***in media res narrative: describe sending a climb (hold, foot, keep tension, etc)***

As I set myself up at the start of the boulder, I start to focus - two crimps to start, the left hand slightly higher, and a right foot on so that I’m back-flagging right. The first move is out right to a small crimp, I can hold it with an open hand grip, and save some energy; I cross over with my left foot, set it on a higher foot hold and flag out with my right food. The next move is a big left hand, it’s bad so I crimp hard and move to quickly cross over with my right foot, release my left foot to keep my hips open, and keep tension before the next move. The third move is a jump out right to a ledge, my feet cut but the hold is good. I swing back to a small left foot, match hands on the ledge then swap feet on the foothold so that I can bring my left foot up to the ledge and lock in a heel hook. From this awkward position, I use my left leg as a lever to hoist myself up to the lip of the boulder with my right hand, it’s a good hold and I manage to bring my left hand up to top out the boulder.

***answer what is climbing? (\*2)***

***- in general + cultural/hist background (\*3)***

***- types (focus: lead/sport + boulder)***

***- misc terms (ascent, onsite/flash, red point, etc)***

***- add: increase in knowledge/literature***

Climbers across the world go through similar experiences as they continually challenge boulder problems. Although rock-climbing first appeared as a sport in the late-1800’s, the sport of bouldering really established itself in the 1970’s and 80’s. During these two decades, the sport saw meteoric rise: starting with John Gill’s article “The Art of Bouldering”, in 1969, and his introduction of chalks (from gymnastics) to increase grip; the development of mats called crash pads in the 80’s to attempt more difficult climbs while preventing injuries from falling; and the rise of indoor commercial climbing gyms in the 80’s.

Our focus for this thesis will be on bouldering and sport climbing/lead; it should be noted however there are other types of climbing, including: top-rope, in which\*; ice-climbing\*; mountaineering and trad climbing\*; free solo and deep water solo. Throughout this paper we will encounter/learn new terminology related to climbing, all of which will also be collected in a glossary.

***leads into project topic (\*1)***

***- brief inspiration section as lead into (\*4)***

***- add: number on hard climbs (what/where/ascents)***

***- what is strength in climbing? are we getting stronger, or are there more strong climbers?***

As I myself have delved in climbing, both in practice and research, one thing became apparent quickly: the continuous effort/never-ending endeavour to get stronger. As I began to look into this and developed questions about climbing benchmarks around the world, and the rate of strength increase/hard climb development, I focused my research on two questions

* Have we (as climbers) gotten stronger over time (since 1970), or are there more strong climbers (...or both)?
* What is strength (in climbing)?

***climbing strength (\*5)***

***recall (1/2) and expand on method the project will pursue (\*6)***

In order to answer these questions, we will analyze several aspects of climbing, including what the records/benchmarks are for climbing routes, what the various grading systems for climbs are (how climbs are measure); what makes a climb hard; how climbers get stronger (exercises, protocols, tools, etc); and other aspects such as the rise/increase in popularity over time, increase research/literature available, social media, etc.

Our analyses will focus on sport/lead and bouldering, and we will work to expand the reader’s climbing knowledge and vocabulary throughout this essay/