

White Paper Structure

I.

Title — You'll want an attention-grabbing title that clearly communicate the problem/solution and is appropriate for your target audience. (i.e. “40 miles too far” or “peace for our generation”)

II.

The abstract or executive summary — this section provides a short summary of what the paper is about, you need to provide enough detail to satisfy while encouraging the reader to continue.

III.

Introduction — Define the issue and provide background discussion.

IV.

Problem Definition — Thoroughly and completely **identify the problem**. This section should be entirely from the perspective of the target audience. (i.e. lack of peace treaty or settlements or Hamas or APAC).

V.

High-Level Solution — Describe **relevant solution** at a high level, including any competing ideas/proposals (which you will rebut later). Support your arguments with tables, charts, and graphics. Quote experts as needed to bolster your positions. You are educating your target audience on the current state of the art, as well as where your solution fits.

VI.

Solution Details — Having thoroughly explained the problem and the general approach to solving it, it is finally time to describe your solution in more detail. This is **the heart of your white paper** and you'll probably want to use case studies or research to support your arguments.

VII.

Benefits — This section is **the soul of your white paper**, where you need to grab the reader and provide assurances that the solution will work. (e.g. peace treaty or settlement freeze).

VIII.

Summary — A quick summary emphasizes both the **benefits** of the solution/proposal as well as the **risks and costs**. Also, the **political implications**. Many leaders may skip the entire document and read this section only, so write this section as if it were an **entirely standalone document** summarizing the main selling points about your solution. Conclude with the most important point that you want the reader to remember.

XI.

Recommended action — This is an important section. Emphatically explain **what the proposal should be and how to achieve it**.

Directions

Target audience: Your target audience is an elected official who is about to make a decision regarding your particular policy issue. You can assume a certain level of governmental knowledge, but it is your job to fully brief the official so that they can make a well informed choice.

Length: I cannot imagine you being able to present an issue very well in anything less than 5 pages and it is very possible that you would need more. There is not a maximum length for this assignment.

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