

ANTHONY T. ATKINS
COLLEGE READING AND WRITING II
ENGLISH 201

ESSAY 2: THE ISSUE ESSAY

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

The goals for this assignment consist of the following:

- To introduce students to research/MLA documentation style
- To learn to write in third person
- To practice writing for a general audience
- To learn about a current issue either locally or globally
- To write with a purpose to inform and explain
- To write without inserting personal opinion

The Assignment

Since our English course is about writing research, students should spend time online and in the library searching various sources for possible research topics and ideas. This essay will focus directly on research writing, audience awareness, rhetoric, and persuasion. In all cases you should be keenly aware of ethos, logos, and pathos.

The Issue Essay is simply an essay where you discover an issue and “report” on the various sides of the issue without inserting your own opinion. You should use 3rd person writing (Introductions and Conclusions sometimes include 1st person writing, but it depends on the purpose). You are certainly allowed and even encouraged to “commentate” on the issue, but do not take a position on the issue nor reveal whether or not one side or position is better than the other. One way to look at this assignment is by considering yourself a reporter and that you must report the findings or sides without explaining how you feel about it. See chapter 6 page 194 “Scenario 4,” for an example. You will need to use your summarizing and paraphrasing skills to explain and inform readers of the issue and the surrounding sides/debates concerning the topic.

Example (you may not use the example as a topic for any essay in this course)

Topic: Abortion

Process: Research abortion and the various sides. You’ll find something like this: pro-choice, pro-life, and a third side or stance will be “well, it depends.” Pro-choice advocates women’s right to choose. Pro-life advocates that abortion is completely wrong regardless of the circumstances. The “well-it-depends” people typically believe in one of the previous sides but feel that circumstances dictate the final decision. For example, some pro-lifers believe that a person that has been raped has a right to abort the child. In short, there are at least 3 sides to this issue. One would research all three sides and “report, explain, inform” readers of the various sides and how they have come into existence, the pros/cons or positives/negatives of each side. The writer, however, should not reveal their own stance or position. The writer’s job is to simply explain the research on abortion.

Format

In addition to conforming to general MLA research paper guidelines your Issue Essay should consider a similar format as below.

Introduction

Introduce the topic. What will you be writing about, for example. Set-up the organizational scheme you will follow throughout the essay. “The topic X effects society in a number of ways. This essay

will explain the various perspectives of X-topic.” You then would explain briefly those sides of the issue you plan to explain. Then, transition to the next paragraph.

Body

In the body of the essay, you will use and cite research that helps you explain, report, and inform your general audience about the topic you have selected. You also want to make sure you explain why the topic is important in the first place. Why would your audience care to hear about it? Why is it significant or important to talk about it? Use transitions between paragraphs. Make sure your sources are good ones (refrain from Wikipedia unless you have a reason for using it as a source—sometimes it *is* helpful, but it depends on why you have cited it). Use academic journals, websites, books. “Organizational” websites are sometimes helpful but remember that they usually push a specific agenda or stance, which may be helpful depending on your approach.

Do not use second person (using “you”) in this essay. Also, consider using “some, few, or many.” Use those terms rather than “I” or “you.” This will help protect you from appearing to offer an opinion in this essay.

Conclusion

Remember to remind the reader of the importance of the issue and to remind the reader, briefly, of the various sides of the issue. It is also important to leave the audience thinking about the importance of your topic. Use research to help you make your points strong.

It is imperative that you spend some time researching topics. Use the web and possibly CQ researcher (in the reference area of the library; it is also online via the library website) to help you find an appropriate topic. You will be required to write rough drafts, peer edit, and provide a works cited page that directs the reader directly to your sources. Your essay will need to follow all MLA format guidelines. **No less than 4 pages and no more than 6 pages.**

Due Dates for Peer Editing, Drafts, and Final Version will be clearly illustrated in the online schedule.

You will submit at least one rough draft and the final draft in Blackboard.

For Final draft: Drafts will be submitted within Blackboard.

Grading Rubric

Clarity, Grammar, Punctuation, (3 or more errors)	1/3 letter grade deducted for every 3 errors
Typographical Errors (2 or more errors)	1/3 letter grade deducted
Late (more than 24 hours)	1 Letter grade
Peer Edit (be sure you have completed your peer edit by due date and have done a thorough job)	Did not peer edit: ½ letter grade Did a poor job of peer editing 1/3 letter grade
Wrong Format (headings, page numbers, MLA format); this also includes Microsoft Word—no “word perfect” or “microsoft works” documents. Cite music lyrics properly in your text. You must have a Works Cited. Cite websites properly. See the Purdue OWL, or look at the new MLA handbook. You will do better if you are consistent in your citation information. It is your responsibility to look up how to cite sources properly.	Depends on exact error and number of them, but in general as much as 1 letter grade or as little as 1/3 letter grade.

<p>Follows directions (mostly 3rd person, explains topic, various sides, why it's important, etc.). This includes submission directions and inclusion of sub-headings. Do not insert your personal opinion or give the appearance of doing so.</p>	<p>Not following the directions may cause a 1/3 letter grade deduction</p>
<p>Title/Introduction/Conclusion (explain your issue in the introduction and be sure to conclude your essay). Be sure to give your essay a unique title.</p>	<p>Lacking a sufficient introduction or conclusion may cause a 1/3 letter grade deduction.</p>
<p>Other Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Transitions between paragraphs (no sub-headings) • Use strong verbs and adjectives • Use logic and clear metaphors (make sense) • Use good descriptions 	<p>Lacking transitions, poor word choice, and sentences that are tough to understand or follow poor logic may lose as much as 1/3 letter grade.</p>
<p>What is 1/3 letter grade?</p>	<p>If you earn an A on your essay but lose 1/3 of a letter grade because of errors, your final grade would be A-. If you were to lose 2/3 of a letter grade, your grade would be B+, and, of course 3/3 of a letter is a full letter grade which would equal B.</p>