Possible topics for the first essay
Just some ideas.

Chapter 1.
  Language evolved from more than just blended signs – a response to Hockett
  English should (or shouldn't) be the official Language of the US
  Dead grammar rules – glad to see them go
  Can a language really be revived from written descriptions?
  Languages die because parents don't want their children to speak them

Chapter 2.
  Why it doesn't (or does) matter that languages have different numbers of words
  There is a limit to how complicated can a language's morphology be
  Little languages have different morphology than big languages
  There is no “unit of meaning” in language

Chapter 3.
  Ejectives arise at higher elevations than other sounds (or not)
  No two /t/ sounds are ever the same – does it matter?
  The phonetic alphabet should be taught in high school (according to Anthony Burgess)
  Everyone under 25 has vocal fry – but only young women get knocked for it
  You can hear “the gay” because gay people talk funny

Chapter 4.
  Why Kenneth Pike's features lost out to Roman Jakobson's
  Phonological assimilation is going to ruin English
  How to make a language with only 13 phonemes
  Language is made up of 20 basic sound properties
  Misheard song lyrics follow phonological rules

Chapter 5.
  Recursion: what separates the apes from the humans
  Any word can be a verb in English, but (your favorite language here) verbs hard too
  Are common verbs more likely to be multivalent?
  “Mess up” is a verb – Discontinuous verbs I have known
  Unspoken words: a key to language structure