

Tasks for Purpose B: To aid policy choice

A problem is recognized. Policy alternatives for addressing it are under consideration. You are asked, or you wish, to present a definition of the problem and to review the policy alternatives. Your intended audience might be policymakers, or an interested community, or the general public.

Follow a strategy of formal analysis using quantitative or qualitative methods. (**Note:** This task outline assumes that you are a novice in policy analysis but that you are prepared to perform—outside the tasks listed here—appropriate technical analysis needed to answer the questions.)

As you work through the tasks listed on the left, use the space on the right to begin developing responses to the task-related questions.

Task 1: Identify the problem and the stakeholders	
Task Questions	Responses and Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the problem? ▪ What brings it to attention? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why does the problem occur? ▪ What conditions lead to it? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whose behavior is affected or whose concerns are relevant? ▪ Who are the target beneficiaries of solutions to the problem? ▪ Who are the implementers of policy to solve it? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What stakes do each (affected groups, target beneficiaries, implementers of policy) have in the problem? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does each define the problem? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What ideals or values (equity, liberty, efficiency, security, loyalty) or ideologies (vision of how the world is or how it should be) are expressed in each definition? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What conflicts of value or ideology are evident among stakeholders? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does politics influence the problem? 	

Task 2: Specify alternative solutions and relevant criteria for evaluating them.	
Task Questions	Responses and Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the goals/objectives of a public policy to solve this problem? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What policy instruments might achieve the goals/objectives? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe at least two (alternative) policies to meet the need 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify relevant criteria for choosing the 'best' one. ▪ How do stakeholders weigh the criteria? ▪ How appropriate are the weights? ▪ What are the tradeoffs among criteria? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the outcome of each alternative according to criteria you consider relevant 	
Task 3: Recommend an alternative and explain your reasoning (if you are making a recommendation)	
Task Questions	Responses and Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which policy option or instrument do you recommend? ▪ Why is it 'best'? ▪ Why are other alternatives 'worse'? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the basis for your recommendation? ▪ What type of analysis supports it? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How will your choice affect stakeholders? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On what conditions (political, economic, organizational) does successful implementation of your choice depend? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the constraints (political, economic, organizational) on implementing your choice? 	

Task 4: Write the document (policy analysis with or without recommendation).

Before you write, use the General Method (see “Communication in the Policy Making Process”) to frame your communication rhetorically and to plan it.

Choose an appropriate genre for your document.

- Policy analysis is communicated in varied document types.
- If an assignment prescribes a particular type, use it in accord with your purpose and intended audience.
- If you are free to choose, you might use a memo.

Cite the sources to which your communication refers. Use the citation style prescribed, or choose either

- APA (American Psychological Association) Style (described at www.apastyle.org)
- MLA (Modern Language Association) Style (described at www.mla.org).

Both APA and MLA style guides tell you how to cite a range of source types including government documents. (For example, see [Citing Government Information Sources Using MLA Style](http://www.library.unr.edu/depts/bgic/guides/government/cite.html) at <http://www.library.unr.edu/depts/bgic/guides/government/cite.html>).

For further help with citing government sources, consult Garner, Diane L. and Diane H. Smith, 1993, *The Complete Guide to Citing Government Information Resources: A Manual for Writers and Librarians* (rev. ed.) (Bethesda, MD: Congressional Information Service)

Review, revise, and edit your document.

- After you write, check your document’s quality against the Checklists (see “Communication in the Policy Making Process”).