

# Looking at Public Policy: G R A D E

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“Public Policy is a plan of action, adopted by government, to solve a problem or reach a goal.”

In a democracy, you have a say on government policies and proposed policies. It's important that you take a critical look at them. Use the following GRADE test to analyze public policies.

Goal	What is the policy and what is its goal? If you don't know what it's supposed to do, you can't measure its success or failure. Policies are designed to address problems. What problem or problems is this policy supposed to address?
Rivals	Who supports this policy? Who opposes it? Knowing the rivals can help you understand who the policy might affect and whether the policy favors special interest. Also, rivals are terrific sources for information. Be sure to check their facts though.
Advantages	What are the policy's benefits? What is good about the policy? Will it achieve (or has it achieved) its goal? Will it achieve the goal efficiently? Is it inexpensive? Does it protect people from harm? Does it ensure people's liberties?
Disadvantages	What are the policy's costs? What is bad about the policy? Is it inefficient? Is it expensive? Does it cause harm? Does it intrude on people's liberties? Are there any potential consequences that may cause damage?
Evaluate the alternatives	One alternative is to do nothing. Most serious problems have various policy proposals. Evaluate them. Look at their goals, advantages, and disadvantages.