



## WORKSHEET: PLANNING AND OUTLINING YOUR POLICY MEMO

Answer the questions contained in this worksheet to kick-start the process of writing your policy memorandum. Once you have completed the worksheet, you can use your answers as a rough framework for a full response to the first task.

### BEFORE WRITING – SOME KEY QUESTIONS

*Do you comprehensively understand the issue? Can you identify two or three distinct positions on the issue?*

*Who is the target audience of your policy memo? What evidence is likely to be effective with them?*

*Do you have enough evidence to support all elements of your paper? (to introduce and define the issue, to show the importance of the issue, to support your position, and to refute counter-arguments)*

*Do you have the range of evidence you need to support different points of your argument? Match evidence and sources to different points of your arguments.*

### 1 TITLE

*Think of capturing the attention of your readers and communicating your position.*

*Write a draft title now and revise it after writing your paper.*



## 2 CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE

Framing and defining the issue: How will you introduce and define the issue? Define the problem or issue that your government or actor must address.

### **Stakeholders and Importance of the Issue:**

How will you demonstrate the relevance and urgency of the issue for modern society? Who and what are affected by this? Which groups, individuals and communities are affected by the issues that you will be analysing? These groups are known as stakeholders. They may not be directly described in the task brief. For example, a brief about digital copyright law may not mention musicians or movie studios whose products are pirated online, but they are clearly affected by the policy under discussion.

- Research the ways that these groups' goals and interests might be altered by the policies you are proposing. Try to write out concise explanations of each group's goals and the things that they value.
- Research the ways that organisations or communities might change or adapt to upheavals in the societies in which they exist. Explain the circumstances in which these changes might take place. Next, consider other changes and transformations that these groups could undergo and summarise those in a similar way.
- What evidence will you use to support this section of your paper?



### 3 RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR POSITION

*Why is action necessary? What will be the effect on stakeholder groups if your target audience does not try to challenge the status quo?*

Some things to consider:

- Are stakeholder groups exposed to unjustifiable risks? Are the stakeholders you have identified especially vulnerable?
- Are any of your stakeholders marginalised within society? Are they part of a highly privileged social group?
- Do your stakeholders have significant ties to political and policy making organisations that lie outside of the direct control of your government? (i.e. other states, NGOs, large businesses). If so, consider how these organisations relate to the stakeholder groups you are researching.
- What are the likely consequences of ignoring stakeholders' needs? Remember to write concise answers and to consider a range of alternative outcomes – never claim that one set of consequences is inevitable.



## 4 PROPOSE A COURSE OF ACTION

### **Position statement:**

*What is your position on the issue? Is it specific and clear? State it in one or two sentences.*

### **Propose a course of action:**

*What should be done to solve the problem? Consider the broad approach and specific practical steps or measures that need to be taken and by whom.*

*Is the solution you propose feasible and implementable?*

### **Reinforce your position:**

What points of your argument will you draw together to restate and reinforce your position?

- Tie your policy response to the lead-in line you used to introduce your memo. Explain briefly how it is consistent with the position you have taken on the issue and clearly state the outcome that your policy should bring about.
- Clearly state which powers, agents and partners your state will use to realise the policy you have described. Will the state have to create novel powers or new institutions to realise its goals?
- If your policy-making choices are relatively limited (signing or not signing a treaty, complaining to the ICJ or remaining silent), justify your choice by referring to your position statement and to the outcomes of any alternative choices.
- Consider the practical factors affecting your policy. How hard will it be for the state to implement your plan? What costs will the state have to pay? Is the state's ability to act or to extend its authority limited by laws or international agreements?

**GLOBAL DEBATE &  
PUBLIC POLICY  
CHALLENGE**



- What will the political impact of your policy be? How will the changes that you want the state to bring about affect its authority? What is the political cost of the policy?



## 5 ARGUMENTATION AND EVIDENCE

The last section of your memorandum should prove why your proposal will be effective. Ask yourself why the policy you have designed will produce the outcomes that you claim it will have. If your policy responses are relatively limited, you should use this section to justify your choice by using a lot of your available word-count to explain why the decision that you support will have a positive impact on the state – explain, for instance, why ratifying a trade agreement will be good for your state’s exporters and agricultural industry.

*What evidence will you use to support this section of your paper?*

### **Closing remarks:**

*Do you have an interesting reflection or question to close your paper? Does your paper go full circle from the opening to the ending?*

## 6 SOURCES CONSULTED

Which published documents support your position, the solution you have proposed to the problem and the arguments you have used to demonstrate your policy’s effectiveness? Remember, you need to use the APA embedded citation style.

Do you have a variety of type and sources of evidence to support your position?