

## Paper 3 – Researched Position Paper

### English 1302: Rhetoric and Composition II

#### The Rhetorical Situation

For your Issue Proposal, you organized your preexisting knowledge on your issue and sketched a plan for research. You then compiled several sources and summarized their contents for your Annotated Bibliography. In your Mapping the Issue paper, you traced the controversy surrounding your issue by describing its history and summarizing the major positions on it. Now—finally—it is time for you to have your say on the issue.

For this paper, you will advocate a position on your issue with a well-supported argument written for an audience that you select.

#### Invention (i.e., discovering what you're going to say in this paper)

1. Choose a *specific* audience (no “American people” or “people interested in my topic”) for your paper. Your audience should be a person, group, organization, website, publication, etc. named by a proper noun (i.e., you have to capitalize it) and with an address (physical or electronic) to which you could send your paper.

Make sure you investigate the characteristics and values of your audience.

2. Your audience likely will want to know immediately both the conversation you're responding to and your own position. Furthermore, they will want to know that you are *advancing* the conversation, turning it in a new direction, rather than just repeating another writer's argument. Consult Ch. 4 in *They Say/I Say* for tips on how to formulate your claim as a response to what someone else has written.

3. Your audience certainly will expect you to support your claim with good reasons, so attach as many reasons as you think necessary. To determine whether your reasons are “good,” draw out the implicit warrant in each claim+reason, and then consider whether your audience will consent to those warrants. If so, then you've probably selected good reasons. If not, then you may need to select reasons that appeal more effectively to your audience's values. Alternatively, you may try to persuade your audience to grant your warrants.

4. For each of your reasons, provide sufficient evidence that your reasons are true. Your personal experiences, observations, and reasoning count as evidence, but you should also draw extensively on outside sources for evidence to support your reasons.

5. Address at least one extended counterargument to some part of your argument. You may choose a hypothetical naysayer or a real opponent found in an outside source. Make sure you:

- name and describe your opponent(s).
- describe your opponent's position fairly and accurately.
- make any necessary concessions, i.e., identify areas of agreement between you and your opponent.
- respond with a well-considered and reasonable rebuttal.

Pay special attention to Ch. 6 in *They Say/I Say* for instruction in how to deal effectively with counterarguments.

**6.** Think about how you're going to come across to your audience as a person of good character, good sense, and good will. Here are some tips:

- Know what you're talking about. Find ample outside sources, read extensively on your topic, and use information from sources to provide sufficient evidence for your reasons.
- Show regard for your readers. Try to come across as approachable and thoughtful, not arrogant or insensitive.
- Treat skeptical readers with respect—don't ignore or demean their opinions just because they expect more proof.
- Be careful and meticulous in your writing, not sloppy or disorganized.

**7.** Think about the values and emotions that you share with your audience and consider how you might appeal to them. Here are some tips:

- Remember the advice of Ch. 9 in *They Say/I Say*: "your judgments about the appropriate language for the situation should always take into account your likely audience and your purpose in writing" (121). Because you are choosing your audience, it's up to you to determine the most effective style for your paper.
- Try to evoke emotions (sympathy, outrage, anger, delight, awe, horror, etc.) in your audience that make your paper more moving.
- Try to evoke sensations (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling) in your audience that make your writing vivid and help readers experience things imaginatively.
- Appeal to values (freedom, justice, tolerance, fairness, equality, etc.) that you share with your audience.

### **Arrangement (i.e., organizing what you're going to say in this paper)**

You'll want to organize your paper in the manner you think will prove most effective with your audience, but here are some general guidelines:

- Heed the lesson of Ch. 1 in *They Say/I Say*: "To give your writing the most important thing of all—namely, a point—a writer needs to indicate clearly not only his or her thesis, but also what larger conversation that thesis is responding to" (18). As has been the case with all your papers, the conversation you're responding to is the one surrounding the issue you've selected. Indicate at the beginning of your paper that you're writing in response to that conversation, and then state a thesis that includes your claim and reasons.
- Also mind the lesson of Ch. 7 in *They Say/I Say*: "Regardless of how interesting a topic may be to you as a writer, readers always need to know what is at stake in a text and why they should care. . . . Rather than assume that audiences will know why their claims matter, all writers need to answer the 'so what?' and 'who cares?' questions up front" (88-89). Like

your last paper, this piece is unsolicited, which means you must work hard to demonstrate why your issue matters and to attract readers. Providing compelling answers to the “so what?” and “who cares?” questions is crucial.

- However you arrange the body of your paper, make sure you include all the information requested in the Invention section of this prompt.

### **Style (i.e., choosing the appropriate language for your paper)**

You’re writing for a highly specific audience, so avoid writing to some vague, generalized reader. When reading your paper, it should be obvious that you’re writing to the audience you’ve identified.

All readers appreciate coherent, unified paragraphs, so your paragraphs should include a topic sentence that clearly states the main idea of the paragraph and supporting sentences that cluster around the main idea without detours.

Document your sources properly according to MLA style. Consult *The Scott, Foresman Writer* for instructions on how to format in-text citations and Works Cited entries.

Proofread carefully; avoid errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics. Use *The Scott, Foresman Writer* for questions you have regarding style.

### **Other Requirements**

Your paper should be **5-10 pages**—anything shorter or longer will be considered a failure to adhere to one of the assignment’s basic requirements. It should be double-spaced, typed in Times New Roman font, with 12-point character size and one-inch margins all the way around.

Your first submission is due at the beginning of class on \_\_\_\_\_, and you should think of it as a final draft—something that is ready to be read by your intended audience. If your first submission does not meet every requirement of this assignment sheet, I will return it to you and count it as late. Both your first and final submissions must be turned in on time—you will be docked a full letter grade for each day either is late.

Peer reviews are due \_\_\_\_\_.

Final drafts are due \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Final Draft:

- Includes a snappy title that catches the reader’s attention and indicates the topic and argument.
- Identifies an arguable/contestable issue appropriate to the assignment.
- Addresses a specific audience.
- Includes a contestable, specific, detailed claim that advances the conversation about the topic.
- Provides well-developed reasons to support the claim.
- Answers the “so what” and “who cares” questions by explaining why the argument is significant and to whom.

- Supports reasons with carefully selected, well-developed examples from multiple sources.
- Anticipates counterarguments, considers them carefully, and responds to them fairly, conceding where others are right.
- Uses sources effectively and integrates them smoothly, paraphrasing and occasionally directly quoting authorities to help substantiate or support points.
- Offers proper attribution to each source cited via in-text parenthetical citation and a correctly formatted Works Cited page.
- Comes across as a credible writer, and appeals to the values and emotions of the audience.
- Develops a seamless, coherent, and well-organized argument.
- Sentences are lively, engaging, and relatively error free.
- Essay is 5-10 pages in MLA Style with Works Cited in 12pt. Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.

Writing Process:

- Submitted complete drafts on time. Drafting process shows evidence of revision of content and style.
- Provided adequate help to peers during peer review.

**Researched Position Paper Peer Review Prompt**  
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**Writer:**

**Reviewer:**

**Introduction**

Early in the paper, the writer should incorporate what “they say” by situating his/her argument as a response to the conversation surrounding a controversial issue. He/she should also provide a clear statement of his/her claim and reasons. Finally, the writer should make it clear to whom his/her argument matters (“Who cares?”) and why (“So what?”).

Are all these elements clear to you? If so, prove it by repeating these elements back to the writer (feel free to quote the writer directly in your response). If not, describe what is missing and suggest some options for how the writer might go about satisfying these elements of the assignment.

**Evidence**

For each of the writer’s supporting reasons, he/she should provide sufficient evidence (in the form of personal experiences, observations, reasoning, and/or information from outside sources) to persuade his/her intended audience of the truth of those reasons.

Does the writer provide sufficient evidence for his/her first reason? If so, describe that evidence and explain why it is persuasive. If not, explain why the writer’s evidence is insufficient and describe the type of evidence he/she needs to provide in order to fully support the reason.

Repeat this process for each additional reason.

**Counterarguments**

At some point the writer should (1) name and describe an opponent, (2) describe that opponent’s argument fairly, (3) identify any areas of agreement, and (4) respond with a rebuttal.

Does the writer respond adequately to an opponent? If so, summarize the four moves listed above and explain why they are effective. If not, explain what is lacking and suggest how the writer might go about executing these moves more effectively.