A spiral-bound notebook with a light brown, textured cover. The spiral binding is on the left side. The text is centered on the cover.

A Guide to Problem and Solution Essays

How to Argue Your Solution

What's a problem and solution essay anyway?

- ☞ If there's a problem, there usually is a solution and even when there's not a definite solution, there are people arguing over which solution is best
- ☞ Problem/solution assignments don't have to be essays, they could be a geometric proof, a lab experiment or political science question in social science

How do I organize this thing?

- Before you get started on the essay, you need to organize your ideas in some sort of pre-write
- There are prewriting ideas in the pre-writing section of this website or you can use the following graph as guideline
- Note that you do not have to organize your paper like this particular model- there are many choices in developing your organization

Problem	Put the problem you'll be analyzing here
Solution	Put your thesis (main solution) here
	Bullet your points that support your solution here (these will become your supporting paragraphs)
Refutation and or conclusion paragraph	Address arguments that oppose your solution as well as other solutions. Be sure to explain the importance of the information

Problem/Solution Pre-write

Example

Problem	Cigarette Smoking
Solution	<p>Offer help to those who are addicted and create programs to prevent new addicts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Educate youths at an earlier age•Make patches, gum and other nicotine programs more affordable•Charge more for cigarettes•Educate families through the media, news and medical services
Refutation/ Conclusion	<p>Some will argue it's against their freedoms to phase this habit out but second smoke takes the rights and lives away from others</p> <p>Some will argue it's too late to help those who are addicted but with the right support and accessibility for help they can quit</p>

So what's my thesis?

☞ Your thesis may vary depending on what your topic is, who your audience is and how much information you have

☞ **Your thesis could argue for one main solution**

“Although many disagree, spanking is still a useful tool to use for discipline problems as long as it’s used constructively.”


When using this format, your body paragraphs will all tie into and support your solution

☞ **Your thesis could argue for the urgent need to solve the problem**

“Even though several attempts have been made to eradicate drunk driving, people still ignore or deny the reality of drunk driving consequences.”

When using this type of thesis, your body paragraphs will support and tie into the importance of the problem.

What will a problem/solution essay look like?

 Here is a sample essay from a student in an English class.

Hot Tips

- ☞ Make sure you do not act like a politician... meaning don't complain about a problem during your entire essay without creating a solution
- ☞ If you do argue for a solution, be sure that you explain the solution thoroughly and realistically so the reader will be convinced

Any other problems?

- 📄 If you want to know more about how essays are generally graded, look at the “How to do the basics” or the “Rubrics” sections of this website
- 📄 Also, writing tips are available in the “How to do the basics” section