21; "222
Argument: Use of the Conditional

In writing a position paper, you will often use logical reasoning as a means of persuading your reader. You may also use hypothetical examples. Both call for use of conditional constructions.

Logical reasoning:

If paid surrogacy <u>were</u> eliminated, those women who volunteered to be surrogates <u>would be doing so</u> for the right reasons.

Hypothetical example:

How long does anyone think the name "Washington Blackskins" <u>would last</u>? Or how about "the New York Jews"?

Be careful of grammatical errors:

If animal research was outlawed, progress in the control of human diseases would be dramatically slowed.

Life at MIT will be easier if undergraduates could take only three courses each semester.

Finish these sentences in a logical, grammatically correct way:

1) If the United States lifted the embargo on Cuba, _____

_____.

2) If all MIT freshmen were housed together in one dorm,_____

_____.

3) Air pollution could be dramatically reduced if_____

_____.

4) Imagine what would happen if paying taxes became voluntary:

_____

Note: real vs. unreal conditional

If the outcome/prediction/recommendation is likely, use the <u>real conditonal</u>:

If the United States lifts the embargo on Cuba, both nations will benefit. (It is likely that this will happen, given the political climate.)

<u>If unlikely, use the unreal conditional:</u>

If birth control devices were distributed in all public schools, teenage pregnancy would decline dramatically. (It is highly unlikely that this will happen.)

21G.222 Expository Writing for Bilingual Students
Fall 2002