

Grade 9-10

Expository Compositions

Proposing a Solution - What This Would Look Like in College

**English 1A**  
**Assignment #4**  
**Proposing a Solution**

Your reading in SMG has discussed and provided examples of ways to explain the causes of a problem and to propose solutions to that problem. The definition of a problem and especially of its causes is an essential first step in laying the foundation for a plausible solution. The same problem defined and explained differently, can seem to point to quite different solutions.

Your next essay will need to establish the existence and nature of a problem, explain its seriousness or consequences, explain its causes (or some of them), and propose one or more solutions that respond directly to some or all of the causes you name. You will also want to respond to the possibility that reasonable readers might understand the problem or its causes differently and might regard other solutions as preferable or superior.

Do not undertake a topic covered in our reading (teen pregnancy, for example). Do not undertake a problem so small or personal that its resolution cannot interest the reader (your hangnail, for example). Focus on action or behavior, not abstract principles or concepts: instead of describing the problem of dyslexia, propose a solution to the fact that our schools fail to serve dyslexics. Do not undertake a topic so huge that it cannot be solved in 5 pages. World hunger, racism, inequality, these are topics too broad for your purpose: instead, narrow it down to some aspect of a large problem, or to some smaller, more reasonable problem. Instead of world hunger, perhaps something like the lack of funding for soup kitchens in rural areas, or, a focused problem having to do with a specific behavior or situation. People don't recycle aluminum cans. People don't get their kids immunized for polio anymore. People don't yield on the freeway.

Less than half of your essay will be devoted to establishing the nature, seriousness, and cause(s) of your problem. The bulk of the essay will be devoted to the solutions) you are proposing: how will it work; what will happen; who will pay for and provide this service, who will benefit, how much, when and where? Who will not benefit? What drawbacks are there? What else will have to happen? What practical, ethical, legal, or financial concerns are raised by your solution?

Your essay will be 5-6 pages long, with at least four reputable sources, in MLA format. You should use the format of a proposal to the person or group that might have authority over implementing your solution. Imagine you are writing a formal

letter to the Governor, the Chancellor, the Police Chief, the Bishop of your diocese, the Chairman of a committee, or another powerful figure.

Your oral reports tenth week will be about a problem, its causes, and a solution. Your report will meet the same criteria as the essay (specificity about the problem, one or more causes, its solution or solutions, and response to objections or concerns). Your oral report will be approximately 6 minutes long, with time for Q&A afterwards. You will turn in a written version of your oral report (@ 3 pages) on the first day of class in 10<sup>o</sup>\* week. You must provide some form of visual aid - a poster, handout, object.... Have fun with this!!!

### **Peer Review**

A research paper should contain the following elements: a clearly stated thesis; developed discussion of that thesis; specific support with relevant, clearly described, clearly explained examples, quotes, and facts; a coherent organizational structure, including topic sentences and focused paragraphs; appropriate tone and word choices; and solid MLA format, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Does this essay have an effective title? \_\_\_ Does this essay have an effective, tone-setting, attention-getting introductory paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_ Does the essay seem to be responding appropriately to the assignment? \_\_\_\_\_

Does this essay have a clearly stated, focused, arguable thesis? \_\_\_\_\_ What do you think mat thesis is? \_\_\_\_\_..

Does the essay offer a sense of the significance of its argument or topic? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the essay provide discussion and reasons in support of its thesis? \_\_\_ Does the essay provide specific, relevant examples in support of its thesis?

Does the essay provide relevant, useful quotes, and does it explain mem effectively in terms of its argument? \_\_\_\_\_ Are those quotes part of grammatically complete sentences? . \_\_\_\_\_ Do ideas, quotes, or other pieces of evidence seem irrelevant, unexplained, unconnected to the argument or to the paragraph in which they appeal1? \_\_\_ Could you suggest additional pieces of support, additional examples that would be useful?

Are transitions or links provided between paragraphs (or related groups of paragraphs)? \_\_\_\_\_ Could you suggest more effective ways of linking paragraphs, ideas, or examples? \_\_\_\_\_ Would a different order of paragraphs, ideas, or examples be more effective? \_\_\_ Is each paragraph focused on a specific idea, example, or closely related set of examples? \_\_\_\_\_

Does each paragraph contain a clearly stated topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_ Are any paragraphs unfocused, with too many (or too few) ideas or examples? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the essay have an effective conclusion, one that sums up the overall argument and leaves the reader with a sense of completeness? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the tone seem appropriate, objective, informed, professional, college-level?

Does the essay have acceptable grammar, spelling, and punctuation? \_\_\_\_\_

What final suggestions can you make that would help the writer improve this essay?

1. [Rubrics](#)
2. Lesson Plans
3. Sample Essays
4. [Related Assignments](#)  
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