

Policy Brief Article Guidelines

Types of Policy Briefs

Advocacy Brief

This type of policy brief argues in favor of a specific policy option.

If your research findings propose a single solution, write an advocacy brief and provide evidence to support that solution.

Objective Brief

This type provides balanced information on various policy options, including their advantages and disadvantages, enabling policymakers to make informed decisions.

If your research findings suggest multiple solutions, write an objective brief and present information on the different options .

Structure of a Policy Brief (Mandatory)

Title

Executive Summary (10%)

Introduction (10-15%)

Policy Problem

The Body

Research Methodology (5-10%)

Research Findings (30%)

Policy Recommendations

Policy Implications (30%)

Structure of a Policy Brief (Optional)

Boxes and Sidebars

Case Studies

Tables

Graphics

Photographs

Authors

Conflicts of Interests

Acknowledgements

References (10%)

Policy Brief Title

The title should be concise, engaging, and precise.

Concise: Aim for fewer than 10 words. If not feasible, split it into a title and subtitle.

Engaging: Capture the reader's attention. Use relevant keywords that are memorable. A question can be effective as a title.

Relevant: Ensure it aligns with the topic.

No abbreviations: Avoid using abbreviations.

Policy Brief Abstract

The abstract appears at the beginning of the policy brief, either as a single paragraph or in a box with larger font, presented as three or four bullet points.

It highlights the key points you want policymakers to understand, even if they read nothing else.

It summarizes the main elements of the policy brief, including conclusions and recommendations.

It should engage potential readers to encourage them to read the full report.

The abstract should be comprehensive enough to provide readers with an overview of the topic, options, and recommendations (typically ranging from

100 to 200 words).

Policy Problem

The introduction addresses the problem:

Introduces the topic.

Explains the significance of the topic.

Describes the research objectives.

Conveys to the reader why action is necessary.

Structure of the Introduction:

The Problem: What is the problem? Why is it important? What is its scope and severity?

Causes of the Problem: Why does the problem occur? Provide evidence or examples.

Impacts of the Problem: What are its effects? Provide evidence or examples.

The Body

Structure the text logically.

Research Methodology

Key Research Findings

Keep paragraphs short and focused on a single idea.

Use additional subheadings as needed. In a four-page policy brief, include at least six subheadings.

Re-read revise, or eliminate each paragraph, as necessary.

Policy Options in an Objective Policy Brief

- Outline various policy options to address the problem
- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of each policy option.
 - **What are the potential benefits of each policy option?**
 - **What is the estimated cost of implementing each policy option?**
 - **What are the potential side effects of each policy option?**
 - **How feasible is the implementation of each policy option?**

Policy Recommendations in an Advocacy Policy Brief

Clearly and concisely, articulate policy recommendations.

Begin each recommendation with an actionable verb.

Keep the recommendations brief; five to six are sufficient.

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Ensure recommendations are realistic, considering feasibility from policy, economic, social, and technical perspectives.

Base recommendations on findings from credible studies.

Highlight key words in the policy recommendations for emphasis.

Policy Application

- Explain how the proposed solutions and policy recommendations can be applied in the current context with available resources.
 - **The connection between research findings and your policy recommendations.**
 - **The likely impact of your policy recommendations.**

Boxes and Sidebars

- Include information such as definitions, case studies, or examples to illustrate points from the main text.
- Boxes should be standalone: readers should understand them without needing to refer to the main text.

- Assign a title to each box and reference it in the main text.
- Limit the number of boxes; one per page is sufficient.

Case Studies

Provide specific examples or stories about events that occurred in a particular place at a specific time. Ensure the case study is relevant to the rest of the text.

Keep case studies concise and standalone.

Focus on the topic and avoid including unnecessary details.

Tables

Tables are an effective way to present information. Keep them simple.

Minimize the number of rows and columns (four columns and six rows)

Place columns that you want readers to compare side by side.

Highlight table cells to make important information easier to identify.

Consider using charts as an alternative to tables.

Round numbers for clarity(e.g., write 25,000 instead of 24,567).

Avoid including statistical significance levels (e.g., $P \leq 0.05$).

Figures

Charts (bar, line, and pie charts) and maps.

Figures are a key design element. Readers often look at them before reading the text, so ensure they are clear and understandable.

Choose a figure type that suits the information being presented.

Use bar or pie charts to compare figures.

Use line charts for time series data.

Keep figures simple displaying only the most important variables.

Provide a title for each figure.

Select colors and design patterns that are easily distinguishable from one another.

Photographs

Photographs tend to capture more reader attention than graphics.

If using photographs, select them carefully to convey a message and enhance the visual appeal of the page.

Acknowledgments

Express gratitude to sponsors, organizations, and individuals who made significant contributions to the preparation of the policy brief content.

Footnotes

Whenever possible, avoid using footnotes.

If necessary, limit the use of footnotes to a minimum.

References

A comprehensive list of references is not required.

Cite only one to four sources to allow readers to find additional information.

Provide web addresses for publications whenever possible.

Authors

Some policy briefs list the authors' names below the title.

Others include them in a footnote or at the end of the text.

Some do not name individual authors, as the policy brief is produced by an organization.

If naming authors, include their name, position, institution, and email address for correspondence.

If authors are not named, provide at least one email address for readers to contact for further information.