



GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFUL POLICY ANALYSES

- Start with an overview of recommendations, methodology, and a roadmap, **not** with background material
- Create chapter breakdowns according to findings and recommendations, **not** according to the steps in your research journey
- Specify your criteria and assumptions and justify them when necessary
- Cut out all material that isn't relevant to your major findings and recommendations
- Support all major assertions with evidence: quantitative data, quotations, examples, footnotes, etc.
- Briefly discuss alternatives, counterarguments, or tradeoffs whenever relevant
- Evaluate your options by balancing out their costs and benefits
- Always consider economic, administrative, technical, and/or political feasibility
- Anticipate your reader's probable questions, concerns, and objections, and address them directly
- Distill and group information into bullet points with appropriate headings
- Never use two words when one will do
- For easy skimming, use subheads and/or boldface to summarize key points
- Supplement text with creative graphs, tables or charts
- Consider closing with a discussion of "next steps"—short- and long-term implementation

Visit the KSG Communications Program web page at www.ksg.harvard.edu/comprg.



TIPS FOR WRITING CASE STUDIES

- Describe in advance the analytic framework you will apply to your case study (e.g. the main ideas or categories from class readings, the key variables under discussion, or the important questions being answered)
- Give some hint of the conclusions you will reach
- Use headings to indicate which idea, variable or question is being examined
- Consider summarizing in advance (e.g. with bullet points) the main findings at the start of each section of your case study
- When comparing two or more situations, use the same format for each description, highlighting the similarities or differences
- Try to include only those details that are relevant to your argument or analysis
- Emphasize places where the details of your case differ from or contradict the hypotheses generated by the analytic framework
- Suggest changes or additions to the framework where indicated by the case data
- Devise some thoughtful explanation for these differences
- Generate recommendations for change or improvement, ideally based on the framework



TIPS FOR WRITING ANALYTIC RESEARCH PAPERS

- Papers require **analysis**, not just **description**. When you describe an existing situation (e.g., a policy, organization, or problem), use that description for some analytic purpose: respond to it, evaluate it according to some specific criteria, examine it for cause-and-effect linkages, contrast it to what happened elsewhere, to what might have been, or to what we have today. Keep in mind that such background description is the necessary first step towards analysis and should comprise no more than 20% of your paper.
- Consider using one of the following common analytic designs to generate new ideas:
 - Question/Answer
 - Problem/Solution
 - Hypothesis/Proof
 - Comparison/Contrast
 - Cause/Effect
 - Change Over Time
- State your hypothesis or purpose up front, explain why it's important or interesting, and then give a roadmap to show how you'll make your case
- Choose interesting facts from the readings and form them into arguments for and against your hypothesis. Make sure your quotations are chosen for some analytic purpose, and don't be afraid to disagree with them.
- Break down big ideas into concrete, measurable parts and then focus on a small, manageable piece of the issue
- Take the risk of expressing opinions or disagreements, and then give reasons, evidence for your position
- When you ask big questions, give concrete indications of how you would begin to answer those questions: e.g. "*Does gender make a difference in philanthropic style?*" What concrete data would you measure or evaluate to answer that question?
- When you respond to a quotation, either positively or negatively, explain **why** and support your position with reasons, evidence. Use the quote to get you to some new place.
- Focus on problems, discrepancies, disagreements, tensions, or changes over time
- Examine counterarguments
- Support key assertions with evidence: concrete examples, sources of information, footnotes, etc.
- When making judgments or evaluations, mention your assumptions and criteria
- Consider using subheads to guide the reader
- Develop only one important idea per paragraph. Try to make the first sentence of each paragraph a summary statement. All other sentences in that paragraph should support, expand, or qualify that first statement.
- Avoid typos!

Uptia

Do Nothing	+	-	+	-	+/-
Tax Pesticides	-	+	+	+	+
Increase number of pesticides banned	+/-	-	-	+	-
Discourage pesticides by giving tax breaks to crops grown in ecologically appropriate areas.	-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-
Limit the amount of pesticides that can be applied to a particular crop.	-	+/-	-	+/-	+/-

Political Feasibility

Equity

Administrative Feasibility

Environmental Impact

Economic Impact

Criteria >

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