacked smoke detectors, sprinkler systems or fire hoses despite being renovated last year to accommodate Covid-19 patients.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi called the fire a crime and ordered an investigation into the incident. He also ordered the firing of the country's health minister and the detention of the health director for the Rasfah area of the capital which hosts the hospital.

Al-Kadhimi came to power promising reform after his predecessor was forced to resign following mass demonstrations two years ago against government corruption and the lack of public services.

The incident highlights Iraq's decrepit health system which has for years been plagued by conflict and mismanagement. The government has spent billions of dollars to restore the health care infrastructure, but critics say there is little to show for it.

Last week, the country topped more than one million confirmed cases of Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic. Iraq has a population of about 40 million.

Student's response

Growing up in Nigeria, I have seen many forms of corruption. These acts include the mismanagement of public services by the trusted parties. Hence, it is not a big deal anymore in Nigeria. I sympathize with the people Baghdad who lost their families to loved ones in the fire outbreak but if this incident was to happen in Nigeria, no health Minister would be questioned or sacked. I think the government would give the person additional money and tell him to try and fix it this is because no investigation would take place.

With poor health care facilities, I see in this country, I have not seen any smoke detectors or water sprinklers in the hospital. I don't hope for this to happen but if this did, I think we would face much more casualties than Baghdad did. Their Prime Minister Al- Khadimi did a great job by ordering an investigation and trying to fix things. I think Nigerian government should try and follow his footsteps in that sense.

Daily Chatter of 6th May 2021

Discoveries – Atomic Babies

For years, the fear lingered that children of the survivors of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine would suffer severe DNA mutations and be at high risk of developing cancer.

But a new [study](#) discovered that the post-nuclear disaster generation is very healthy and carries no more DNA mutations than children born to any other set of parents, the BBC [reported](#).

A scientific team recently screened the genomes of children born between 1987 and 2002. Their parents included survivors of the disaster, as well as the workers that helped clean up the highly contaminated areas after the accident.

Researchers tried to find de novo mutations – also known as new mutations – which occur randomly in an egg or sperm cell.

“We couldn’t find anything,” said co-author Stephen Chanock, who explained that his team recruited entire families in order to compare the DNA of both parents and their children.

The findings show that radiation exposure will not impact offspring.

Researcher Gerry Thomas from Imperial College London, who was not involved with the study, said the results offer relief for survivors of nuclear disasters that were unwilling to have children out of fear of passing on mutations.

“(People) were scared to have children after the accident at Fukushima because they thought their child would be affected by the radiation they were exposed to,” she said. “It’s so sad. And if we can show that there’s no effect, hopefully we can alleviate that fear.”



Student's Response

In the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine,
There was a great and horrible disaster.
But what was going through every scientist's brain,
Was the thought of children developing cancer.

They all expected them to start mutating,
Due to the high levels of radiation.
But what they got was most surprising,
As no child showed any sign of mutation.

Personally, I thought that was unbelievable,
That all the children were so healthy.
Because the thought of their immune system being so
stable,
Was nothing short of a mystery.

But that news brought so much relief.
Especially to the survivors of the nuclear explosion.
Because now they no longer had any fear,
At the thought of raising the next generation.

By Mihai Zaharia

Daily Chatter of 12th May 2021

Need To Know – Middle Eastern #MeToo

Farah Hamza Akbar and her family told police that she feared that a man whose marriage proposal she rejected was going to kill her. The police arrested the unnamed man on harassment charges, but he made bail. Shortly after, Akbar was left at a hospital bleeding from a fatal stab wound to the heart.

“That is what we got, exactly what we said, that he is going to kill her, and he killed my sister,” said Akbar’s sister, Dana Akbar, in a video [cited](#) in the Washington Post. “Where is the government? We told the judge. I told you many times he would kill her, and now she’s dead.”

The killing unleashed a torrent of unrest in the conservative, stable and usually quiet Muslim nation on the Persian Gulf.

That’s because here, men commonly stalk women in ham-fisted attempts to gain favor and affection, the Associated Press [reported](#). They drive close to women on the highway, follow them home and show up at their workplaces as if the women should be grateful for the attention.

In the same way revelations of sexual harassment in Hollywood and at workplaces around the country helped give rise to the #MeToo movement in the US – and elsewhere –

Akbar’s death might have been a routine event but instead, it galvanized Kuwaiti women who are sick and tired of sexist, paternalistic and violent men into a Kuwaiti version of the movement called, #Lan_Asket (I will not be silent).

“A woman was killed in broad daylight and (during) Ramadan...Why can’t the government protect women?” [asked](#) women’s rights activist Sahar bin Aly in an interview with Reuters during a Kuwait City protest. “There’s a constitution between us and the state, a constitution that promises equality.”

Kuwaiti leaders – the country’s leadership and parliament – are all men. They have work to do.

There had been some movement toward protecting women before this murder. In September, Kuwait enacted a new domestic violence law that plans to establish women’s shelters and restraining orders designed to protect women. Female judges have also been appointed for the first time, as the Loyola Marymount University-based Asia Media International [explained](#).

But the law is full of holes. As the BBC [reported](#), members of the Bidun (Bidoon) ethnic community, a group of stateless residents who are technically not Kuwaiti citizens, can’t report harassment because they don’t have identity cards, for example.

Akbar’s killer, meanwhile, has been arrested again and charged with first-degree murder, the New Arab [wrote](#).

Whether or not his trial will help change the deeply ingrained misogynistic currents in Kuwaiti society is a question that a verdict might help answer.



Student's response

The violence propagated against women in Kuwait is very heart-breaking. The case of Farah Hamza Akbar is the case of many women in Kuwait and other parts of the world. Unfortunately, the lives of precious women in Kuwait had to be lost before people had a wake-up call and the government decided to take women seriously in the country. The tragic case of Farah forces us to take a closer look at the behaviour of men, especially men who refuse to take no as an answer.

My belief, men need to understand that no means no. No does not mean pursue the woman further. No does not mean bombard her phone with calls and text messages. No most definitely does not give the man a right to stalk her or show up at her place of work, expecting her to change her mind, because the truth is not only will she get sick and tired of you, but she might also file for a restraining order against you. The government and the relevant law enforcement agencies, not only in Kuwait but around the world and especially here in Nigeria, need to take harassment cases filed by women seriously and give women the relevant protection they need. If only the court had taken the complaints of Farah's family to heart, she would still be here with us today. We do not need to lose another life, simply because she said no, we need to teach our men and our boys everywhere, around the world to respect the wishes, privacy and most especially the No of a woman because if we do not, we will keep having more gruesome cases like Farah.

Daily Chatter of 9th April 2021

Need To Know – **Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité**

French President Emmanuel Macron is planning to close one of the country's top educational institutions, a bastion of the elite responsible for educating most of France's politicians and the upper echelons of society, Radio France Internationale [reported](#) Thursday.

The Ecole Nationale d'Administration is a French “grande école,” elite higher education institutions that are separate from but parallel and often connected to the French public university system. In existence for 75 years, they produce much of the “state nobility” and its alumni include four French presidents including Macron.

Macron said the school shutdown is part of an effort to eliminate elitism and “offer the French people a closer, more efficient, more transparent and more benevolent public service.”

The school was originally founded by General Charles de Gaulle in 1945 to break the hegemony of France's ruling elite and end nepotism in the country.

However, the school's reputation is now more synonymous with elitism and privilege. Before the school's existence, 55 percent of ENA students were from working-class backgrounds. Now that number is about six percent.

Macron's decision to close the ENA follows pledges made during the “Yellow Vests” protests in 2018 and 2019 to lower fuel taxes and bring about economic justice. Analysts say the move was made to gain support against the far-right ahead of next year's election, France 24 [reported](#).



Daily Chatter of 19th April 2021

Want To Know – [Show Might Go On](#)

Japanese officials are considering canceling the Tokyo Olympic Games amid a surge in coronavirus infections in the country despite earlier statements that the Games must go on, Reuters [reported](#) Saturday.

A ruling party official said this week that canceling this year's Games remains an option as health officials recently acknowledged that the pandemic has entered a fourth wave.

The announcement comes as the Japanese government expanded quasi-emergency measures to 10 regions, casting more doubt on whether the Olympics can be held in Tokyo in less than 100 days.

Tokyo's Olympic chief maintained that Japan was committed to holding the Games this summer, but analysts worry that proceeding "is contradictory to Japan's commitment to global health and human security."

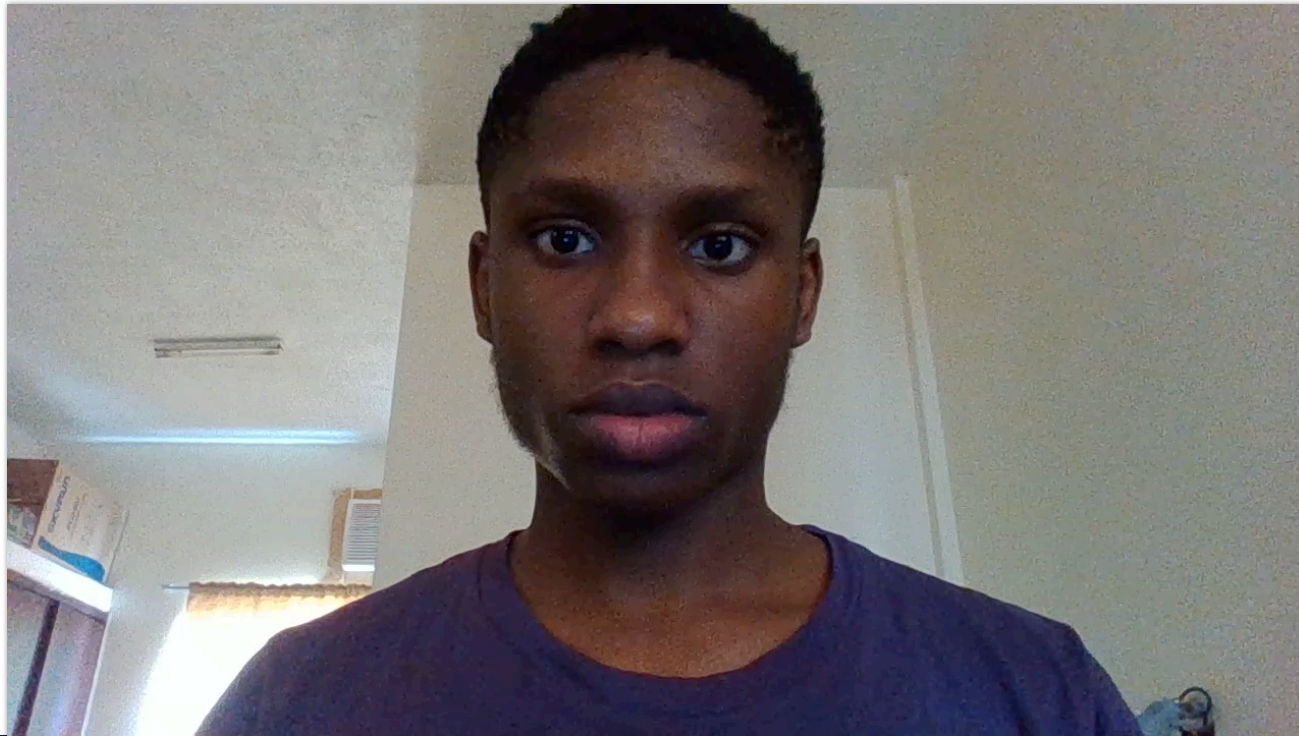
Japan has already barred international visitors from attending the Games and the country has performed poorly in stemming the rise in infections: It has had limited testing capacity and a slow vaccination rollout.

Surveys and opinion polls have highlighted how a majority of voters as well as doctors want the event canceled or postponed.

But the government and Olympic officials have stressed that another postponement is out of the question. The Games were initially scheduled for last year.

Student's response

(Fortune Nkanang)



Student's response

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité

I learnt that the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, has intentions on closing one of the preeminent universities in the nation, which is École Nationale d'Administration. This institution's primary objective is to raise leaders to oversee and control top political positions. To be very honest I believe this is a good idea because, if every nation has an institution that can train certain individuals on how governance of your nation as whole could be implemented, certain issues wouldn't arise because these individuals have been taught. The only issue I have is that, having an institution like this in my country Nigeria now, would foster corruption in some way believe me; because some leaders put their selfish interest above the health/state of the nation. But irrespective of the effect of corruption, the institution would be good for the society.

So, with the prestige engraved within ENA, the institution is highly associated with prestige and elitism which basically facilitate the acceptance of their graduates into the public service in France. I wouldn't blame or criticize the public service if most of their employees are from ENA because I believe the public service would have high expectations from these graduates due to trainings received. But looking at this situation at hand from the perspective of President Macron, closing this institution would help bring the French closer and be more and more transparent in the public service. Based on Macron's analysis, the ENA some years ago comprised students comprised students from middle income families and the elite also which signifies a certain level of unity among the nationals. In conclusion, I stand with President Macron's idea of closing the ENA irrespective of him taking advantage of this scenario in favor of the upcoming presidential elections.

Daily Chatter of 21 April 2021

Need To Know - **Denier-in-Chief**

The president of Tanzania, John Magufuli, denied that Covid-19 was real. The virus likely proved him wrong.

It may have claimed his life on March 17.

As CNN [explained](#), the late 61-year-old president officially died from heart failure, which officialdom maintains he had been fighting for years. But opposition figures said that credible government officials told them Magufuli was yet another casualty of the coronavirus pandemic. He hadn't been seen in public since Feb. 25, leading to speculation over his health while his representatives insisted, he was fine even as he remained offstage.

The irony was that Magufuli was among the world's most outspoken critics of public health measures designed to stop the spread.

"Vaccines don't work," he said in a [speech](#) in January, according to the New York Times. "If the white man was able to come up with vaccinations, then vaccines for AIDS would have been brought. Vaccines for tuberculosis would have made it a thing of the past. Vaccines for malaria would have been found. Vaccines for cancer would have been found."

Magufuli was first elected in 2015 as a reformer. Tanzania had been a "beacon of stability in East Africa since it secured independence from Britain in the early 1960s," [wrote](#) the Washington Post's obituary. He cracked down on public corruption, ending no-show jobs, imposed higher taxes on foreign businesses and launched an infrastructure program.

But he also moved his East African nation closer to authoritarianism.

He closed down newspapers and television stations that ran critical stories of his administration. He tortured musicians who sang songs criticizing him. Magufuli charged detractors with sedition, "immorality" or "insulting" the head of state.

"Critics said he was an autocrat with thin skin, a man obsessed with building a personality cult and who did not entertain any slights or jests whether from musicians, comedians or commentators on social media," the BBC [wrote](#).

Magufuli's death is a chance for Tanzania to move on, [says](#) Human Rights Watch. His successor, President Samia Suluhu Hassan can uphold human rights and initiate a process to heal and ensure accountability for the abuses of the late president's regime.

Hassan is already pursuing a U-turn in Covid-19-related policies, Bloomberg [reported](#). She's appointing an expert panel to develop a plan to curb the spread of the virus. She also moved to settle tax disputes with international businesses and cut red tape that is now holding up foreign investment in mining and other extraction projects. Meanwhile, she is lifting bans on new online television channels and other media enterprises – and is inspiring hope for the repeal of a law [passed](#) in 2018 that imposes jail terms for questioning the accuracy of official statistics.

Hassan says she's not interested in isolation either: She's already trying to improve Tanzania's relations with the international community after ties with the US and other Western nations were strained by Magufuli's clampdown on civil liberties and his disputed reelection last year – the opposition has been all but wiped out, [reported](#) the Conversation.

While Magufuli's authoritarian tendencies are not out of the norm in Tanzania, many are hoping Hassan will break the mold, at least a little. But first, it will take time to repair the damage done.

Student's response

The death of Tanzania's president from the deadly virus came as a surprise to the world. It was so because Tanzania's late president, Late John Magufuli, never stopped criticizing covid-19 and its vaccines. He reformed Tanzania by reducing graft, lowering unemployment, and increasing taxes on foreign companies. Despite his remarkable achievements, he governed with absolute authority and disciplined anybody who tried to criticize his administration. Magufuli's death provides an opportunity for Tanzania to move forward; and his replacement, President Samia Suluhu Hassan, can redress the errors he made with his authoritative style of rule. She can seize the opportunity to restructure Tanzania into a nation that values human rights and takes responsibility for matters affecting citizens' welfare.

While it is sad that Tanzania's president died, he would still be alive if the virus had been taken seriously in his country. He ignored foreign warnings to place his country on lockdown, and instead downplayed the consequences of infection, thus putting the entire country at risk. It is irresponsible for elected officials to fail to respond quickly to matters of national urgency and security. I can only hope that the new president will take Covid-19 more seriously and enact counter-measures while reorganizing the country.

The End.

**THANKS
FOR
LISTENING**

