

How to write the perfect policy brief

Katie Driver,
23 October 2024

Think before you write!



- What exactly is the policy challenge?
- Why is it a problem now?
- Why isn't the solution simple/obvious?
- How might we respond?
- Will it be worth the effort?
- Who can help?

Select your material

- What's the smallest amount of information you can include for each point?
- Are there one or two 'killer facts' which define or shift the argument?
- What is 'must know' for your decision-maker?



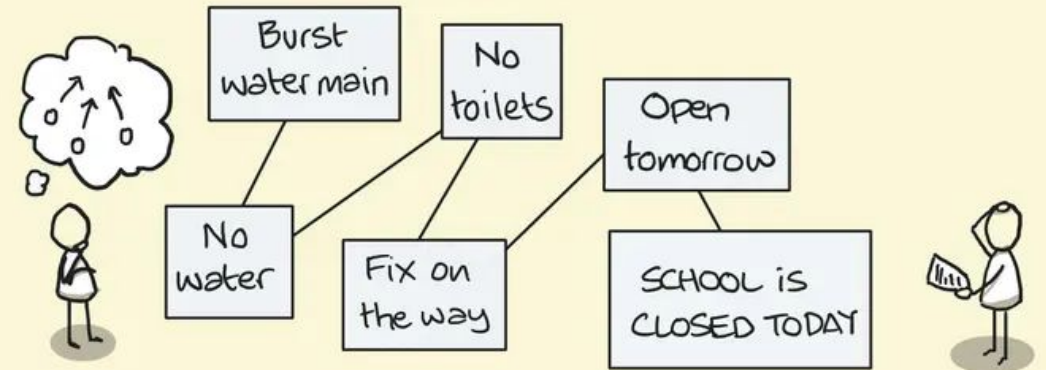
Organise your brief

- Lead with your recommendation
- Make sure the top page includes all the crucial information
- Follow agreed formatting, or use headings to guide your reader

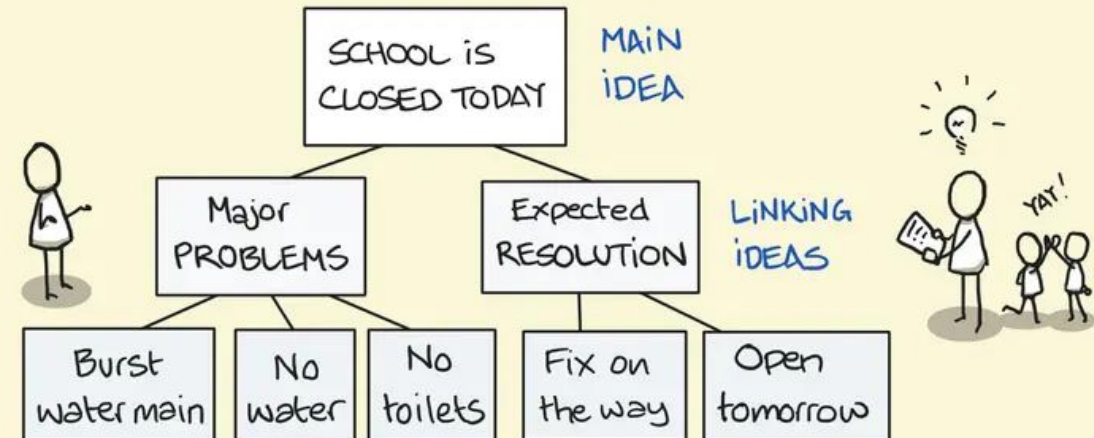
THE PYRAMID PRINCIPLE

ORGANISE IDEAS TO COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

WE OFTEN **THINK BOTTOM-UP**



BUT IT HELPS TO **COMMUNICATE TOP-DOWN**



From Barbara Minto

sketchplanations

Write with George Orwell's six rules in mind

1. Avoid tired metaphors and figures of speech
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active
5. Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word or jargon if you can think of a plain language equivalent
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous

