

Paper 2 – Mapping the Issue

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. For this paper, you will map the controversy surrounding your issue by describing its history and summarizing at least three different positions on the issue—all from a completely neutral point of view.

Before people can make an informed decision on a controversial issue, they must know the history of the controversy and the range of positions available. Publications often meet this need by providing a neutral, unbiased description of an issue's history and the main arguments made on all sides (e.g., *The New York Times's* "Times Topics" section or *Slate's* "Explainer" section). Imagine you are writing such an overview of your issue for a UTA student publication that offers analysis and commentary about politics, news, and culture.

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

1. Your audience of UTA students will want to know some background information on your issue, so draft answers to the following questions:

- What caused the issue?
- What prompted past and present interest in it?
- Who is interested in the issue and why?

2. Your audience will also want to know the current, major positions on the issue, so reflect on the titles in your Annotated Bibliography, draft descriptions of 3-5 different positions, and identify which articles in your bibliography advocate the positions you've described.

3. Now that you've drafted descriptions of the background and major positions on your issue, draft a more detailed description of one position:

- What are the main claims of those who advocate this position?
- What reasons do they provide for those claims?
- What evidence do they use to support their reasons?
- What assumptions underlie their arguments?

Support your description by summarizing and analyzing at least one source from your Annotated Bibliography that advocates this position.

4. Repeat step 3 with a second position, again supporting your description by summarizing and analyzing at least one source from your Annotated Bibliography. Additionally, you should highlight the relationship between the two positions you've described by answering the following questions:

- What are the points of intersection and diversion?
- On what points do advocates of these positions agree, and on what points do they disagree?
- What are the reasons for disagreement?

5. Repeat step 3 with all the remaining positions you plan to describe, always including a summary and analysis of at least one source from your Annotated Bibliography. Also, for every new position you introduce, explain its relationship to the previous positions you've described. Highlight points of intersection and diversion, describe points of agreement and disagreement, and explain the reasons disagreements exist.

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

- Describe the most significant positions across the entire field of the controversy; don't simply describe those positions that cluster around the position you favor.
- Summarize sources fairly and analyze them carefully. Accurately identify their main claims, supporting reasons and evidence, and implicit assumptions.
- Maintain neutrality. The time will come for you to take a stand on the issue, but don't do it now. Advocates of the positions you describe should feel that you have represented their views and arguments fairly, and your readers should finish your paper without any idea of where you stand on the issue.

7. Think about the values and emotions that you share with fellow UTA students and consider how you might appeal to them. Here are some tips:

- Appeal to readers' desire for information by presenting clear, well-organized, well-supported summaries that show you've read widely and closely and have developed a deep understanding of positions ranging across the entire field of the controversy.
- Appeal to readers' sense of fairness by providing truly unbiased descriptions of all positions/arguments.
- Draw on the lessons of Chapter Nine in *They Say/I Say* by mixing standard written English with "the kinds of expressions and turns of phrase that you use every day when conversing with family and friends" (115). Because you're writing for publication and for readers you don't know, you should adopt a more formal style and tone than in your first paper. This does not mean, however, that you need to abandon your unique ways of expressing yourself.

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 of UTA students, 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 was the case with your first paper, 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 in which you promise to describe the most significant positions on your issue.

- 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). Unlike your first paper, this one is unsolicited, which means you must work harder 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 answer fully and in detail all the questions/requests 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 audience. When reading your paper, it should be obvious that you’re writing to fellow UTA students.

Heed the lesson of Ch. 9 in *They Say/I Say* and mix standard written English with “the kinds of expressions and turns of phrase that you use every day when conversing with family and friends” (115). The more important lesson of that chapter is “that your judgments about the appropriate language for the situation should always take into account your likely audience and your purpose in writing” (121). As mentioned earlier, your style should be more formal than in your first paper, but this does not mean you should write in a pretentious style that is not your own.

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 no longer than five pages—anything beyond that length 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 for publication. 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.
- Includes a specific, detailed thesis about the history of the issue and the available range of positions on the issue.
- Answers the "so what" and "who cares" questions by explaining why the argument is significant and to whom.
- Provides background about the issue that provides a context for understanding the range of positions on the issue.
- Identifies, summarizes, and analyzes at least three positions on the issue.
- Supports analysis with carefully selected, well-developed examples from multiple sources.
- Maintains neutrality by describing each position fairly.
- 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 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.