

# **Problem-Solution Essay**

## *Honors English 10*

**{SOL Focus: 10.6A-I,K,M}**

Problem-solution essays consider the problems of a particular situation and give solutions to those problems. They are in some ways similar to cause and effect essays, especially in terms of structure. Problem-solution essays are actually a sub-type of another type of essay, which has the following four components:

- Situation
- Problem
- Solution
- Evaluation

The 'situation' may be included in the essay prompt, in which case it will not be needed in the main body. If it is needed, it can often be included in the introduction. The "problem" and "solution" are located within the body paragraphs; this is where the heart of the essay will lie. The 'evaluation' may be included as part of the conclusion or omitted altogether, especially for short essays.

### **Structure**

There are two main ways to structure a problem-solution essay. These are similar to the ways to structure cause and effect essays, namely using a *block* or a *chain* structure.

\*\*For the *block structure*, all of the problems are listed first, and all of the solutions are listed afterwards.

\*\*For the *chain structure*, each problem is followed immediately by the solution to that problem.

**NOTE:** Both types of structure have their merits. The former is generally clearer, especially for shorter essays, while the latter ensures that any solutions you present relate directly to the problems you have given. **BOTH TYPES SHOULD BE APPROACHED WITH AN ANALYTICAL TONE.** You are analyzing the problem and coming up with possible solutions that can be supported both factually and logically.

### **Block**

Introduction  
(including 'situation')

Problem 1  
Problem 2

Transition sentence/paragraph

Solution 1  
Solution 2

Conclusion  
(including 'evaluation')

### **Chain**

Introduction  
(including 'situation')

Problem 1  
&  
Solution to Problem 1

Problem 2  
&  
Solution to Problem 2

Problem 3  
&  
Solution to Problem 3

Conclusion  
(including 'evaluation')

### **Assignment: The Best Solution**

*Do you agree that Barton has no choice but to let Marilyn die? Consider the problem presented in the story and write a problem-solution essay in which you develop and support your ideas about what could have been done differently (if at all) in "The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin.*



**Prewriting:** Using the Outline model, list specific reasons (evidence) to support your idea(s) about what could have been done differently with regard to Marilyn. Be sure to consider the time period, setting, and populace at large as you develop your reasons; following this, organize the details into a sequence. **Your prewriting is due on February 8, 2021 and is worth 30 points.**



**Drafting:** Use your Outline as the basis for drafting your essay. Your essay needs to be a minimum of five paragraphs; this is approximately 500-750 words with the count being about 100-150 words per paragraph; DO NOT GO OVER THIS NUMBER; YOU CAN SAY PLENTY AND STILL BE CONCISE. Add supporting details that will support how and why you believe this change could have benefitted Marilyn; you also need to consider the well-being of the populace at large. **Your rough draft is due on February 12, 2021 and is worth 50 points.**

**Revising:** As we will be using Google Docs (Google Classroom), once your essay has been reviewed, you may begin revisions on it. **Your final copy is due on February 17, 2021 and is worth 100 points.**

### Essay Requirements/Mechanics:

1. You **may use “I”** in your essay, as this is an essay about your opinion regarding the problem & a possible solution.
2. Avoid the use of contractions (“didn’t” for “did not”) UNLESS part of a direct quotation.
3. Watch your subject-verb agreement; this must agree in number (singular subjects need singular verbs; plural subjects need plural verbs).
4. Watch your pronoun-antecedent (noun being referred to) agreement; this must agree in gender and number (**Example: Annie’s book = her book** {singular & feminine})
5. Be sure to provide a **creative title** for your essay.
6. **Each paragraph needs to have a minimum of four-five sentences, complete with proper capitalization and punctuation.** If you can, try for a total of six to seven sentences per paragraph.

Below is a checklist for the main body of an essay. Use it to check your own writing or get a peer (another student) to help you.

 <b><u>Checklist</u></b> 
The essay is a problem-solution essay.
An appropriate structure is used: block or chain
The essay has a clear thesis statement & overview of the ‘situation’.
Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence.
The essay has strong support (facts, reasons, examples).
The conclusion includes a summary (‘evaluation’) of the main point(s) and a call to action.