

structuring project 1 | assignment 5

When you propose a fresh metaphor to replace the militaristic metaphor, you are in effect positing a solution to a problem. The problem-solution structure is used in academic writing not only when a practical problem presents itself (global warming, a rise in teenage pregnancies, low voter turnout) and a policy-oriented solution is proposed, but also when a conceptual problem has been identified, and you offer an idea or set of ideas to address it. For instance, in a Philosophy class, the problem might be: “Humans make many irrational decisions, yet we know that humans are, by nature, rational creatures. How can we account for this discrepancy?” You might then turn to previous explanations of madness, or gaps in logical thinking, or theories of irrationality based in cognition studies to respond to the puzzlement and thereby “solve” the problem.

introduction (1 – 2 ¶)

prelude	A catchy and salient statistic, a pithy quotation, or terse but provocative remark placed at the start of your introductory section as a first sentence (or set of sentences), and/or as an epigraph.
shared context	A set of statements that describe a scenario, situation, or way of thinking that readers will recognize as existing in the world. This may be a common scenario, interpretation, or analysis of a phenomenon related to the subject or focus of the paper.
problem (and cost)	A statement or set of statements that describe the insufficiency, wrong-headedness, inaccuracy, or problem with the common way of thinking described in the shared context.
solution / central claim	The argument’s central claim (thesis) that solves, ameliorates, or positively affects the problem that’s been identified.

Consult the “Guidelines for Introductions” document on Moodle for a fuller description of these parts. In our small groups, we will create sample texts for each of these elements. Shared context, problem, and solution are interlocking pieces. You can’t invent a solution until you have the problem defined, and you can’t determine exactly what aspects of our common experience to call attention to without knowing the nature and scope of the problem you’ve identified.

body: problem (2 – 3 ¶)

Here, you’ll describe the problems associated with use of war metaphors both generally, and specifically in relation to Covid-19. You can turn to what you find to be the important problems that scholars identify (as they consider war metaphors used in relation to social problems generally, and consider the liabilities of war metaphors

related to medical and epidemiological phenomena). Here, you will decide what parts of scholars' analyses seem most applicable to your project. Try not to simply "report" on everything they have said; instead, select those findings that speak to the problem as you define it in your essay. Here, you will be making use of scholars' terms, phrases, and passages to illustrate their points.

body: solution (2 – 3 ¶)

In this assignment, this is the most important part of your paper because it showcases your creative thinking. You can think of this as a hypothetical exercise in new thinking. That is, here you are proposing an alternative rather than coming up with a full-blown plan for its execution. Nonetheless, you want to describe its workings: How will the metaphor reconfigure the social actors that you worried about in your problem section—politicians, healthcare workers, citizens? What troublesome aspects of the problem (as you earlier described it) will the fresh metaphor reconfigure or improve? What is the likelihood that the fresh metaphor will be embraced? Is the metaphor used elsewhere in society (as analogy to something other than an epidemic), and will that other use seem familiar to citizens so that they embrace the fresh metaphor more easily? Generally, does the fresh metaphor suggest positive ethical behaviors (e.g., a renewed sense of solidarity among citizens, perhaps an enhanced sense of our vulnerability, a less combative approach to illness, etc.)

conclusion (1 ¶)

The "Guidelines for Conclusions" document on Moodle provides greater detail regarding the typical structure of a conclusion used in academic writing, but essentially the conclusion looks forward to new questions, newly-emergent issues, or further research that lie on the horizon. What additional questions would need to be addressed if your fresh metaphor has a chance of becoming viable? What obstacles lie ahead? What can be done to help the change come about? Even if the practicality of the fresh metaphor isn't clear, what is the value of proposing alternative? What's the value of hypothetical thinking like your own?