

Issue Proposal Worksheet

in preparation for an Exploratory Paper and a Position Paper (Essay II)

(from *Perspectives on Argument* 111)

To Begin:

- Pick a story, speech, or poem (from Pages: Literature & Criticism) which critics disagree about.
- Pick an issue that critics disagree about (a single question that your sources give three or more different answers to; your position can be the third position if you disagree with both of the other two).

Complete the Following:

1. Write your issue in a complete sentence. Explain it, and include the information that provides background and makes the issue interesting to your readers.
2. Explain the parts of the rhetorical situation that are already in place as you begin to write. Describe the exigence (need) for writing on this topic: the context for your issue, including what happened to make people interested in it. Identify the individuals or groups of people interested in this issue, with a brief introduction to their positions. Mention some of the constraints of these groups: what do they think, value, and believe?
3. Describe at least three different positions on your issue, state who holds them, and give some of their reasons for holding them. You may explain more than three positions, if you want or need to do so. Jot down the positions.
 - a. Position 1:
 - b. Position 2:
 - c. Position 3:
4. Explain your personal interest in the issue and the position you favor.

Guidelines

Suggestions and Example

It helps to articulate the issue as a question, with each position as a different answer to the question. (In Essay I, the essay to which you responded answered a question one way, and if you disagreed, you were answering the question in a second way.) For examples of issues articulated as questions, with many possible answers, see *PA* 96.

For other suggestions, see *PA* 97-98. For an example of an Exploratory Paper describing multiple positions on an issue, see *PA* 108-110.

Issue and Sources

Published research, including the critical essays you responded to in Unit I, discusses its relationship to other published research and usually disagrees with other published research in some way. (The critical essays you have been provided have, in fact, been selected because they disagree with each other.) If you want one of your sources in Unit II to be the same as the critical essay you used for Essay I, then that critical essay can be your source for one of the positions you describe above. The issue would be the thing that it disagrees with another source about.

How do you find sources with opposed positions on the same issue? The easiest way would be to use other critical essays about the same literary work:

- the critical essays provided on Canvas
- sources cited in those critical essays (find these through the library)
- sources which cite these sources (using Google Scholar)
- other sources through the Baylor library

You need at least one source for each position (either critical essays from Canvas or appropriate sources from outside it). You do not need sources that endorse each position (although that may be helpful), but the different positions must at least be described in your sources.