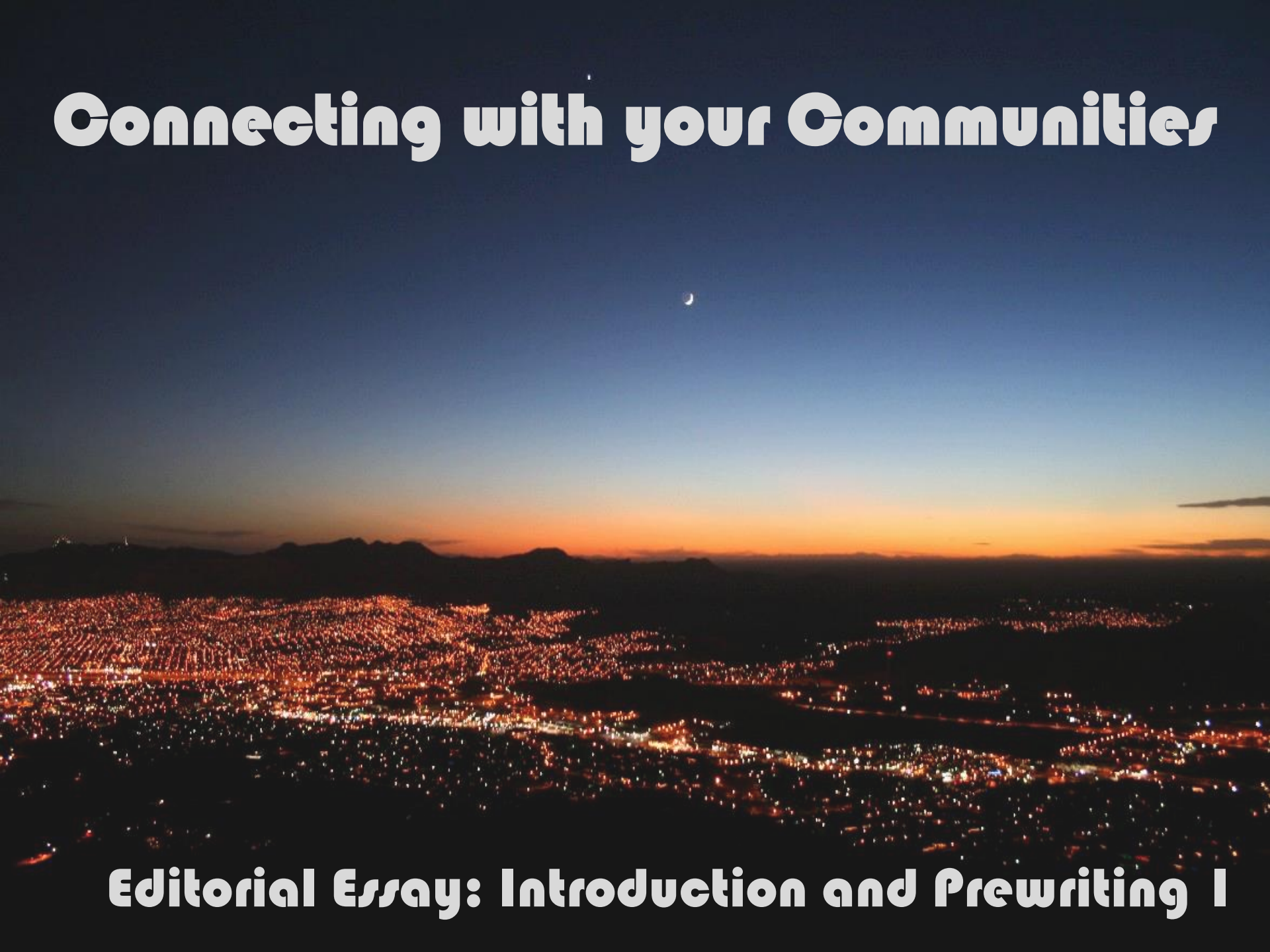


# **Connecting with your Communities**



**Editorial Essay: Introduction and Prewriting I**

# What is Community?

Definition of COMMUNITY from *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*

1: a unified body of individuals:

a : state, commonwealth

b : the people with common interests living in a particular area

c : an interacting population of various kinds of individuals

d : a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together

e : a group linked by a common policy

f : a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests

g : a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society



# The Communities We Live in

We all live in various communities at the same time:

- Family
- EPCC
- Our city or town
- Religious Communities
- Groups or Organizations
- Work/Professional



# Our Goals

For this essay you will do a number of things:

- Identify an issue in one of the communities you are a member of and write an editorial essay about that issue.
  - That can be something that needs to be changed, something that works well and people should know more about, or someone who contributes to the community and should be recognized.



# Our Goals

- Identify a relevant publication (audience) for the community where you can submit a letter to the editor.
  - This can be a newspaper, a website that takes commentary, a newsletter or bulletin.



# Our Goals

- Investigate to find information you need to make your case.
  - This is not a formal research paper, but you will include information you've found. It might come from internet or library research, an interview, or experience and observation.
  - While you can use your experience and observation, you do need to include some other information as well.



# Our Goals

- Write an editorial essay explaining your point of view, and if applicable to your topic, suggesting a method of action. If applicable, you also need to address opposing views.





# Finding a Topic

As you think on what you'll write about, begin by looking around the communities you are a member of and think about whether any of these questions spark an idea:

- Is there anything happening in that community that is good and more people should know about?
- Is there anything in the community that could benefit from change?
- Is there anything in the community that is not dealt with and that should be taken care of?
- Is there anyone or any group that should be praised for contributing to the community?



# Finding a Topic

Remember:

Your topic must be relevant to you. That is, it must be something that affects you directly.

For example, if you choose to write about the death penalty, then you must know someone who was subject to it, or who was a victim of someone subjected to it. (Please don't write about the death penalty.)



# Identifying Communities

To begin you must first identify the communities you are a member of. So, these are some of my communities:

- El Paso Community College
- Chaparral, NM
- Teachers

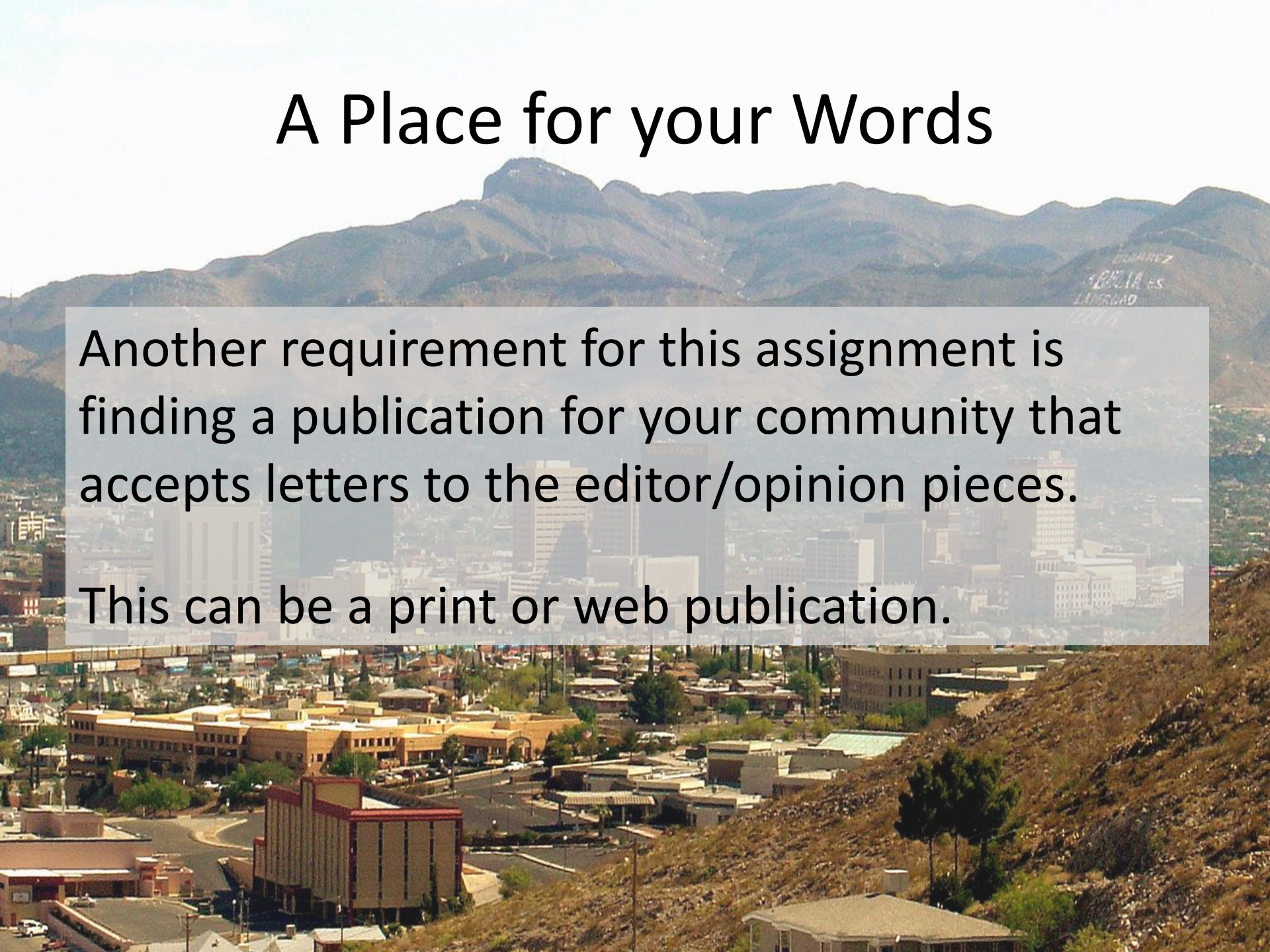
Making a list of these gives me the opportunity to come up with a wide variety of topics.



# A Place for your Words

Another requirement for this assignment is finding a publication for your community that accepts letters to the editor/opinion pieces.

This can be a print or web publication.





# For Example

Once I have a list, I can look to see if there are any relevant publications that I might be able to write to.

- El Paso Community College

- *The Tejano Tribune*
- *The El Paso Times*

- Chaparral, NM

- No newspaper, but covered by *Las Cruces Sun News*, and some by *El Paso Times*

- Teachers

- *Community College Times* (A publication by the American Association of Community Colleges—I had to do an internet search to find the national association for community colleges.)
- *NCTE Inbox* (the newsletter for the National Council of Teachers of English)



# Issues to Write About

The next step is to decide what issues each community might offer to write about.





# Issues to Write About

- El Paso Community College
  - The state of classrooms
  - Price of books
  - Class size—most national organizations recommend no more than 20 students in composition classes.
- Chaparral, NM
  - People not taking care of their dogs
  - Need for a newspaper or newsletter
- Teachers
  - Class size
  - Need for the state to look at what helps students, and not just what gets them in and out of classes.



# Purpose Requires Knowledge

In order to clearly explain your ideas, you may have to find out some facts and statistics. Begin by asking yourself these questions:

- What information do you need to find out and explain?
  - Do you need facts or statistics?
  - Do you need to interview\* someone? Who? Why is that person a credible source?
- What narrative or experience can you share?

Any claim you make must be backed up by support through research, interview, or experience.

\*Remember to take due dates and timelines for this assignment into consideration.



# Purpose Requires Knowledge

- El Paso Community College
    - Class size—most national organizations recommend no more than 20 students in composition classes.
      - Who recommends this? (1)
      - What are their recommendations? (1)
      - Why is it beneficial and necessary to good learning? (1 and 2)
  - Chaparral, NM
    - People not taking care of their dogs
      - County ordinances and laws about dogs. (1)
      - Problems caused by stray dogs (1 and 2)
  - Teachers
    - Need for the state to look at what helps students, and not just what gets them in and out of classes. (1 and 2)
1. Online research and talking to the librarian.  
2. Experience and observation



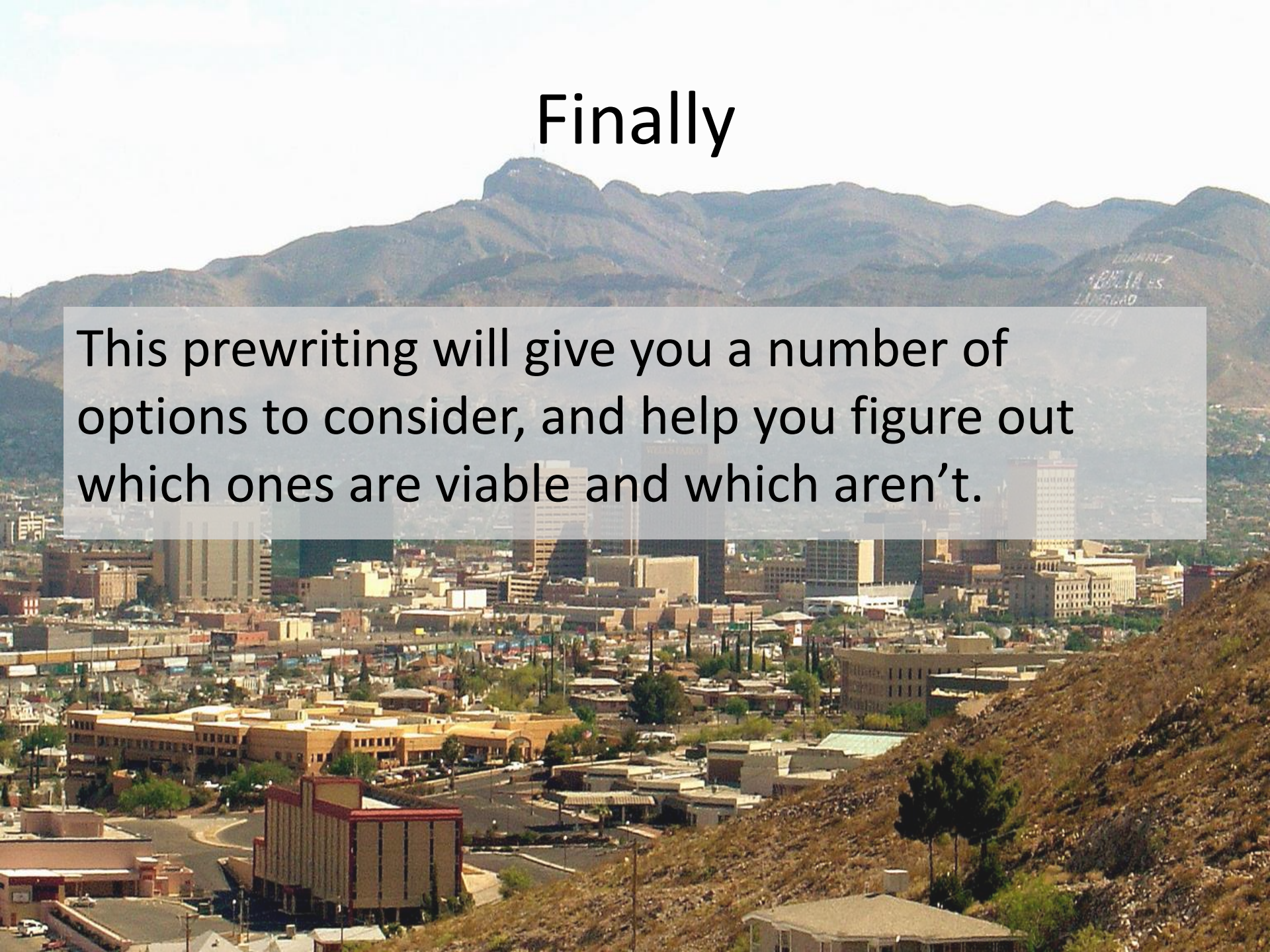
# Purpose Requires Knowledge

Notice how I began narrowing down my topics as I worked on the last part? This will help you see where your real interest lies, and which ones you have the most ideas for.



# Finally

This prewriting will give you a number of options to consider, and help you figure out which ones are viable and which aren't.





# Sample Prewriting

- El Paso Community College (*The Tejano Tribune, The El Paso Times*)
  - Class size—most national organizations recommend no more than 20 students in composition classes.
    - Who recommends this? (1)
    - What are their recommendations? (1)
    - Why is it beneficial and necessary to good learning? (1 and 2)
- Chaparral, NM (*Las Cruces Sun News, El Paso Times*)
  - People not taking care of their dogs
    - County ordinances and laws about dogs. (1)
    - Problems caused by stray dogs (1 and 2)
- Teachers (*Community College Times, NCTE Inbox*)
  - Need for the state to look at what helps students, and not just what gets them in and out of classes. (1 and 2)

1. Online research and talking to the librarian.
2. Experience and observation

Note: This is only one way to do this. As long as you get the required info down, you're good to go.



# Prewriting 1

- Community: Make a list of communities you belong to. You should start your list with the city/community you live in and EPCC. Come up with at least 3 communities.
- Target publication: For each community, find a target publication. If it's a community issue, the most obvious target publication is the community newspaper.
- Issue: Make a list of topics you might write about for those communities. You should have issues for at least two communities.
- Research/Information: Make a list of things you need to know and where you can find them out (e.g.: internet, specific website, library, interview).



# Prewriting 1 Worksheet Online

English 1301: Essay 2, Prewriting 1

Name	
Community	Target Publication
Issue	
Things to find out (research)	
Issue	
Things to find out (research)	
Community	Target Publication
Issue	
Things to find out (research)	
Issue	
Things to find out (research)	
Community	Target Publication
Issue	
Things to find out (research)	
Issue	
Things to find out (research)	