

## Essay 4: Final Essay: Proposal

A research-based essay that identifies and defines a problem or situation, describes the debate surrounding proposed solutions, then makes a sustained argument in favor of a particular solution.

### ***The basics***

<b>Length:</b>	1,500 to 2,100 words (not including Works Cited page)
<b>Value:</b>	25% of your final grade (includes successful completion of all of the steps)
<b>Research:</b>	At least 5 credible, recent sources found through the USC Upstate Library
<b>Format:</b>	Use MLA Style

### ***Description***

This essay is significantly different than the final essay students write in English 101. In that course, the final essay requires you to describe a current and debatable issue or topic and three competing viewpoints regarding it, then to support the position you find most reasonable. By contrast, the “Proposal” essay requires you to make a sustained argument from start to finish in which you argue forcefully for your position, but also take other positions into account. The focus is on your proposed solution to a problem, rather than on a fair and accurate reporting of what others have said about that problem. Even so, to maintain a thoughtful, substantiated position on the issue, you should consider other positions that have been taken on that issue.

### ***Multi-stage process***

You will complete the following steps for this assignment. Failing to complete any of these steps will have a negative affect on your grade:

- Writing and submitting a topic proposal
- Meeting in at least one 1-on-1 conference with me
- Writing and peer reviewing an annotated bibliography
- Participating in a draft workshops of your proposal project

### ***Finding a Topic Worth Doing***

The final paper in English 102 will allow you to demonstrate all that you have learned in this course this semester and in English 101, including the following:

- Using a multi-stage approach to writing: brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing;
- Critical reading: understanding texts but also being attuned to how the author shapes his or her ideas;
- Successfully quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing texts as appropriate;
- Making use of the standard “moves that matter in in academic writing,” as explained and demonstrated in *They Say / I Say*.
- Locating and assessing relevant, credible sources;
- Generating and supporting your own ideas regarding a topic while also incorporating source material found through research.
- Using current MLA format appropriately.

The topics for final papers will be defined by your own interests and revised through discussions with other students and with your instructor. You should select your topic thoughtfully, and stick with that topic until you turn in your final draft for a grade, even if your thoughts about that topic change over the coming weeks.

**What not to do**

- Do *not* pick a topic just because you already know what you think about it.
- Do *not* pick a topic because you wrote an essay about it in high school.
- Do *not* pick a topic because you think it will be easy to write about; the “easiest” topics are actually those that you genuinely want to know more about and will enjoy researching and studying for a few weeks.
- Do *not* pick a topic that is no longer currently in the news but that is an example of a stereotypical “research paper topic”; and do not pick a topic that is so broad that you’re unlikely find much new information about it:
  - Examples of these kinds of topics include (but are not limited to) gun control, abortion, legalizing drugs, changing the drinking age, teaching evolution in schools, global warming, and same-sex marriage.

**What to do**

- Consider the things that you are most interested in and about which you would like to become an expert;
- Consider topics that are related to your major (if you have already declared one);
- Consider topics that are related to what you want to do for a living;
- Consider topics related to your hobbies.

***These topics are off limits***

Abortion	Euthanasia / Mercy killing	Pornography
Abstinence programs	Evolution	Same-sex marriage
Animal rights	Gun control	Speed limits
Arctic and Antarctic ice loss	Immigration laws in the U.S.	Stem cell research
Athletes on strike	Legalizing marijuana	Steroids in sports
Bullying	Mercy killing / Euthanasia	Tort reform / Medical malpractice
Climate change / Global warming	No Child Left Behind act	Vaccinating children
Drinking age	Obesity	War on drugs
Driving age	Organic foods	War in Iraq
Eating disorders	Paying college athletes	War in Afghanistan