

apolitical

The Apolitical template for writing excellent solutions-focused articles

This template will guide you to write an effective solutions-focused article. If you don't think this is the right format for your article, please visit our contributor page and see our other templates.

What is it?

A solutions-focused article describes a problem and makes the case for one or more specific solutions. The style is argumentative and analytical, and often makes use of illustrative examples to prove a point. In order to be relevant to Apolitical's readers, the problems will most often focus on government or public servants.

What is it good for?

The format is ideal for explaining complex real-world challenges in an easy to understand and digestible manner. The format is versatile and easy to adapt, and therefore lends itself well to describing a wide range of topics and themes.

What is it not good for?

Not all things that are relevant to Apolitical's members are rooted in a problem that needs solving. As such, you shouldn't choose this format if you want to focus on describing how to do a very specific task. Instead, the "how to" format may be a better fit.

What are some good Apolitical examples?

The solutions-focused article is one of the most popular article types on Apolitical, and there are many good examples to draw from. 3 recent examples are:

- [Why do men win 99 percent of all procurement contracts?](#)
- [We need to talk about the passive-aggressive culture in government](#)
- [Public servants are tired of change-washing — not change](#)

How long does it take to make one of these?

As with all articles, the time it takes depends on the author. Experienced writers will be able to write one of these in a day or less, while new writers may need a week or so of on/off-work to deliver a first draft.

Detailed production guide:

Below is a chronological outline of what a 700-900 words solutions-focused article can look like.

Intro/hook

The purpose of the intro is to grab the attention of the reader and set the tone for the rest of your article. There are many ways you can do that, but some effective methods include:

- [Leading with a surprising statistic or fact.](#)
- [Describing a vivid scene](#)
- [Making an assertive statement that sets the tone for the rest of your article.](#)

The most common mistake we see among new writers is to open the article with the background. If you find yourself doing that, ask yourself: why is this important to me? That passion will often resonate with others and be a good place to begin your article.

Introducing the problem

Next, you will want to describe the problem. In your description, remember to emphasise how this is relevant to the reader. If it's not clear why it is relevant, the reader will often trail off.

Background

Once you have introduced the problem, it's often a good idea to introduce yourself and perhaps even the organisation you represent. If you're an expert in your field, don't be shy about it! It helps build your credibility as an author when you emphasise your relevant experience.

Present your solution

Now is the time to advocate for your solution. Begin by describing the basics: what it is, how it works, and why you think it is a good solution. If there are research reports or data that supports your argument, you can point to these to support your case. But the most effective tool is often to use examples.

Example

Using real-world examples is an effective way to make your case because it anchors your argument in a very concrete case. This enables you to show how the solution works in practice. If you have been involved in a project that has delivered the solution you are describing, it also has the added benefit that you will be able to describe the process from the inside.

Counter-argument

Even the best solutions will face counter-arguments. Thinking about what the most common objections are and addressing them in your text, will show the reader that you have a broad understanding of both the pros and the cons of your argument.

Outro

In this last part of your article, you have a lot of freedom to decide which note you want to end on. You can, for example:

- Look ahead and make an educated guess for how the field will evolve in the coming years.
- Give the reader actionable tips or methods for applying your solution in their context.