**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”