

EXERCISE

The Elements of Analytic Writing

Structure of a Simple-form Analytic Article			
<i>Main, Basic Elements to Satisfy Your Audience's Needs</i>			
Reader's Needs		Structural Element	
• Clear, meaningful summary	➔	Thesis – BLUF	One sentence or short paragraph
• Enough facts to understand phenomenon	➔	Factual snapshot, validation	Perhaps one quarter of paper
• Grasp of why and how it's happening	➔	Drivers and trends	Perhaps one half of paper
• Idea of what will happen and what else could happen	➔	Scenarios, Alternatives, and "Wild Cards"	} Perhaps one quarter
• Why it's important	➔	Implications	

In this exercise, you practice identifying, prioritizing, and ordering the main elements of information and analysis of an interesting foreign news story.

Which information or comment constitutes which element of your paper? In which order should each appear?

Exercise Instructions

Read the sentences and paragraphs on pages 3 and 4, and compile an analysis of what happened; its context; drivers; trends and future scenarios; and implications.

In the table below, using the sentence and paragraph numbers, arrange the facts and comments into the structure of an analytical piece that serves your reader's needs.

- You're preparing this analysis for a U.S. Assistant Secretary of State.
- Write the sentence and paragraph numbers in the space provided.
- Focus on the *substance* of the sentences, not whether they fit grammatically or are in the desired style. Think of them as *ideas*, not sentences. (In real life, you would paraphrase or synthesize almost all of the quotes.)
- Not every fact/comment fits; don't try to force them.
- There is no single right order. The idea is to "rough in" the elements.

Elements and Order	
How would you order the sentences below in a short analytical article?	
Thesis – BLUF	Sentence _____
Factual laydown, validation	Sentences _____ _____
Drivers and trends	Sentences _____ _____
Scenarios, Alternatives, and "Wild Cards"	Sentences _____ _____
Implications	Sentences _____ _____

TYCOON ABDUCTED TO CHINA¹

1. Many of China's most powerful families have their “bagman” – the dealmaker who helps arrange their business affairs and who rises in turn to great wealth on their coattails.
2. Mr. Xiao has a youthful look, with a round face and an enigmatic smile.
3. Living in Hong Kong, he held court attended by female bodyguards, managing businesses that made billions.
4. He showed loyalty to the ruling Communist Party decades ago with his stance as a student representative at Peking University. He opposed demonstrations in 1989 that culminated in a state crackdown and the killings around Beijing's Tiananmen Square.
5. The billionaire's abduction and likely detention has parallels with the fate of the Russian oligarchs who prospered after the collapse of the Soviet Union before falling foul of the ambitions of President Vladimir Putin.
6. Xiao Jianhua was abducted and taken to China by Beijing agents in January.
7. Xiao Jianhua has long had strong connections with the families of Communist party leaders, but he was much more than a bagman by the time he was abducted by Beijing's agents and taken back to mainland China.
8. A Chinese billionaire with connections to top Beijing leaders has been abducted in Hong Kong by Chinese public security agents and taken to mainland China, according to two people familiar with the investigation.
9. Chinese President Xi Jinping has been conducting a crackdown that has ensnared a growing number of tycoons.
10. Chinese law enforcement agencies are not allowed to operate in the territory, according to the former British colony's “Basic Law,” its mini-constitution.
11. Xiao’s disappearance will add to fears that Hong Kong is losing its autonomy, coming after the abduction in 2015 of five booksellers who published works that criticized Chinese leaders and made explosive allegations about their misdemeanors.
12. Xiao holds Canadian citizenship as well as a diplomatic passport issued by Antigua and Barbuda.
13. While most bagmen rise and fall with a single powerful politician, Mr. Xiao has worked on behalf of a number of powerful families, according to news reports. In 2013, he helped the sister and brother-in-law of President Xi Jinping offload shares in a company after Bloomberg published a probe into the wealth of the Xi family and other Chinese leaders’ relatives.
14. In 2014, Xiao denied media reports that he had fled to Hong Kong to avoid being caught in the president’s corruption crackdown.
15. This is not the first time someone has been seized from Hong Kong by Chinese authorities since 1997. In late 2015, five Hong Kong booksellers and publishers disappeared for months.
16. Mr. Xiao has contacted relatives and said he was safe.
17. Washington has been silent on this and previous incidents in which Beijing has allegedly violated Hong Kong laws.
18. Some tycoons hoped they were beyond the reach of China's public security forces because Hong Kong is semi-autonomous with its own police and legal system.

¹ Based on excerpts from news stories published in January and February 2017.

19. Hong Kong police added that they would “continue to investigate the case” and had asked the mainland authorities for assistance in determining “the subject’s conditions in the mainland.” The Hong Kong government reiterated that outside law enforcement agencies, including those from the mainland, were not authorized to enforce the law in Hong Kong.
20. The abduction of billionaire Xiao Jianhua from Hong Kong by Chinese security agents has been condemned as a further blow to the rule of law in the semi-autonomous financial center.
21. The Chinese government and its powerful but secretive security forces have intensified their meddling in Hong Kong affairs over recent years.
22. Should the bodyguards of a target of an attempted Chinese abduction engage in a shootout resulting in deaths or injuries, however, the problem could easily move to the front burner.
23. A growing list of businesspeople has been ensnared in President Xi Jinping’s anti-corruption campaign and some believed they would be protected by staying in Hong Kong.
24. Mr. Xiao was accosted in his waterfront apartment at around at 1am by “five or six plain-clothed Chinese public security agents,” who then took him and two of his bodyguards to the mainland.
25. The Chinese government appears oblivious to foreign and Hong Kong condemnation of such actions, suggesting they will continue as Beijing wishes.
26. Experts say the Xiao case is a flagrant violation of the Hong Kong’s Basic Law and very bad for the future of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy and for Hong Kong’s future as a financial center.
27. Starry Lee, chairman of the main pro-government party in Hong Kong, played down the incident, telling a local radio station that she “cannot see a case of cross-border law enforcement,” just “rumors.”
28. Hong Kong officials said they would not allow mainland or foreign officials to enforce any law against anyone in Hong Kong.
29. Lee Bo, a Hong Kong bookseller who published works critical of top Beijing leaders, was abducted from Hong Kong in similar fashion to Mr. Xiao in 2015, along with three colleagues who were seized on the mainland and one in Thailand.
30. There have been several other cases of wealthy businessmen being kidnapped from Hong Kong and reappearing in the custody of mainland police, not all of them made public.
31. Observers say these are not isolated incidents. Setting aside the highly publicized booksellers’ case, which had political dimensions to it, there have been series of high-risk cross-border incidents over the last five years.
32. Steve Vickers, a political risk consultant and former head of the police criminal intelligence bureau during Hong Kong’s colonial era, said Hong Kong authorities were “powerless” to stop the mainland security forces from interfering, particularly as they often worked with local triad groups.
33. The UK government, which is nominally committed to ensuring faithful implementation of the “Basic Law” establishing Hong Kong’s governance and the former colony’s relationship with China, has condemned previous examples of Chinese intervention.