

Essay 4 Assignment

Essay 4: Problem-Solving

Task

Essay 4 is a "problem and solution" essay that will be written in three parts: an **introduction** that presents an overview of the problem, a **middle section consisting of summaries of and responses to your two sources**, and a **conclusion**. The sources that you summarize and respond to will discuss the problem (and perhaps offer solutions), and your conclusion will explain your thoughts on the best course of action for addressing the problem. Consider this essay a “bridge” essay in that it will begin to prepare you for the type of research writing you will take on in English 102.

The topic of your essay is up to you, but you will want to choose a contemporary problem to discuss that is **narrow enough in scope** so that you can address it in an engaging, interesting, and in-depth way in an essay of at least 4 pages. Thoroughly reviewing the page called **How to Choose a Focused Topic for Essay 4** on Canvas will help you to choose an appropriately narrowed-down topic.

Audience: You are writing for your peers—intelligent and curious college students who are unfamiliar with the readings and topics discussed in this class.

Structure

Introduction (1-2 paragraphs):

Get our attention with a clear and captivating **hook**.

Then, in the **background information** section, you should then **introduce the problem**. Why is it a problem? How did it become a problem? You will likely want to use information from one or both of your two sources here, making sure to appropriately introduce and cite any sources you use.

Also in the background information section, you may want to discuss: What do you know about this problem already, perhaps from your own experience (or the experience of people you know)? How did you get interested in it? You can also discuss why this problem is important to you, and why it should be important to the reader.

Your **thesis**, which can be one or two sentences, should state the problem, refer to the authors of the two sources you will summarize and respond to in the body, and your solution.

Body Paragraphs (3-4 paragraphs): Summary and response to your two sources

Be sure to use the materials provided in the Week 11 module to help you select your sources.

You can organize this section one of two ways:

- Summary of source 1
- Response to source 1
- Summary of source 2
- Response to source 2

Or, if it makes more sense to you, you can do this:

- Summary of source 1
- Summary of source 2
- Response to the two sources together
 - Note that your response paragraph would need to be especially well-developed if you choose the three paragraph approach for your body paragraphs

Remember that a summary focuses primarily on main or key points and is always shorter than the original source. If one or both of your sources are long, you will have to work to focus on the overall main ideas in order to fit your summary into one paragraph per source. Since you are spending a full paragraph on each source, though, and since your readers definitely won’t have read your sources, you’ll want to develop a summary of at least ½ to ⅔ of a page double-spaced for each source.

After each summary, then respond to the source: what did you think of it? Does it convincingly present the problem? Does it convincingly convey a solution? You do not have to use the rhetorical analysis terms of emotion, logic, and credibility, though you are welcome to.

Sandwich quotations from your sources within your summary and response paragraphs as needed to support your points.

Conclusion (1-2 paragraphs): Your Solution

Now that you have articulated the problem in your introduction and summarized and responded to two articles, how would you propose addressing or “solving” this problem? Of course, addressing the problem isn’t always about “solving” it in a simple/straightforward way, and it’s okay, even important, to acknowledge that.

You don't have to use outside sources for this section, but if you would like to, you may consider citing more qualitative and/or informal evidence here: Do you know someone with a stake in this issue? Could you interview them?

Alternatively or additionally, you could call upon the sources you used previously in your essay to bring their perspectives together as you discuss possible solutions. You could use or modify this template: “X believes that _____ would solve this because _____ and Y believes that _____ would be better because _____. However, I suggest that we _____.”

A few additional guidelines

- Please limit yourself to using no more than 3 sources for this essay. Using more than 3 sources would take you off track from the purpose of this assignment, and you will have lots of opportunity to work with more sources in English 102 and future courses. **I will penalize your grade if you use more than 3 sources.**
- Remember to write transitions between each section (for example, "Now that the problem has been introduced, the first source that presents a possible solution is _____").
- Don't forget your Works Cited page!
- This may sound like a lot, but don't worry. We will do this in a few separate stages through Canvas assignments leading up to the peer review draft deadline.

Due Dates

Draft due: Wednesday, December 2

Peer review due: Sunday, December 6

Final, revised version due: Wednesday, December 9

Criteria for Success

- An introduction with a carefully chosen and interesting hook as well as any necessary background information.
- A one to two sentence thesis statement that answers the prompt, makes a specific claim, and is correctly positioned in the final sentence(s) of the introduction.
- Body paragraphs with clear topic sentences and thoughtfully developed supporting evidence/examples from the source. At least one body paragraph should summarize your first source, at least one body paragraph summarize your second source, and one to two body paragraphs should respond to their arguments.
- A conclusion that discusses a solution to the problem and makes the stakes of the problem clear.
- A well-organized and well-developed essay displaying the student’s critical thinking about the topic and thesis; the essay meets the assignment guidelines.
- Appropriate in-text citations, Works Cited list, and ethical use of summary, paraphrase, and quotation (avoids plagiarism).
- Correct punctuation and no pattern of grammar errors; the essay has been carefully proofread and uses MLA formatting. The essay has an original title.
- Sentences that convey a clear message and meaning.

How to Find Sources for Essay 4

Once you have chosen a focused topic for Essay 4, you will begin searching for the two sources you will be using in your essay. (Since this essay does require you to do some research, you can consider it a “bridge” essay because it will begin to prepare you for the type of research writing you will take on in English 102.)

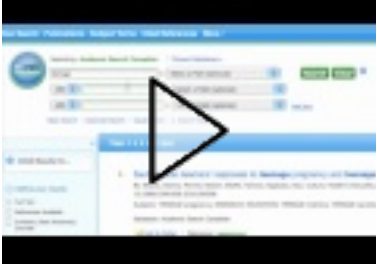
You only need to find 2 sources for your essay. If you like, you may have up to one additional source for a total of no more than 3 sources. (Reminder from the Essay 4 assignment: I will penalize your grade if you use more than 3 sources.)

Here are some steps to follow and some resources that will help you find your 2-3 sources for the essay.

Step 1: Generate effective search terms to help you find relevant sources.

- This video, from the University of Houston Libraries, will help you develop the right keywords/search terms for your topic. Note that this resource uses the EBSCOhost library database to demonstrate a keyword search, but its wisdom can be applied to a keyword search in any database or browser.

Search Using Keywords 



- If you are struggling to find sources using your search terms, this document titled **Generating Keywords for Successful Searching**  can also help you develop the right keywords/search terms for your topic.

Step 2: Learn about responsible research practices & begin searching for sources.

For this essay, you are encouraged to use recent (published in the last 5 years), widely-trusted, popular sources, and you are welcome to use Google search to get started. If you hit a paywall with an article you’d like to use, you will then want to use the library databases to bypass the paywall and access the full article.

- This video explains the difference between popular, scholarly, and trade sources. You can use any of these types of sources for Essay 4, but most people will probably use popular sources for Essay 4, such as newspaper and magazine articles.

Scholarly Trade & Popular Articles Tutorial - Santiago Canyon College 



- Here are some news sites, newspapers, and magazines that are generally considered reliable. You might want to begin your search for articles at one or more of these sites. Remember, if you hit a paywall, you should be able to access the article through the CCP library for free.
 - Trusted local news sources such as The Philadelphia Inquirer and WHYY
 - The Atlantic
 - British Broadcasting Channel (BBC)
 - Cable News Network (CNN)
 - National Public Radio (NPR)
 - New York Times
 - The New Yorker
 - Time Magazine
 - The Wall Street Journal
 - Washington Post
- Check out this video and website **Evaluating Sources for Credibility**  from Flinders University to learn how to find reliable sources.
 - Even though it is ok to use a Google search to begin looking for sources, you want to avoid using the following websites as sources: Wikipedia, websites or blogs where you can’t determine the reliability or angle/purpose of the sources from the About page (often called About Us). If you’d like to learn more about how to evaluate websites, check out **The CRAP Test for Evaluating Websites**  created for CCCOnline by Stefanie Stephens.
- At any point in your research process, you are encouraged to **chat online with a CCP librarian** , and/or to **set up a Zoom session with a librarian**  for help narrowing down and finding the best sources for your essay. This will save you time and frustration because librarians are experts in narrowing topics and finding appropriate sources.

- When choosing your two sources, you want them to be distinct from each other. In other words, your second source should provide another perspective on your subject than the first one does. This could mean proposing a different solution, offering additional or different information, or just having a slightly different focus. It does not have to be an "opposing" perspective, but it should offer a different "viewpoint" in some respect. As part of your response to your second source, mention why you chose it to compare/contrast with the first source you use.

In English 102, you will gain a lot of experience using CCP library databases, and I welcome you to start working with the research resources available to you through the college now if you’d like to do so. If you do use the CCP library databases, watch the following videos to learn more:

how to log in to the library 



how to search through Summon 



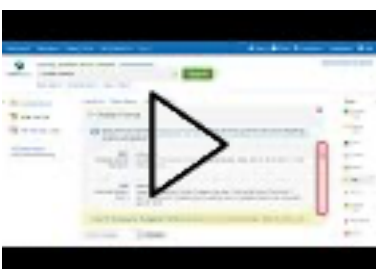
- Summon searches through all of the library databases, and sometimes the results can be a bit overwhelming or hard to sift through. Sometimes it works better to instead search through a particular database.

Two databases that I recommend you check out are:

- EBSCOhost:** The screenshots on this document demonstrate how to access EBSCOhost: **How to Access Library Resources from Off Campus-EBSCOHost.pdf** 
- ProQuest:** ProQuest will allow you to access articles from the *New York Times*. To access ProQuest, you would follow the same steps shown in the document above, except you would select ProQuest from the A-Z list of databases on the library website.

- If you do use one of the library databases, one of the perks of this is that the database will automatically generate the citation you need for your Works Cited list: Watch this video for more info:

How to Cite Articles You Get from EBSCOhost 



(Note that other databases in addition EBSCOhost have similar citation tools.)