Essay 2: Additional tips

Particular issues for each option:

Basic option
- Keeping it interesting and lively (i.e., so it doesn't sound like "an assignment")
- Articulating your own idea clearly and effectively
- Integrating ideas from readings smoothly

Letter option
- Sounding natural, conversational
- Avoiding sounding preachy
- Integrating ideas from readings smoothly

For both options
- Using ideas from our readings & film in a meaningful way—i.e., not just dropping them into your text like sprinkles on top of an ice cream cone. The readings should be integral to your discussion; readers should see you reflecting on other writers' ideas.
- Representing ideas from our readings and film accurately
- Include counterargument—that is, anticipate readers' objections to the argument you're building

Shaping your essay
- Consider opening your essay with a question rather than a thesis statement and then unfolding the answer
  - The answer may be straightforward
  - More likely it will have some qualifications or modifications
  - Alternatively, it may re-frame the question rather than answer it— e.g., "What we *really* should be asking is…"
- Do you want to preview your main points in your introduction, or let them unfold organically?
- Do you want to start with your biggest point, followed by counterarguments, qualifications, additional points?
- Or, might it be more effective to open with counterarguments ("Many people believe…"; "We act as if we believe …) to create motivation for the discussion and work up to your biggest point?

Some devices that can help bring your argument into sharper relief:
- Analogies (simple and/or extended), metaphors and images
- Contrasts (from history, other cultures, science vs. culture, your childhood vs. now, one writer vs. another …)
- Stories and/or scenes
- "Characters"

21W.015 Writing and Rhetoric: Writing about Sports
Fall 2013