

A TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

A Focused, Well-Presented Issue

My readers don't get the point.

- Quote experts or add information—statistics, examples, anecdotes, and so on—to help readers understand what's at stake.
- Consider adding visuals, such as photos, graphs, tables, or charts to present the issue more clearly.

My readers have a different perspective on the issue than I do.

- Show the limitations of how the issue has traditionally been understood.
- Reframe the issue by showing how it relates to values, concerns, needs, and priorities you share with readers.
- Give concrete examples or anecdotes, facts, and details that could help readers see the issue as you see it.

A Well-Supported Position

My readers do not find my argument clear and/or persuasive.

- Revisit your thesis statement to make sure your position is stated clearly and directly.
- Reconsider your reasons, or explain how they support your position.
- Add supporting evidence—statistics, examples, authorities, and so on.
- Consider adding visuals, graphs, tables, or charts to support your argument.
- Strengthen the logical, ethical, and/or emotional appeals of your argument.
- Try outlining your argument; if your organization is weak or illogical, or if your transitional strategies are not working, try reorganizing the material, adding transitional words and phrases, or repeating key words strategically.

An Effective Response to Opposing Views

My readers question my response to opposing arguments or objections to my argument.

- If your refutation is weak, strengthen it with additional or more compelling reasons and evidence.
- If your concession weakens your argument, qualify your position with words like *sometimes* or *often*.
- Consider adding a refutation to your concession.

A Clear, Logical Organization

My readers are confused by my essay or find it difficult to follow.

- Outline your essay. If necessary, move, add, or delete sections to strengthen coherence.
- Consider adding a forecasting statement with key terms that are repeated in topic sentences throughout the essay.
- Check for appropriate transitions between sentences, paragraphs, and major sections of your essay.
- Review your opening and closing paragraphs. Be sure that your thesis is clearly expressed and that you reaffirm your position in your closing.