

# TEMPLATE FOR WRITING A POWERFUL ARTICLE OR BLOG

## Headline

Sum up the point of the article in 10 words at most – this helps focus your attention and could form the basis of the headline or a tweet.

**Example:** Digital government could change your life – if you can access the internet

**Example:** One in three women is a victim of violence. Time for men to step up

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## Intro or “Lead” section

- Short first paragraph – Grab your reader’s attention. You could do this by stating a surprising statistic, or telling a short anecdote.
- Short second paragraph – Tell the reader about the broader issue that the anecdote or fact illustrates.
- Short third paragraph – Outline the main argument you will make in the rest of the article.

### **Example: Singapore’s abandoned bikes show how not to regulate the sharing economy**

Bicycle-sharing startup Obike closed down in June, leaving bikes strewn throughout Singapore’s streets and over 100,000 upset users unable to claim back an estimated US\$4.6 million in deposits.

Dealing with unknown and disruptive new technologies and business models, like the sharing economy model of Obike, is always going to be a challenge for policymakers.

But could scenario planning – an approach to policymaking that forecasts how different possible future scenarios could evolve – help policymakers to better anticipate crises and formulate plans in such rapidly changing sectors?

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## Main article body

The “body” of your article will consist of multiple points that all come together to support your overall argument. There are many ways to set up the body of your article, and this will depend on the type of piece you are writing. Below are two possible structures.

One is for an opinion piece that takes a view on a critical debate. The second is for a policy piece that discusses an innovative new policy or program you have either implemented yourself or believe government should implement.

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### Option A - Opinion piece – your view on a critical debate or trend

#### ## Section 1: Background

- Give some more context to the debate or trend you will discuss. E.g. What countries does it apply to? How new is this issue? How many people or governments could be affected – and if I’m not affected why should I care? Who has been a public advocate – or opponent?

#### ## Section 2: Your strongest argument

- Introduce your strongest argument or point
- Use a few sentences to expand on this claim
- Cite any examples or research that back it up
- What should your audience take away from this – why does it matter?

#### ## Section 3 (repeat if needed): Your further argument(s)

- Introduce your next argument or point
- Use a few sentences to expand on this claim
- Cite any examples or research that back it up
- What should your audience take away from this – why does it matter?

#### ## Section 4: Counter-argument

- Introduce any counter-arguments
- Explain why these are not devastating for your argument

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## Main article body

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### Option B - Policy/research piece – tell the world about an innovative solution

#### ## Section 1: Explain the problem

- Explain the precise problem the solution is aiming to tackle. E.g. Germany's gender pay gap; Canada's public servants needing better digital skills
- Why should your reader care? Is this a problem with international ramifications? How many people are affected? What are the knock-on consequences?

\*\* This section should be shorter than the next one

#### ## Section 2: Your solution

Use two or three short paragraphs to explain the policy/program you think is a good solution

If this solution was introduced by your department/organisation....

- Explain a bit about the process involved
- Outline the results/impact
- Say why you think it could (or could not) work well elsewhere

If this is a solution you're calling on government to adopt...

- Where have you seen this idea employed? What results did it have?
- Would it be feasible to replicate?
- Why do you think it is better than alternatives?

#### ## Section 3: Challenges this might involve

For example:

- What should policymakers hoping to implement your idea watch out for?
- Would the public support this idea?
- How much would it cost to implement?
- Are there some cities/countries/regions this would not work well in? Why?

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## Conclusion

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**Sentence #1** – What is the key takeaway your reader should remember from the article?

**Sentence #2** – Optional: a call to action – ask the reader to comment, share, advocate

**Example: Tell don't sell: how to craft a great story about your policy idea**

We end here with a moral of our story. Whether you are a scientist or an issue-advocate, you likely care about shaping public policies so that they are more closely aligned to your values. Mastering the art of narrative can help you achieve these goals. So go forth and tell good stories.

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## Final Checklist

- Have I proofread my article?
- Have I asked a colleague to read for sense?
- Will everything I've said make sense to an international audience?
- Have I convinced my reader of my main argument? And can I summarize that argument in one line?
- Is everything I've included interesting and relevant?
- Have I stayed at around 700-800 words?
- Have I stayed clear of jargon and policy speak?
- Have I linked to references for critical facts and statistics?
- Have I checked against Apolitical's style guidelines?