

## Research & Analysis / Source Summaries

Build balanced briefs on controversial topics — what sources say for and against a proposition.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Debate Prep, Decision Briefs, Policy Analysis

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Why This Prompt Exists

On controversial topics, people seek sources that confirm their beliefs and ignore the rest.

Balanced briefs prevent that.

You get:

- decisions made after hearing only one side of the evidence
- debates where each side cites different sources and talks past each other
- analysis that ignores contradictory evidence
- confirmation bias disguised as research
- stakeholders who trust your conclusion less because you didn't acknowledge counterarguments

But balanced briefs build trust:

- for: strongest arguments and evidence supporting the proposition
- against: strongest arguments and evidence opposing it
- source quality: not all evidence is equally credible
- weight of evidence: which side has stronger support
- open questions: what evidence is still missing

Without balance, you're an advocate, not an analyst.

This prompt builds an evidence-balanced brief for any proposition.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a policy analyst who builds balanced evidence briefs.

Your task is to summarize what sources say for and against a proposition.

Generate:

1. PROPOSITION (clearly stated)

- [One sentence stating the claim to evaluate]

2. FOR (arguments and evidence supporting the proposition)

- Argument 1: [claim] – Source: [citation] – Quality:

[High/Medium/Low]

- Argument 2: ...

- Argument 3: ...

3. AGAINST (arguments and evidence opposing the proposition)

- Argument 1: [claim] – Source: [citation] – Quality:

[High/Medium/Low]

- Argument 2: ...

- Argument 3: ...

4. WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT

- Which side has stronger empirical support?

- Where is the evidence strongest? Where is it weakest?
- What's the level of expert consensus (if known)?

#### 5. OPEN QUESTIONS

- What evidence is still missing?
- What would resolve this debate?

#### 6. BALANCED CONCLUSION (1-2 paragraphs)

- What we can conclude with confidence
- Where reasonable people can disagree

#### INPUTS:

Proposition to evaluate:

[E.G., "Four-day work weeks increase productivity"]

Sources (summaries or full text):

[PASTE SOURCE 1, SOURCE 2, SOURCE 3, ETC., WITH CITATIONS]

Decision context:

[E.G., "Deciding whether to pilot a 4-day week in Q3"]

Your prior position (for bias awareness):

[E.G., "I lean toward supporting the proposition"]

#### RULES:

- Include quality assessment for each source – not all evidence is equal
- Seek out sources that disagree with your prior position

- If evidence is one-sided, say so honestly
- Distinguish between empirical evidence and expert opinion
- Flag when sources argue past each other (different definitions or outcomes)

### How To Use It

- Build the “against” side first — it’s harder and more valuable.
- Include sources you disagree with — that’s how you stress-test your position.
- Use the “weight of evidence” assessment to guide decisions, not just vote count.
- Share the balanced brief with stakeholders before decisions — it builds trust.
- Update the brief as new evidence emerges — positions can change.

### Example Input

#### **Proposition to evaluate:**

“Four-day work weeks increase employee productivity”

#### **Sources:**

“Source A: Iceland study (2019-2021) — 2,500 workers, 4-day week, productivity maintained or improved in most workplaces. Source B: UK pilot (2022) — 61 companies, 73% reported increased productivity. Source C: Academic review (2023) — finds productivity gains in desk jobs, losses in customer-facing roles. Source D: Manufacturing association report — 4-day week impossible for production schedules.”

#### **Decision context:**

“Deciding whether to pilot a 4-day week in Q3 for our software engineering team”

### Why It Works

Most research summaries advocate for a position — they tell you what to think, not how to think.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- clear proposition (what exactly are we evaluating?)
- balanced presentation (for AND against, not just one side)
- source quality assessment (not all evidence is equal)
- weight of evidence (which side has stronger support)
- open questions (what we still don't know)

Great briefs don't tell you what to believe — they give you the evidence to decide for yourself.

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