

A TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

A Focused, Well-Defined Problem

My readers aren't convinced that my problem is serious or even exists.

- Change the way you present the problem to address readers' concerns more directly.
- Add information—statistics, examples, description, and so on—that members of your audience are likely to find persuasive or that they can relate to.
- Consider adding visuals, such as graphs, tables, or charts, if these would help clarify the problem for your audience.

A Well-Argued Solution

My readers aren't convinced that my solution is a good one.

- Try to make your solution more convincing by discussing similar solutions used successfully elsewhere or by demonstrating more clearly how it will solve the problem.
- Add evidence (such as facts, statistics, and examples) to support your reasons.
- Review the steps needed to enact your solution; if necessary, lay them out more clearly.

An Effective Response to Objections and Alternative Solutions

My readers have raised objections to my solution.

- Cite research studies, statistics, or examples to refute readers' objections.
- Concede valid points or modify your solution to accommodate the criticism.
- If you can neither refute nor accommodate objections, rethink your solution.

My readers have proposed alternative solutions that I don't discuss.

- If possible, establish shared values with those who propose alternative solutions, but show why their solutions will not work as well as yours.
- If you cannot demonstrate that your solution is preferable, consider arguing that both solutions deserve serious consideration.

A Clear, Logical Organization

My readers are confused by my proposal or find it hard to follow.

- Try outlining your proposal to be sure that the overall organization is strong; if it is not, try moving, adding, or deleting sections to strengthen coherence.
- Consider adding a forecasting statement and using key terms in your thesis and repeating them when you discuss your main points.
- Check to see that you use topic sentences to introduce your main points and that you provide appropriate transitions.