

THE SITUATION ROOM

★ ★ ★ EXPERIENCE

HOW TO READ A MEMORANDUM

Correspondence within the government is often formatted like the following example. This worksheet will help you understand how to read all parts of this type of correspondence to prepare for the Situation Room Experience.

NOTE: Text like "Confidential" that denotes level of secrecy around a message

4535

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

July 1, 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: WILLIAM P. CLARK

THROUGH: CHARLES P. TYSON

FROM: PAULA DOBRIANSKY

SUBJECT: Request for Presidential Photo Opportunity: European Parliament President Piet Dankert

State has forwarded a memorandum (Tab II) requesting that a photo opportunity be granted with the President for European Parliament President Piet Dankert early in November. As this would be Dankert's first official visit to the U.S. since his election as President of the European Parliament on February 19, 1982, I recommend that this request be given favorable consideration. A Schedule Proposal is attached at Tab I.

Al Myer concurs.

RECOMMENDATION

That you forward the Schedule Proposal at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments:

Tab I Schedule Proposal

Tab II State memorandum, June 29, 1983

cc: Jack Matlock
Peter Scumier

DECLASSIFIED
Sec 3.4(b), E.O. 12958, as amended
White House Guidelines, Sept. 11, 2009
BY NARA DATE 1/12/10

CONFIDENTIAL
Declassify on: OADR

Find receiver, sender, subject, here

The message

Notification of additional attachments to the message

Recipient approves/disapproves a suggestion

Note the "declassified" stamp that makes the document available for the public to read

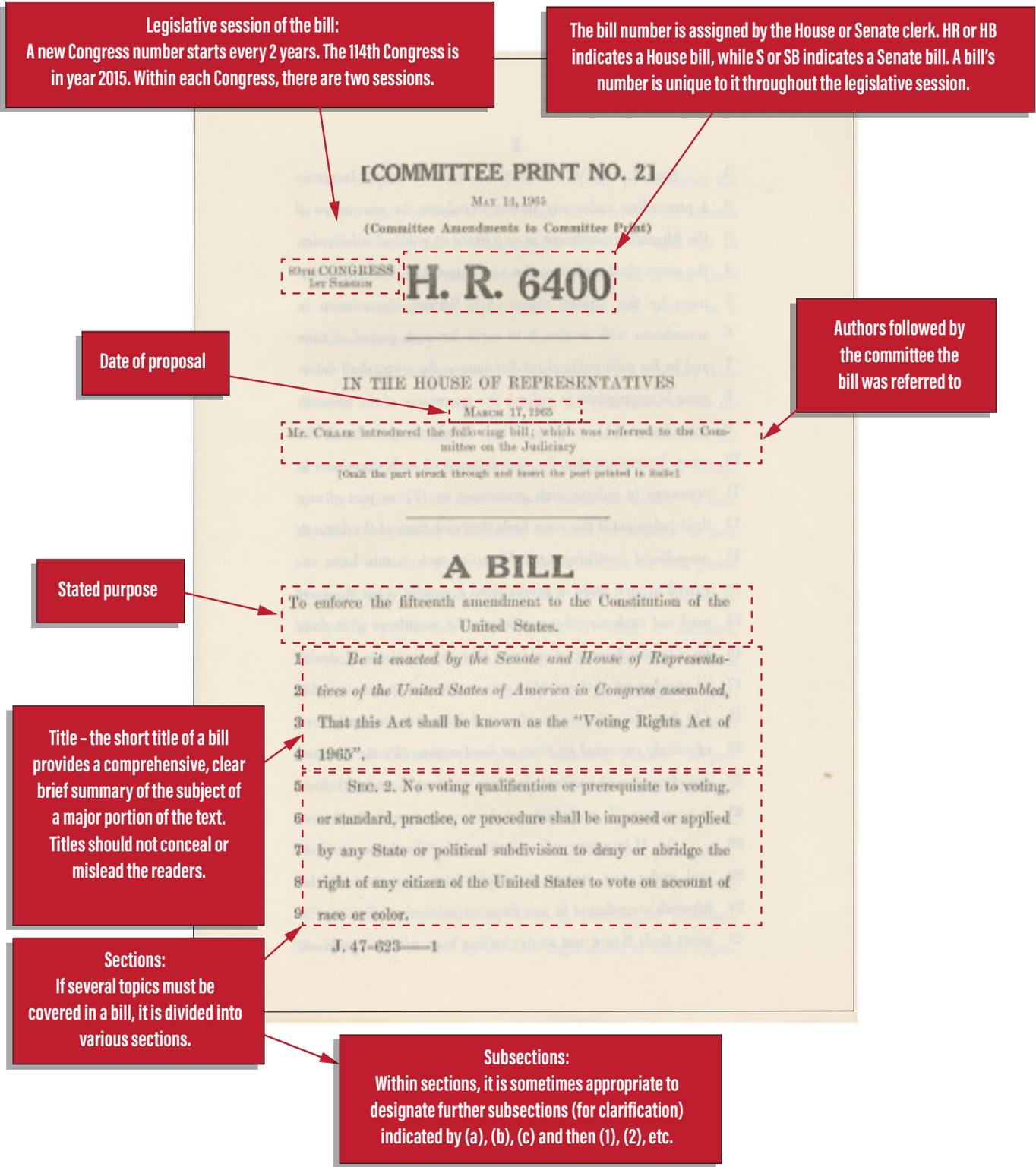
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The term "Breaking News" means you are meant to be watching new information about an event that is happening right now.

1. Summarize the "Breaking News" report you just watched.
2. Did the reporter accurately reflect what was happening in the background?
3. Did you bring previous knowledge or preconceived ideas to your experience? Did this influence your experience of the material?
4. What are the differences between a breaking news broadcast and a pre-recorded report? What might change in the images, content, situation, and level of impact of each?
5. What were some of your emotions while watching the video, and what prompted them?
6. Do you think the report was one-sided or did it explain differing viewpoints on the situation?
7. What two or more questions would you like to ask about the situation you just watched unfold?

HOW TO READ A BILL

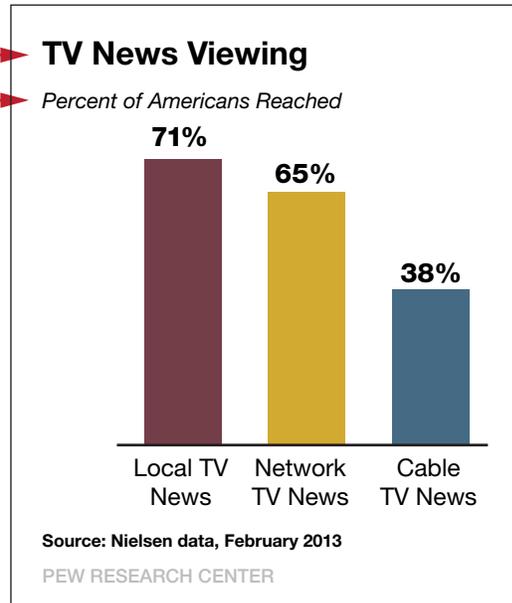
Bill – proposed law, amendment to a law, or amendment to the Constitution



HOW TO READ TABLES AND CHARTS

Know what is being measured: look at the graph title, x & y axis, and other labels or keys to familiarize yourself with the content

Look for sub-categories or keys that allow for further analysis of graph or chart data. For example, the color coding in these two graphs allows for easier differentiation, and the sub-categories of heavy, light, and medium TV viewers in minutes watched per day clarifies meaning in the second graph.

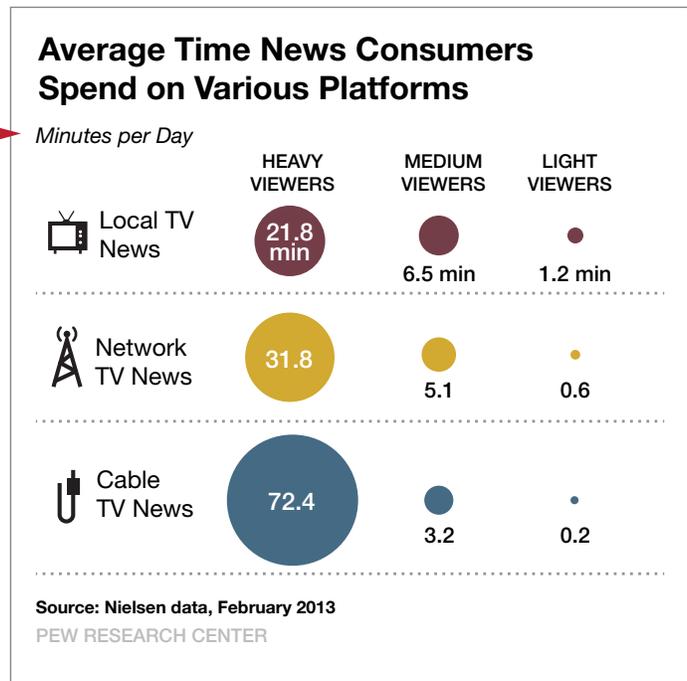


What are the units used in measurement? (Hours versus minutes is a big difference!)

Test your graph reading skills:

Can you state one data piece from the graph?
Example: Heavy TV viewers for Local TV News watch about 21.8 minutes of it per day.

Look for short-term and long-term trends or surprising data to make inferences and generalizations.
(Does anything double or show dramatic change? What could have caused this?)



HOW TO READ A CABLE

Cable - the term given to a confidential message.

The diagram illustrates the components of a cable message. Red boxes on the left label the parts: 'The situation and subject matter of the cable', 'All the people who will get the cable', 'The subject of the cable', 'The message', and 'The author'. A red box at the top right is labeled 'Date'. Red arrows point from these labels to the corresponding text in the sample cable message.

SENSITIVE

PAGE 18 SITUATION(S) MESSAGE(S) LISTING DATE 04/28/81//

SITUATION: PRES
 SUBJECT CATEGORY: ASSASSIN
 MESSAGE / ANNOTATION:

MESSAGE:
 FLASH
 Z 310103Z MAR 81 ZFF4
 FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS FLASH
 AMEMBASSY KABUL FLASH 5016
 AMEMBASSY CONAKRY FLASH 5307
 UNCLAS STATE 080707

E.O. 12065:IN/A

TAGS:PDIP

SUBJECT: STATEMENT TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

1. THE PRESIDENT HAS UNDERGONE SURGERY FOR THE GUNSHOT WOUND RECEIVED IN THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION THIS AFTERNOON IN WASHINGTON. THE BULLET HAS BEEN REMOVED. THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN REMOVED TO POST-OPERATIVE CARE, IS IN GOOD CONDITION WITH PROGNOSIS EXCELLENT.
2. PLEASE INFORM YOUR GOVERNMENT OF THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUE TO REASSURE YOUR HOST THAT THE CONTINUITY OF OUR GOVERNMENT IS ASSURED.
3. WE WILL KEEP YOU CLOSELY INFORMED AS EVENTS WARRANT.

HAIG
 BT

***** WSHR COMMENTS *****

RA>NAN,COLE,VP
 SEA

PSN:003815 DTG:310103 TOR:090011

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