

# **Policy Brief Workshop**

EC140

# Assignment outline

**Monday**                      Handed in idea proposals

Check comments to make sure no problems (you may have full credit *with* a problematic prompt)

**December 6**              Peer review workshop              (Draft due 1:10pm)

**December 13**              Submit final brief

# What is a policy brief?

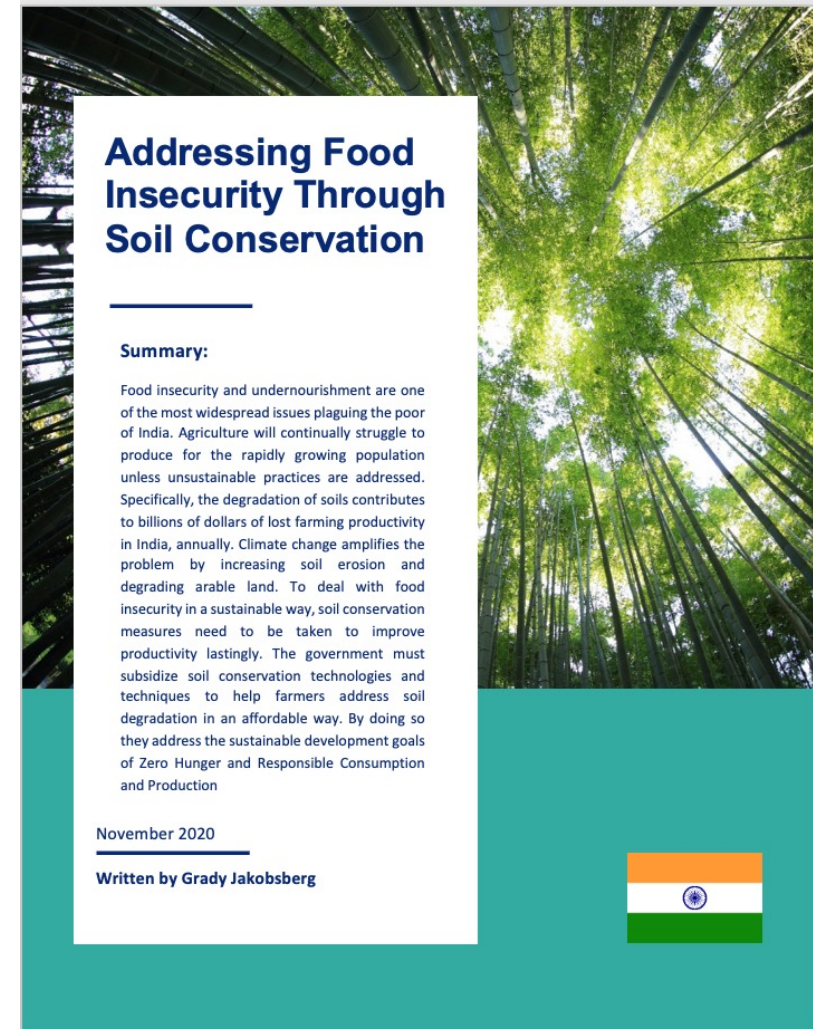
A policy brief presents a concise summary of information that can help readers understand, and likely make decisions about, government policies. Policy briefs may give **objective summaries of relevant research**, suggest **possible policy options**, or go even further and **argue for particular courses of action**.

# Structure

1. Executive summary
2. Statement of problem/background
3. Pre-existing policies/evidence
4. Policy options
5. Policy recommendation
6. References

# Executive summary

- For the very busy policymaker
- Executive summary and brief should **stand alone**
  - I could read just summary and “get it”
  - If I skip the summary, I could read the brief and “get it”
  - There will be some repetition of concepts, but not wording
- **Must haves**
  - The challenge
  - Link to Covid-19/climate change
  - The SDG
  - Recommendation



# Statement of problem/background

*This is where your brief starts*

- Define and motivate the policy challenge
  - Support this with sources
  - May start general, but also focus on your particular context. Any additional info people need to know about it?
- Describe how exacerbated by climate change/COVID-19
  - Support this with sources
- At some point, specifically name the relevant SDG
- You'll bring in outside sources here, may or may not be peer-reviewed (remember, 6+ sources total)

# Pre-existing policies/evidence

- What do we know about ways to address this problem?
  - Could be evidence of success or failure
- Based on outside evidence (cited). This is where you will be most likely to bring in **peer-reviewed**, academic journal articles (note 3+ total)

# Policy options

- Include 2–3 policy options
- For each option, discuss advantages and disadvantages
- Paragraphs or tables
- This discussion should be tied to outside evidence when possible (either discussed in pre-existing policies or new papers)



# Policy recommendation

- One paragraph
- Select **one** of the policy options, recommend it, and justify.

# References

- As before, include a reference section at the end.
- Use standard formatting (MLA, APA, Chicago)
- Use in-text citations (Yang 2006) as appropriate

# Key specifications

- **1000–1500 words** (excluding references, including executive summary)
- Formatted to be aesthetically pleasing
- At least **3 peer-reviewed academic journal articles** cited, at least **6 total sources**
- Label your sections (please!)

# Tips for good brief writing

One paragraph one idea

Avoid direct quotations (*for this assignment*)

Lead with the topic/argument, not the author

Ananda and Hearth conducted a study in 2013 on government subsidization of agricultural inputs. They found that these inputs increased fertilizer use from 33 kg to 156 kg per ha from the beginning to the end of the Green Revolution

Government subsidization of agricultural inputs have been responsible for a jump in fertilizer use from 33 kg to 156 kg per ha from the beginning to the end of the Green Revolution (Ananda & Herath, 2003).

# Tips for good brief writing

Consider whether each sentence is necessary. Kill your darlings.

Active voice

Policy B is to be recommended. While Policy A can be implemented to alleviate food insecurity, the issue of soil degradation must be addressed within the realm of agriculture.

I strongly recommend Policy B. While Policy A will produce higher short-term returns toward alleviating food insecurity, India must directly address soil degradation, which is responsible for 54% of soil erosion globally (Borrelli et al. 2020).

# Activity

- I've linked a bad (generic) policy brief
  - Download it and open up
  - As a group, edit or comment the bad stuff. Big and small.
    - Make sure you are in "suggestions" mode
  - Don't worry about how it aligns w/ this particular assignment
- We will discuss together
- Then you'll submit on BB