

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE BRIEFING BOOKS

What's the quality of the **Executive Summary**? Are all of the crucial bases covered for the Secretary's personal attention? If this is all he reads before testifying, will he be adequately positioned?

1. Is there a brief, clear **storyline** that outlines the big picture?
2. How effective is the **breakdown of sections**? Does it suggest the right logic and structure for the Secretary and her staff? Are issues framed from the perspective of potential actions by the Executive, the Congress, etc.
3. How focused are the **background descriptions**? Are problems well specified from the perspective of the likely reader(s)? Has raw data been carefully selected and adequately interpreted for the Secretary?
4. Is there a clear discussion of the **tradeoffs** involved?
5. Are all **problems matched with potential solutions** or guidelines for change?
6. Is a **framework for future work** by the Administration or the Congress provided? Is there a focus on decisions that need to be made?
7. Is the treatment of advantages and disadvantages (economically, politically) analytically sound and clearly explained?
8. If included, are existing and potential **laws and regulations** covered?
9. Are **recommendations and/or findings** feasible, clear, and logically prioritized?
10. Are the **graphics** of high quality, with captions summarizing the key points they make?
11. Is the **overall presentation and writing quality** up to professional standards? Does the book avoid excessive wordiness?