



## What is a briefing note?

A briefing note is a brief text that accurately and fully conveys the ideas or points of view developed in a longer document, in this case, a press release comprising a set of articles.

It is not an opinion or argumentative paper. Do not include your point of view; rather, stick to the ideas, facts and arguments made in the texts you have been given to read. Do not summarize each article individually. As all the articles address the same topic, you should highlight the main ideas and present them in the order that makes the most sense to you, making sure to follow the instructions you've been given. Since you will read texts presenting two points of view on the same topic (e.g., for/against, advantages/disadvantages, government's point of view/business world's point of view), your briefing should provide a balanced reflection of these points of view, which are stated in the general instructions.

## Rephrasing

Your briefing note should highlight the essential ideas in the press kit by rephrasing them in your own words. You will be evaluated on how well you do this. The source of articles is indicated directly above each of them. For each idea rephrased, you must write the reference in parentheses to indicate where you found it. You should use the method (author-date) preferred by HEC Montréal, for example: This new program will facilitate the social inclusion of thousands of people per year in Montérégie (Poitras, 2020). To find out more about this method (author-date), consult the guide [Citer ses sources](#) developed by the library. Do not quote the articles in your text—quotation marks are not permitted. Do not copy sentences whether partially nor fully. Doing so could result in penalties. See the page on [intellectual integrity](#) of students to learn more.



### **Expected structure of the briefing note**

Your text must be made up of complete sentences that are organized into paragraphs. It must be 450 words long (with up to 10% leniency, so between 405 and 495 words). This word count includes references to sources. Your text will not be corrected beyond 495 words. A text of fewer than 350 words will result in an automatic fail.

You are expected to organize your briefing note for the HECFRAN test as follows:

- **A short introductory paragraph (30 to 70 words total)**

The introduction puts the topic of the press kit into context, presents the two points of view defended in the press kit and gives an overview of the briefing. In other words, the introduction is in the format of “general topic, narrowed topic, main points.”

- **Two development paragraphs**

It is recommended to structure your development in two separate paragraphs. The first sentence of each development paragraph should clearly present the topic of the paragraph, meaning one of the two points of view argued in the press kit. The first sentence is the main idea of your paragraph. The main idea is followed by several sentences comprising secondary ideas that back it up. The two points of view must be equally represented in the development. Objectivity being a characteristic of the briefing note, the two points of view must be defended with a similar number of ideas.

- **A brief conclusion (30 to 70 words total)**

This paragraph provides a final review of the topic, and sometimes recaps the two points of view or themes. Alternatively, this can cover one or two essential elements of the press release. The conclusion often ends with an open-ended statement or question to reflect on.