



Research Paper: Arguing the Issues in *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*

ENGL 1301

Directions: Choose **ONE** of the topics below (and option if available) to investigate through research:

Topic #1: You are a staff writer for a local consumer group called *San Antonio 2030*, which advocates for a better future for San Antonio and its citizens. You have been charged with writing an article in *SA2030* magazine to help local consumers make a decision about an important offering from City Public Service Energy (CPS Energy). Choose one of the options below to focus your topic:

Option #A: The Home Manager System

In chapter 12, Friedman describes a futuristic picture of what he calls a “smart grid” and how it would work. That future may, in part, already be here in San Antonio with CPS Energy’s Home Manager System. Research the current progress on the smart grid and the “smart black boxes” that Friedman describes. Also research the Home Manager System. Then write an article in which you advocate for whether San Antonio citizens should or should not get this Home Manager System installed. You need to argue the specifics related to the CPS Energy Home Manager system as well as bring in larger arguments that make this smart grid choice a good one or bad one within a hot, flat, and crowded world as you bring in information from Friedman’s book.

Option #B: Windtricity

Windtricity is a wind-generated electricity program offered to CPS Energy customers that allows them to purchase renewable energy for their homes or businesses. Windtricity customers agree to pay a little extra on their bills, which goes toward offsetting the higher cost of procuring wind-generated electricity. Research the Windtricity program and the current benefits and drawbacks of wind power. Then write an article for *SA2030* in which you advocate for San Antonio citizens to join the Windtricity program or not. In your argument supporting the position you advocate for, you will bring in information to support your argument from this research and from Friedman’s book.

Option #C: CPS Energy and Renewable Energy

Your editor gives you a special assignment to write an open letter to the CPS Energy Board of Trustees’ plan for adding renewable energy into its total energy mix. In this letter, to be published in *SA2030* magazine as a featured piece, argue whether CPS Energy should *accelerate*, *decelerate*, or *keep the same* plans for adding renewable energy into its energy generation mix. You need to research CPS Energy’s renewable energy plans and current arguments for or against renewable power. In addition, you should bring in information from Friedman’s book. (Note: In this paper, you don’t have to argue for or against any particular renewable power source, such as nuclear or solar. You are just trying to convince the Board to increase or not the amount of renewable energy they will target in the future.) You are encouraged to specify a target amount that CPS must reach and why (i.e. 20% by 2020 or 80% by 2025).



Topic #2: In chapter 13, Friedman argues that we need a consistent “price signal” for carbon energy. In particular he discusses the need for a “carbon tax.” You are a member of Tax Hawks America, a non-partisan policy institute focused on tax policies in America. Your job is to write an advocacy essay directed toward your Congressional representatives on whether they should support or oppose a carbon tax. You will need to research who your Congressional representatives are, the pros and cons of a carbon tax and build your case out of information in Friedman’s book as well as from your research.

Topic #3: San Antonio College has many student organizations, but currently there is no organization focusing on issues related to climate change and what Friedman calls the “Climate-Energy Era.” For this topic, you are to write an advocacy piece arguing for or against the formation of this club on our campus. Choose one for the options below to focus your topic:

Option A: You are a staff writer for the campus newspaper *The Ranger*, and you are writing a feature article in which you argue why a Code Green Club should be formed and why SAC students should join. Research whether similar clubs or action groups have been created on American college campuses and build your case for this new club out of information from research and from Friedman’s book.

Option B: Write a letter directed to Mr. Richard Farias, the director of the college’s Office of Student Life, that argues why a Code Green Club should be formed. Research whether similar clubs or action groups have been created on American college campuses and build your case for this new club out of information from research and from Friedman’s book.

Topic #4: You are a research intern working for Thomas L. Friedman as he prepares for his third edition of *Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—And How it Can Renew America* (version 3.0). Friedman, of course, wants to include up to date information in his book. For this topic, you will research current information on one trend or problem he discusses in the book (energy supply and demand, petrodictatorships, climate change, energy poverty and biodiversity loss). This information should be from information *no older than eighteen months ago* and preferably from the last six months.

Write an essay for Friedman in which you argue whether this trend still exists and whether it is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. In other words, argue whether this trend still is problematic or not and build your case out of information from research and from Friedman’s book.

Topic # 5: Prepare a topic for an issue raised in Friedman’s book that you would like to research. You will either defend or challenge the topic through research and information from Friedman’s book. Your topic must be approved by your professor before you can begin your research.

1. Compose an essay of at least 1,000 words.
2. Your purpose is to persuade your audience.
3. Provide supporting evidence in the form of direct quotes, paraphrases or summaries from at least **FIVE** sources, either traditional (printed) or online (at least 1 background source and 1 journal source). Friedman’s book will be your sixth source.
4. All borrowed information must be cited and listed according to MLA documentation style. Even though your chosen topic may be a magazine article or letter, it will contain the same principles of essay writing we have been learning up to this point— **appropriate essay title, engaging start, clear thesis, effective topic sentences, clear conclusion**. However, you are welcome to use headings for sections of your content as well as appropriate graphics to enliven your communication.

