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Research skills training manual for the
Research Services of the Myanmar Hluttaw

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The training material collected here was delivered to the research services of the Hluttaw between November 2016 and July 2017. The training was delivered in short, targeted sessions to small groups of researchers. The materials are designed so that experienced researchers or research managers can deliver these training courses to new staff or junior staff.

An electronic version of this book is available so the material for individual courses can be printed off when required. The electronic version also includes some Excel files for use in the statistics and Excel training.

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Induction for new staff

HLuttaw and general principles of Parliamentary research

This induction course provides guidance on the most important tasks in your work: enquires, writing briefings, and an introduction to the core policies underlying your work. It also provides an overview of the HLuttaw, the research service and your role.

HLuttaw

The HLuttaw is the national democratic body of Myanmar. Every five years, national general elections are held to elect Members of Parliament to the HLuttaw. The most recent general election was held in November 2015.

The HLuttaw is composed of three Chambers:

- Pyithu – 440 Members, of which 330 are directly elected (the remainder are appointed from the Myanmar military. This is the ‘lower house’ of the HLuttaw.
- Amoytha – 224 MPs, 268 directly elected and the rest military appointees
- Pyidaungsu – Composed of all the members of Pyithu and Amoytha, so 664 MPs

The National League for Democracy (NLD) won 79.4% of the seats contested in November 2015. This means that NLD MPs account for 60% of all MPs in the HLuttaw

For more information on the HLuttaw, please see the Key Issues briefing paper, produced by the research services to inform MPs elected in the 2015 election.

Research Services

Each HLuttaw has a research service. The role of the research services is to provide research material to MPs. This is done in two main ways which are discussed in more detail:

- In response to questions from MPs, known as enquires;
- In briefings published by the research services and available to all MPs.

Key principles of Parliamentary research:

- **Impartiality.** The fundamental and most important aspect of your work. All material provided to MPs must not include your own opinions, must not favour the opinions of any one political party (including the party of the MP asking the question) and must provide a balanced view of the topic. This is because you work for all MPs so cannot be seen to agree with some and not others.
- **Confidentiality:** All questions from and discussions with MPs must be treated confidentially. You must not reveal the contents of their questions to any other MPs or to anyone outside your team. This is because MPs must be free to ask you anything without the fear that it will appear in public.
- **Accuracy:** Your work must be correct. MPs must be able to rely on the information you provide in speeches and other work, so it must be correct and make use of good evidence, which is clearly sourced.

- **Clarity:** You must write clearly and in a way that makes it easy for MPs to understand your work. MPs are not always experts, so you must write information that can be easily read.
- **Timeliness:** You must complete enquires from MPs within two week or more quickly if possible. This is because MPs respond to current affairs and so need information quickly.

Exercise: impartiality

Impartiality is the most important feature of Parliamentary research. Impartiality means:

- Never show your political opinions
- Never make judgements based on your political opinions
- Treat all questions in the same way (answer them correctly and thoroughly)

We can demonstrate impartiality by:

- Writing with non-emotive language
- Ensuring that a range of different view are mentioned
- Use evidence to back up everything you say, and be clear where your evidence comes from.

Exercise

Please read the following sentences and suggest a more impartial way of phrasing them.

1. China has become a huge problem in South East Asia because it uses its wealth to dominate trade and economic development.
2. The leader of the Party said that foreign companies have made the economic situation worse. The Deputy Leader agreed that this is a major issue. So all foreign companies should be banned.
3. Everyone thinks that the Government needs reform. It was created after a terrible period in history and cannot cope with the modern world.
4. I think that it is better if all Governments cooperate to help people in poverty. Obviously, no Government alone can solve the problem.
5. Housing has always been an issue in the South of the country, and this has got worse recently.

Enquires

Enquiries will take up most of your time as research staff. They are questions from MPs, and you should answer any questions or requests, excluding:

- Speech writing
- Law writing
- Translation services
- Work directly unrelated to parliamentary duties

Most enquiries will be taken at the enquiries desk next to the Chamber. MPs will approach the desk and ask you a question. The most important thing to do is **WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN!**

When an MP asks you a question, you will have a form to fill in. The most important pieces of information to record are:

- The name of the MP
- Their preferred contact details, including their telephone number so you can call them back if you need more information.
- What is their question (as much detail as possible, see below for more info)
- Why do they need this information, this provides useful background and context
- What is the deadline – **all enquires must be answered within two weeks**

It is also a good idea to write your own name on the enquiry, and the date it was taken.

When taking down the MP's question, think about asking the following questions:

- What kind of information would you like on the subject? Are you interested in the law, or how the Government decided its policy? Or are they interested in numbers and statistics?
- Is this a constituency issue? What is the MP's constituency?
- Are you interested in a specific case? Can you tell me more about it?
- Are you interested in a specific place, region or country?
- Would you like to know what the different political parties have said about this? Are you interested in what NGOs have said about this?
- Is your enquiry related to a draft law, committee or a debate in the Hluttaw?
- Did you read about this in a newspaper? Do you know when the article was published and the name of the newspaper?
- How much detail would you like? Do you want a short report?

Be prepared to ask the MPs questions – if you are unclear of what they said or what they meant, it is better to ask as soon as possible, rather than risk providing the wrong information or not giving them what they want.

Once you have taken an enquiry, it will normally be logged on the ledger and in the enquiries database. You will be assigned enquires by the Research Manager of your section.

All enquiries should be completed within two weeks. But you should get a specific deadline – “asap” is not meaningful! If you are able to complete an enquiry more quickly, you should do this – MPs will be pleased and impressed. Remember that you do not always have to send lots of information. Sometimes a short response is all that is required.

Generally, MPs ask about topical or current issues. You can take the following steps to prepare:

- Read or listen to the news – keep on top of topical issues in Myanmar
- Keep informed about what is happening in the Hluttaw – what Bills are being examined and what topics are being debated.
- Read research briefings prepared by your section and the other research sections: [Pyidaunsu briefings](#), [Amoytha briefings](#), Pyithu briefings

Remember that your colleagues are always there to help, and may have answered similar question in the past. Sometimes you can search the enquiries database to see if a similar question has already been answered.

All your enquiry responses should be checked with someone more experienced before you send them to the MP.

If you are ever unsure whether you should write something or if you do not understand something, ASK A COLLEAGUE!

Exercise: enquiries

Exercise: The person leading the induction pretends to be an MP and asks the following question to the new staff.

They take the enquiries down as best they can, and are watched by their colleagues.

The group then discusses what they did well and what could be improved.

Example questions:

1. What is the value of agriculture in Myanmar?
2. What is Government policy on illegal encampments?
3. What is the process for amending the constitution of Myanmar
4. I cannot read this English article, please translate it.
5. How does Myanmar compare to the rest of the world?

Briefings

Briefings are longer documents that are written by research staff and are made available to MPs in oriented copies and via the internet.

MPs are very busy, need accurate and impartial material, and are not necessarily experts in all subjects. Therefore, regardless of how complex the subject matter, briefings must be:

- Relevant to current affairs and MPs interests
- Short and easy to read
- Well structured, including clear headings and titles
- Have a clear summary at the beginning
- Always be impartial

Please see the *Guide to writing research briefings* for further information.

Choosing a briefing topic

Often your research manager will choose a briefing for you to write, but in some cases, you will have to choose one. Briefings generally are on one of the following topics:

- Something that has been in the news a lot and is of great national interest
- Something that has been discussed in the Hluttaw, such as a piece of legislation
- Something that has been asked about frequently by MPs in enquiries

Always consult with colleagues and your research managers before beginning to write a briefing.

Keep it short

Generally, it is better to write a short briefing that someone will read, rather than a long and comprehensive briefing that will not be read by anyone. A few tips for keeping briefings short:

- Avoid repetition
- Make sure everything is important to say. If it is not exclude it.
- Use quotes sparingly. Try to paraphrase longer quotes if possible. Remember that quotes will rarely describe a situation as well as you can.
- Use Annexes for long lists, data or supplementary information that is useful, but not important to the overall document.

Easy to read

It is crucial that your briefing is easy to read. This means that it is much easier for people to understand what you are saying. Some essential points for clear writing:

- Write in short sentences, ideally shorter than 25 words.
- Write in short paragraphs, ideally around three sentences.
- Use headings. When the topic you are discussing changes, make sure that you insert a new heading.
- Break up the text as much as possible: bullet list, numbered lists, tables (for statistics and other things) and charts.

- Use numbers sparingly – they are very important, but select the most important and don't use too many in a paragraph – consider a table/chart instead.
- Remove technical language, or if you must use it, explain it clearly.

Well structured

It is important that your reader can follow your writing easily. Having a clear structure and lots of succinct headings makes this easier. The ideal structure of a briefing is outlined in the *Guide to writing Parliamentary briefings* (page 31). Some key things about headings are below:

- Headings must be informative. Instead of 'statistics', use something like, 'statistics on agriculture in Myanmar'
- Consider using a table of contents, and always use one if the briefing is more than three pages long.
- Consider using sub-headings. These will normally use a smaller font than the main headings, and will break up a long section into smaller, related sections.
- Generally, you should have a summary, an introduction, a section on government policy/actions/relevant legislation, a section on expert views and a section on international comparisons as a minimum. You may also find it useful to have a section on statistics.

Clear summaries

Writing a summary is one of the most important aspects of good briefing writing. A summary allows the reader to understand the key issues in a briefing without reading the whole thing. It allows them to judge whether they want to spend time reading the whole of the briefing. Some key aspects of a good summary:

- Write a sentence which summarises each section of your briefing
- Remove all technical language
- Do not include quotes, unless there is a very good reason
- Do not use citations
- Use short sentences and paragraphs as normal.

Always be impartial

Impartiality is very important in all aspects of your work – talking to MPs, answering enquires and writing briefings.

Impartiality is the most important feature of Parliamentary research. Impartiality means:

- Never show your political opinions
- Never make judgements based on your political opinions
- Treat all questions in the same way (answer them correctly and thoroughly)

We can demonstrate impartiality by:

- Writing with non-emotive language

- Ensuring that a range of different views are mentioned
- Use evidence to back up everything you say, and be clear where your evidence comes from.

References

When you use evidence to support your arguments or points, it is crucial that you show where your evidence comes from. You will do this using footnotes. These are explained in more detail in the *Guide to writing Parliamentary briefings* (page 26).

The key points:

Author (or organisation name), Title, Publisher (or url, date accessed), date published, page number

Exercise: summary writing

New staff will be given a document, working in pairs, take 15 minutes to summarise the document.

Be aware that:

- The summary should contain all the important information
- The summary should be very easy to understand
- It should be shorter than the document you are summarising

Summary of e-Governance report – Exercise answers

The summaries must refer to:

- That the Government has a national economic policy objective to establish an e-Government process
- That the e-Government system will help Government agencies to deliver more effective services to citizens
- The e-Government system will create demand for IT software and hardware, therefore boosting the sector and economic growth

The summaries could refer to:

- E-Government will enable greater citizen participation
- The social, education economic and health sectors will be assisted by E-Government
- The E-Government proposal has received financial assistance from international companies and organisations

Use Myanmar e-Governance introduction as the exercise material:

<http://www.mcit.gov.mm/news/myanmar-e-governance-master-plan.html>

Training: Critical thinking

'Critical thinking' seeks to identify the strengths and weaknesses in arguments. Learning about critical thinking serves two purposes: to improve the quality of your work; and to help you spot problems in the things you read or hear.

Arguments

Arguments are a series of statements (called premises) that are designed to support a particular conclusion. Some arguments are strong, and some are weak. In critical thinking, you will learn about some of the signs which reveal weak arguments.

Examples of **strong** arguments:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. I live in Nay Pyi Taw | 1. I live in Nay Pyi Taw |
| 2. Nay Pyi Taw is in Myanmar | 2. Some people in Nay Pyi Taw work at the Hluttaw |
| 3. Therefore, I live in Myanmar | 3. Therefore, I might work at the Hluttaw |

The two premises (statements 1 and 2) are true, and the conclusion (3) is true.

Examples of a **weak** arguments:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. I live in Nay Pyi Taw | 1. I live in Nay Pyi Taw and so do some of my friends |
| 2. Everyone who lives in Nay Pyi Taw can drive | 2. You are my friend |
| 3. Therefore, I can drive | 3. Therefore, you live in Nay Pyi Taw |

Some of the premises are not true, or the conclusions do not 'follow' from the premises (which means the premises can be true, and the conclusion false).

Assumptions

An assumption is a premise in an argument that is not stated but is required for the conclusion to make sense and follow from the argument. **Assumptions are not all bad** or all good – some are necessary for good arguments. But when you analyse an argument it is sensible to start by thinking about what has been assumed so that you can test the strength of the assumptions.

The vast majority of complex arguments involve assumptions. For example:

- The flowers are beautiful so I am going to give some to my Mother
- You should eat lots vegetables because they are good for your health
- Campaigning hard in the referendum campaign left all the politicians exhausted

Fallacies

Arguments often display certain characteristics which should make you consider carefully whether to agree with them. Fallacies are normally due to assumptions about the world, or

about human behaviour. Some fallacies affect the thinking of individuals and entire organisations, meaning that all arguments from some sources can be legitimately questioned.

Below are some famous fallacies which are particularly relevant to the Parliamentary research or public policy context. I have explained the nature of the fallacy and then given an example of an argument which displays the fallacy.

Authority Bias

This is the tendency to accept the view of someone or a group in a position of authority, often without question and in some cases despite evidence to the contrary.

- Invest in Icelandic Banks because the recommendation comes from a successful investment bank.
- The director of the campaign has won many elections before so we should follow his advice.
- The policy didn't work before when he was in charge so it will not work now.

People or groups in authority are not always wrong, but sometimes they may be (if an argument is discredited because of the person making the argument, then this is called an *ad hominem* argument, for example, "I don't agree because he was once in prison.")

Confirmation bias

This bias is particularly relevant to policy making: If something happens that I am trying to achieve, it is due to my actions. If it does not happen, I need to do more of what I am doing. Examples that confirm this are celebrated, examples that contradict it are ignored or made to appear like confirmation. This bias is related to 'coincidence' – the idea that two things may appear to be related, but are not.

- I sweep my door step every day and there are no tigers round here. Once I failed to sweep, but there were still no tigers because of all the sweeping I had done before.
- My briefing papers are a very popular. I have a file of compliments from MPs. I throw away any complaints.

Sunk cost/gamblers fallacy

Since this policy or course of action has taken up so much of my time or money, I should complete it. Often gamblers are characterised as thinking that since they have already bet so much on a certain outcome, it is worth continuing to bet on it because they must win eventually.

- The Government has spent £billions planning a new railway. The analysis shows that it will not improve the transport network in the long term. But they should complete it because they have already spent so much planning it.
- I prepared for an interview using a complicated example that took a long time to plan. The interview does not cover this topic, but I should use the example anyway because I spent so long preparing it.

Availability bias

The world conforms to how I see it. I think that the world follows the patterns I see regularly, and the examples I am familiar with are true in other situations as well.

- Everyone I speak to gained nothing from university, so there is no need to fund more universities.
- We all know our way around this place, so what is the point in paying for signs or maps?

Herding, or the social proof fallacy

This tendency occurs when majority opinion strongly favours one view point. There is a tendency for commentators to agree with the majority viewpoint, and ignore or argue against evidence which is contradictory to the majority view point.

- My survey suggests that between 46% and 56% of people favour Toyota cars. But all the other surveys show that Toyota are the most popular, so I will say a majority prefer them.
- The government sends a letter to me saying “your neighbours use less power than you between 7PM and 9PM.” So now I turn off the heating in the evening.

Framing

This is not a fallacy, but is something to be aware of in your own work, and when reading arguments in other pieces of work. How an argument is phrased can change its meaning and impact. This is particularly important in the context of Parliamentary research, where impartiality is crucial.

The following three sentences are consistent with each other and could be based on the same evidence but convey something very different.

1. The government should seek to help addicts recover so they no longer need drugs.
2. Drugs are responsible for most crime, ill health and social breakdown in society.
3. Policy responses to drug addiction vary around the world.

Sources:

A clear introduction to many different types of fallacies is **Rolf Dobelli, *The art of thinking clearly*, Sceptre Books, 2013** (<http://en.bookfi.net/book/2261102>)

A free online resource for learning more about critical thinking in general is [The Critical Thinking Community](http://www.criticalthinking.org) (www.criticalthinking.org)

Exercise: Critical thinking

Arguments

What, if anything, is wrong with the following arguments?

A)

1. I live in Nay Pyi Taw
2. Vladimir Putin lives in Russia
3. Therefore, I work at the Hluttaw

B)

1. Before living in Nay Pyi Taw, I lived in London
2. Nay Pyi Taw is a new city
3. Therefore, I have lived in London longer than I have lived in Nay Pyi Taw

C)

4. If I live in Nay Pyi Taw, then I have visited the water fountain park
5. The water fountain park is beautiful
6. Therefore, I have visited something beautiful

Assumptions

List the assumptions in the following arguments

A) If Trump wins then Putin will have a puppet in the White House

B) When the robots take all the manual jobs we will be paid more

C) The training courses she has attended prepare her well for answering enquires

Fallacies

Identify the fallacies used in the following arguments. Each argument may exhibit more than one fallacy. You may also like to consider what assumptions underlie the arguments.

1. There have been over 100 official studies published since 2010 which suggest that free school meals are a good thing, so they must be.
2. I have always used this method to draw charts in excel and everyone I teach understands it, so it must be the best method
3. Generally the other group do not have as much work as us, so they are lazy. When they do complete more work than us, the work is easier.
4. Free university places make society better because skill levels are higher. It would be unfair to deny the next generation this opportunity and make society worse.
5. The evidence shows that clean drinking water saves lives. The Government has not prioritised this, so they must not care about saving lives, and their other priorities must be bad.

Customers

Training: Dealing with difficult customers

This training does not prepare you for all eventualities when dealing with customers, but it does provide some strategies for dealing with some examples of challenging customer behaviour.

General principles of good customer service:

- Know your customers and what they expect (you can control this sometimes)
- Respond to and learn from what your customers want (and show that you have responded)
- Be patient with your customers
- Know your own products, your team's expertise, and your management policies
- Always be respectful to your customers

Types of problems and solutions

Issue: MP asks for translation or for you to write a speech for them

Solution:

- Know your management policies (explain why you cannot do something)
- Publicise your management policies (posters of what you can and cannot do)
- Suggest another option – the IR dept?; a source for a translation
- Provide some research that may be useful

Issue: MP demands lots of work with a short deadline

Solution:

- Ask why they need it so quickly – is there another way to help them?
- Be prepared. You should be familiar with briefings and past research. Also major events
- Explain why you think you cannot provide the information
- Provide something – a bit of material soon, and more later may work
- Send links to documents, contact details for other organisations or very short analysis

Issue: An MP does not like what you provide and asks for something else, or more

Solution:

- Sometimes this is not a problem – MPs are entitled to ask for more
- Keep a record of their question, so they cannot say you provided the wrong material
- Be confident – you are the expert. If it is the best available information, then say this
- Always keep MPs informed about your progress, particularly for difficult enquires. Then any problems will not come as a surprise and they will not be disappointed

The other thing to be aware of is that if a complaint is serious, there is a formal complaints procedure in the Management Policies guide. It states that:

1. All serious complaints recorded by research manager
2. Research manager and research involved will address complaints directly with MP

- a. If the complained is unwarranted, the Director should deal with it
- 3. If the MP is not satisfied with the response, then the Director will deal with it

Resist pressure to change a briefing or the content of an enquiry. If you do this then you risk undermining your impartiality.

Training: Asking follow up questions

Taking enquiries from MPs should be a conversation. You should try to engage with them so that you:

- Understand the enquiry
- Know what the MP expects (the format, length and type of response, as well as the subject matter)
- Understand why the MP wants the material

After the MP has told you what they want, it is important that you are able to ask questions which draw out more information so that you are confident you understand the question.

There are few things to note about all questions:

- Ask them one at a time
- Keep them simple and easy to understand
- Be clear about why you are asking a question

There are different kinds of question:

Type of question	What it is	When to use it
Open questions	A question with no limit on an acceptable answer. <i>“What sort of material are you interested in?”</i>	At the beginning of a conversation; when you need to get a lot of information.
Probing questions	Questions which follow a certain previous answer and try to clarify that topic. <i>“What aspect of this are you interested in?”</i> <i>“How would you like this information presented?”</i>	After you know the broad topic they are interested in, but if you still need more information or are unsure of the meaning.
Leading questions	A question which encourages someone to give the answer you want.	When you know what you can provide and want them to agree.

“Can we give you this information next week?”

Closed questions

Questions with only a limited number of answers.

Generally at the end of a conversation when you have got all the important information.

“Do you need this soon?”

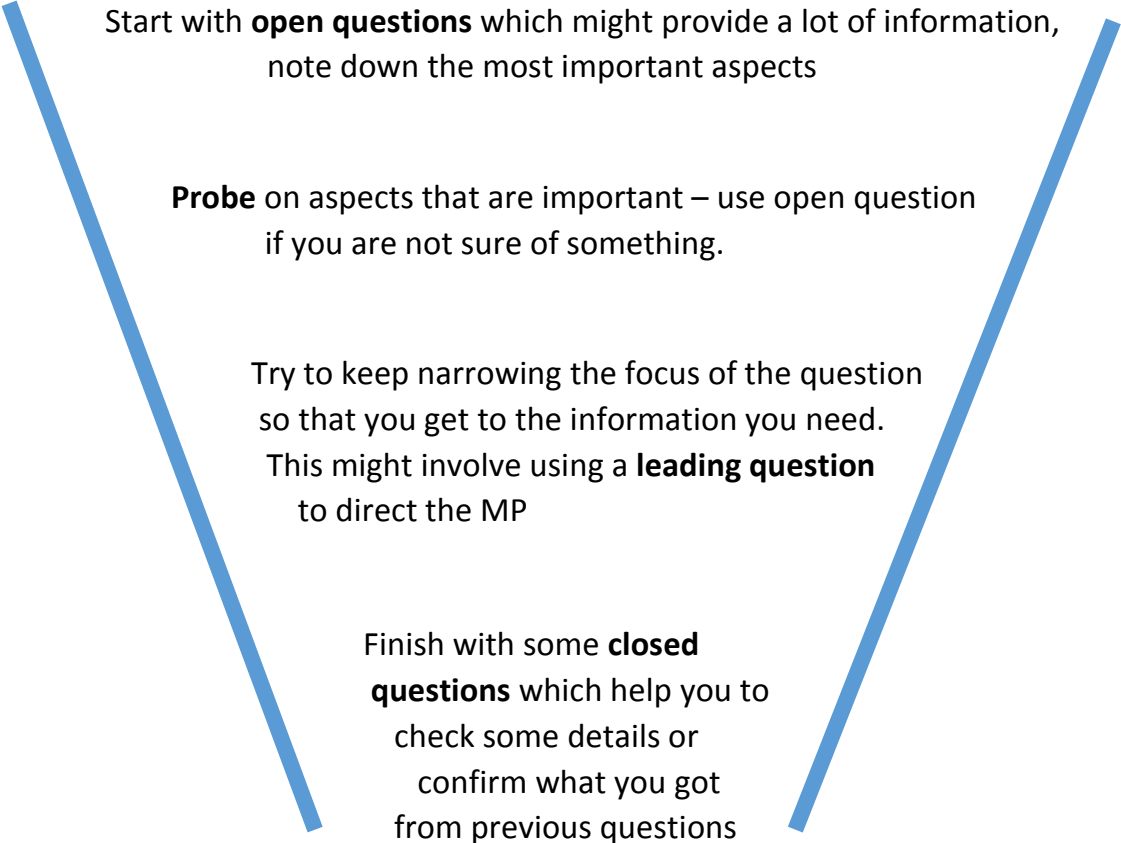
“Are you interested in policy or statistics?”

These questions should be used together, generally starting with open questions, then probing on the information that you receive, then asking some leading questions to check what you have found out, and finishing with closed questions.

Also note that you can repeat this process several times, or ask several of each type of question. But it is a good idea to ask a logical stream of questions – so you would normally start broad with questions that can be answered in any way the MP wants, and get more specific, to questions where you are restricting what they give you what you need.

Funnelling questions

The process described above (starting broad and getting more specific) is called funnelling:



Start with **open questions** which might provide a lot of information, note down the most important aspects

Probe on aspects that are important – use open question if you are not sure of something.

Try to keep narrowing the focus of the question so that you get to the information you need. This might involve using a **leading question** to direct the MP

Finish with some **closed questions** which help you to check some details or confirm what you got from previous questions

Exercise: Asking follow up questions

The following exercise is designed to test your ability to ask follow-up questions that will help you to understand what an MP wants.

Use the techniques and strategies taught in the training session to find out more about what the MP wants in each of the scenarios below.

1. I want to compare Myanmar to other countries.
2. How many unemployed people are there?
3. What is Government policy on illegal encampments
4. Tell me about the ADB.
5. Why is trade so low?

Evidence

Training: Web searching

The internet is the key source of information for almost all enquiries and briefing papers. However, it can be difficult to find enough information to adequately cover a subject, or to find a specific bit of information.

The following key tips should help you to find information. The exercise after this training is intended to allow you to practice your skills.

1. Always use Google and Chrome

Google is the fastest and most advanced search engine in the world. Although other search engines exist, Google provides the most predictable results and covers the most webpages.

Chrome is the Google browser – the search engine is built into the browser meaning that is easier to use this browser to deliver search results.

Some key things you can do in Chrome to help you search:

- Type directly into the address bar. You do not have to go to Google to start searching, just type and press Enter.
- Translate the page to English, or Myanmar (right click on a page and select translate this page).
- You can save a search and return to the results later. Just click the star symbol in the right of the address bar.
- The address bar will 'auto-complete'. Start typing something and it will make suggestions for frequently typed phrases or existing websites.

2. Use quotation marks to narrow searches

If you put your search terms within quotation marks, the results that are returned will contain exactly that phrase. So, searching for *donald trump* return any page about or related to him; searching for *“Even for Donald Trump, the distance is still fun to think about”* will return articles with exactly that phrase.

You can also do this with individual words: searching for *walk* will return results for *walking, walked, walker, walkers*. But searching for *“walk”* will not return any results that do not feature this precise word.

3. Use the minus symbol

If you want to limit the results returned because you are getting too much information, use the '-' symbol. Webpages featuring any word immediately following this symbol will be excluded from your results. For example if you are interested in Donald Duck, searching for *donald* will not be much good because most of the results will be for *Donald Trump*, you could search for *donald-trump*. This will return results featuring the donald but not the word trump, and might be more useful.

Other symbols you can use:

- '+' Returns pages showing only both of the words surrounding it.

- ‘|’ Returns pages showing either of the words surrounding it
- ‘~’ Returns pages involving words similar to the word following it

4. Searching websites

Often there is a search function on websites (normally in the top right hand corner). However, these search engines often do not work as well as Google or throw up different results. It is therefore better to use Google and the following techniques:

- Search a specific site by typing *site:www.bbc.co.uk then your query*
- To search across a kind of site, type *site:.mm then your query*

5. Choice of language

An essential skill in developing web searching skills is the ability to choose appropriate search terms. Some tips for better searching:

- Start broad and get more precise: start with a single word or phrase, if you cannot find what you want, use more words or more detailed phrase
- Consider synonyms (words with the same or similar meaning). If you cannot think of a synonym, consider using the thesaurus function in Microsoft Word: open a document and type in the word you are interested, right click on the word and then hover over ‘synonyms’.

Exercise: Web searching

The following exercises are designed to help you practice some of the skills mentioned in the web searching session.

Using and computer and working in small groups, try to answer the following questions:

1. Find Theresa May’s birthday using the UK Government website.
2. Find a copy the Myanmar Government’s e-Governance strategy.
3. Find the Myanmar Government’s Citizens Budget.
4. Find five articles which present a balanced view of the situation in Rakhine
5. How many people were unemployed in Myanmar in 2014 (find a document which shows this, not a database)

Training: Assessing evidence

Good enquiry responses and briefing papers depend on good evidence. Every claim you make should be supported by evidence. If you cannot find evidence for something, then be very cautious about stating it in an enquiry.

The role of evidence

Evidence fulfils several roles:

- Proves that something is correct
- Supports a claim that you have made
- Provides a reason for a certain course of action
- Demonstrates your impartiality

However, some evidence is good evidence and some evidence is bad evidence. Before using evidence in an enquiry response, it is important to ensure you have picked the best evidence.

Spotting bad evidence

The characteristics of bad evidence are:

- Internally inconsistent – facts presented in a source cannot all be true at once.
- Externally inconsistent – facts presented are different from those presented in other documents
- Uses no sources, or spurious sources
- Is out of date
- Uses informal language – generally a sign that material is not in its final form or is not appropriate for Parliamentary briefings
- Methodology is unclear or not mentioned
- Author's background means that they are biased

Spotting good evidence

The characteristics of good evidence are:

- Internally consistent
- Externally corroborated
- Well sourced (referencing good sources)
- Written in formal language
- Clear conclusions and arguments
- Is produced by a reliable source or author

Good sources

Below are some general points to consider about sources (not all bad things):

- Date published (is it too old to be useful)
- Author – are they known to hold a particular viewpoint?
- Publication (newspaper/journal/organisation). Does it have a particular agenda or viewpoint

- Is it in agreement with other publications?
- Has it been cited in other publications (use Google Scholar)

Below are a list of good and bad sources. Please note that the usefulness of all sources has to be measured in context – some will be good in some cases but not in others.

Good sources	Bad sources
International organisations (World Bank, IMF, EU)	Personal Facebook, Twitter other social media
Governments	Personal blogs (including on BlogSpot, Medium)
News Agencies: BBC, Sky, Aljazeera	Websites which reproduce other work (find original)

Exercise: Assessing evidence

You have been asked to find information on bamboo farming in ASEAN countries.

Assess the quality of the following sources. The following checklist will help you decide if they are a good source to quote from:

- Date published (is it too old to be useful)
- Author – are they known to hold a particular viewpoint?
- Publication (newspaper/journal/organisation). Does it have a particular agenda or viewpoint
- Is it in agreement with other publications?
- Has it been cited in other publications (use Google Scholar)

1. http://www.value-chains.org/dyn/bds/docs/497/Marsh_OxfamMPDFBamboo.pdf
2. http://growinginclusivemarkets.org/media/cases/Vietnam_MekongBamboo_2011.pdf
3. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x2450e/x2450e0a.htm>
4. <http://www.mmbiztoday.com/articles/bamboo-exporters-seek-foreign-support>
5. <http://asianfarmers.org/?p=4891>
6. <http://www.inbar.int/sites/default/files/INBAR%20South%20Asia%20Strategy%202016-2020.pdf>

Writing briefings

Training: Briefing writing Masterclass

This session is for experienced researchers and uses the example of a House of Commons briefing to explore best practice in designing, writing and publishing a briefing.

We will be using the House of Commons briefing on *Food Waste* as an example. It can be accessed at: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7552>

Cover

- Titles should be as short as possible, whilst being informative.
- Always include the most recent date that the briefing was updated
- Use the Hluttaw research service branding. This is important to tell readers that this is from the Hluttaw and is therefore independent of Government.

Contents page

- Rough structure:
 - Definition and statistics
 - Impact and why the subject is important
 - Policy/legislation
 - Any other initiatives
 - International comparisons
 - The future
- 1. Major heading – the overall topic
 - 1.1. Sub-heading – details of the topic
 - Minor heading – Detail of the sub-topics
- Also note that international facts are often included in other sections. If a comparison is important then this discussion should be included within another section.
- Consider using questions as the name for headings – this can

Summary

- Key facts in first paragraph. No need for an introduction to the Hluttaw or the purpose of the briefing (your branding or the disclaimer should do this).
- Each paragraph of the summary describes the contents of a section of the briefing.
- No technical terms, sources or footnotes.
- Short sentences (30 words max) and short paragraphs (3 sentences max)

Graphics/images/statistics/graphs

- Use the 'snipping tool' (which is a tool that can be downloaded onto your computer). If someone else has produced the graphic or the chart that you need, then use that but remember to source it correctly so that someone else can find where it came from
- In any charts or graphs, always include title, indication of where you are examining, what the units are that you are using, consider whether it is easy to see what the graph says.

- Ensure statistics are used sparingly, that they are rounded, that all units are mentioned.

Formatting of text

- Use bullet lists when appropriate.
- Numbered lists can also be very useful
- Consider using boxes in the text if a key fact needs explaining.

Quotes/paraphrasing

- Use block quotes for longer quotes (more than a sentence). This means indenting the quoted material and reducing the font size by one point.
- Use normal quotes for significant words which are important to quote on their own.
- Paraphrase the vast majority of anything you are quoting – this is the best way to make material available in a way which other people can use.

Footnotes

- Every piece of evidence that is used must be sourced correctly.
- All footnotes should follow the same format (Author or organisation which created the document; Title; Date created; Date accessed if a webpage)
- Ensure that titles are hyperlinked (no urls showing). Do this by copying the url of the intended location, selecting the title in the footnote, pressing CONTROL and K, then pasting the url and pressing RETURN
- Consider using hyperlinked words of statements to link to important information or sources directly from the text of a document.
- Use *ibid* when a footnote refers to the same source as the previous footnote.
- Use other Hluttaw publications or briefing papers as the source if you think they are the best source or if more information that may be relevant can be found in that source

Legislation

- Ensure all legislation is linked to (ideally hyperlinked from text and footnoted)
- Ensure that the date that the legislation came into force or was enacted into law is mentioned clearly
- Some clear explanation of how the legislation is relevant to the policy area under discussion.

International comparisons

- Always make clear why you are providing international comparisons – are they very different from the Myanmar case, or are they very similar.
- Do not feel that you always have to include a lot of international comparisons. It is often a good idea to include a few neighbouring countries, but sometimes just one interesting comparison will be fine.
- Often a good idea to use respected international bodies as the main source of comparison, for example the World Bank, the OECD, the EU or similar.

Related policy areas and the future

- Often the last sections in a briefing, this is an opportunity to show how this area fits into the broader policies of the government
- An opportunity to include lots of NGOs and other bodies that may have published in this area.
- Include Parliamentary material to show that Parliament has considered this area
- May also be a good opportunity to link to and market other research by the Hluttaw

Back cover or disclaimer of the briefing

- Always include the role and impartiality of the Hluttaw research service, and the copyright
- Always mention the legal position of the research (not legal advice)
- Mention ways to get in touch with the author or the research service for complaints or thoughts.

Training: writing legislation briefings

One of the core purposes of the Hluttaw is to create legislation. MPs must decide whether to support or oppose proposed legislation. In order to do this they must have access to impartial material which explains clearly what the legislation is intended to do and the views of relevant experts on the significance of the legislation.

The Hluttaw research services are in a unique position to provide this kind of briefing. The Management Policies of the Research Services state that "...briefings will be written on major pieces of legislation..."

Which pieces of legislation?

The research services do not have enough time to produce briefings on all pieces of legislation that come before the Hluttaw. Research managers must decide which pieces of legislation count as 'major' and therefore require briefings. There are several things to consider, similar to the considerations when deciding which topical briefings to write about:

- How much media attention has the legislation received? If major news organisations have featured it multiple times, then consider writing about it.
- Have MPs been placing lots of enquiries about the legislation?
- Have NGOs or other organisations (such as the UN) published reports on the legislation.
- Your own judgement – do you as an experienced Parliamentary researcher think that the legislation is significant for Myanmar and so MPs should be informed about it.

Which research department does the work?

One important thing to consider is which research department will produce briefings on each piece of legislation. There is no point in work being duplicated by more than one research department.

One way to avoid this is for the research service of the Hluttaw into which the legislation is introduced to cover that piece of legislation (for example, if a piece of legislation is introduced in Amyotha, then the Amyotha research section would complete the initial briefing.)

The Bill Box

This is a folder (which can be an electronic folder) which consist of useful or interesting documents referring to a Bill. It is very useful to keep this material all in one place so that you can answer enquires about a Bill quickly and write briefings that include all the relevant information.

One person should be assigned to maintaining the Bill Box – whilst the Bill is in their Hluttaw they will monitor the Hluttaw publications (questions and speeches), the press, government publications and other organisations. When something relevant to the bill is published it will either be printed and kept in a box, or saved to a folder specific to the Bill.

When the Bill passes to another Hluttaw, the researcher will share the box or folder with a researchers in the next Hluttaw who can then use the box to inform any updates they write. The new researcher will also add to the box

Where to get information?

Similar sources will be used to find information about legislation as for other enquires and briefing papers, with some important differences:

- Global New Light of Myanmar – key source for the text of legislation, the timetable for the introduction of legislation and government plans and policies around legislation (see this link for an archive of past editions: <http://www.moi.gov.mm/npe/nlm/>)
- Meetings departments – the text of legislation should be available here, and they are the best source of information on the timetable for legislation as well.
- Other Myanmar press
- NGOs and other organisations working in the policy area.

What to include

Summary: answer the following questions with one or two lines:

- When was the Bill introduced to the Hluttaw, and by who?
- What problem is the Bill seeking to address?
- What are the main provisions of the Bill?
- What do different stakeholders generally think about the Bill?
- Is there evidence that the Bill might need to be amended?
- Does the Government support the proposed amendments?
- What is the next step for the Bill?

1. Introduction

Background to the Bill

- When was the Bill introduced?
- Who introduced it? The Government or is it a Private Members Bill?
- What are the main provisions of the Bill (summarise them)?
- Describe the stages that the Bill has gone through (for example, has it already been considered by the other Hluttaw?).
- What are the next steps for the Bill? Give dates if possible.

What is the problem that the Bill is seeking to address?

- State clearly what problem the Bill is seeking to address.
- Give definitions of technical words so that MPs understand the problem.

Is the problem important in Myanmar?

- Give facts and figures to show how important the problem is – remember, it might not be important! If there are no facts and figures available, say so.
- How does Myanmar compare to other countries?
- Do trends indicate that the problem is getting worse or better in Myanmar?

2. Government actions

Get this information from an official source such as a Government website or Hluttaw statement.

Government policy

- Give a statement defining the principle of how the government said it will address the problem the Bill is seeking to address.
- What actions has the Government taken to implement its policy?
- What future actions are the Government planning?
- What does the Government think about the Bill?

3. Analysis

Identify the most talked about issues about the Bill. Give each issue a sub heading in this section. Focus on the most important issues.

For example, if a Bill is seeking to reduce violence against women, you might have subheadings on “punishments for offenders”, “compensation for victims”, “the role of the police” and “funding of violence reduction programmes”.

Issues

- Explain the issue.
- What clause of the Bill does the issue relate to (if any)?
- How do stakeholders, including MPs and Committees, think the Bill should be changed on that issue?
- What is the Government’s opinion on the issue? Explain if it agrees or disagrees with the proposed changes.
- What evidence is there from other sources such as academics, books or journals to support or reject the opinions? What are the main pros and cons of the different opinions?
- OPTIONAL: How do the opinions interact with other legislation such as on human rights?
- OPTIONAL: Will certain groups of people be particularly negatively impacted (women, ethnic minorities etc.) by an opinion?

International examples (this is an optional section depending on the availability of evidence and time)

- Has a similar law been successfully introduced in another country? If so, why was it successful?
- Has a similar law been unsuccessful in another country? If so, why was it unsuccessful?
- What international agreements are there on this issue? Is the law considered international best practice?

4. Conclusion

In this section you should use the information given in previous sections to answer the points below. The answers you give are your conclusion.

If you cannot answer the point you need to either find more information, or say that on the basis of the evidence available it is not possible to answer the point.

- What are the key pros and cons of the Bill as described by stakeholders?
- What are the main areas where stakeholders have asked for changes to the Bill?
- Explain whether these opinions are supported by strong evidence. Ensure you state clearly where the evidence is from and why you consider it to be strong (such as based on an academic survey, or expert opinion).
- Has the Government said it will support these changes to the Bill? If so, why?
- Has the Government said it will **not** support these changes to the Bill? If so, why?
- Give the next steps for the Bill (such as Committee stage).

Training: making international comparisons

MPs are very interested in how Myanmar compares to other countries, particularly countries in SE Asia. Therefore it is a good idea to include a comparison between the situation in Myanmar and other countries in all briefing papers, legislative briefing papers and enquiry responses if time allows. Briefing

The topic that you are covering will change the type of comparison that you choose to make. For example

- Statistics are a very useful way to compare countries. Consider using a chart or graph to illustrate the difference between countries.
- The impact of law in different countries is normally a crucial way to analyse a piece of legislation.
- How policy is adopted in different countries provides a useful way to compare the situation in different countries.

Choosing which comparisons to make

Myanmar MPs are generally interested in SE Asian countries (particularly ASEAN countries). This is sensible for a number of reasons:

- ASEAN countries are **geographically** close to Myanmar
- Some are **economically** close to Myanmar
- Some are **socially** similar
- But some ASEAN countries are also very **different** from Myanmar on these criteria

The key point is that a comparison should be *interesting*. Some countries are so similar to Myanmar that a detailed comparison is not worth making (unless the point of the question is to demonstrate a striking similarity).

One tip is that if a **comparison shows something interesting** then it is worth making.

Sources:

The sources below are some useful resources which bring together information on different countries and present it in a way which makes it easy to understand.

Statistics:

World Economic Forum *Competitiveness index*: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-index/> See also:

<https://ourworldindata.org/> (v good)

<http://www.nationmaster.com/>

<http://www.oecd.org/statistics/compare-your-country.htm>

<http://www.indexmundi.com/factbook/compare>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/rankorderguide.html>

Policy:

Finding databases of international policy comparisons depends on the academic interest in a particular policy area. Some areas are better covered by this type of material than others. Below are some examples of policy comparisons which may be useful (Note that many do not include direct comparison with Myanmar).

Constitutions: <https://www.constituteproject.org/>

Tax policy: <http://www.oecd.org/tax/tax-policy/tax-database.htm>

Human rights: http://unimelb.libguides.com/human_rights_law/comparative

Health policy: <https://geographyas.info/health-issues/comparing-healthcare-services/>

Education policy: <http://www.enic-naric.net/educational-systems-country-profiles-and-other-tools.aspx>

Legal comparisons:

Comparing laws can be difficult, and often you may not be able to make a detailed comparison.

The World Legal Information Institute features some guidance on how to compare countries: <http://www.worldlii.org/>

Otherwise you may want to search “law comparison” AND the topic you are interested in.

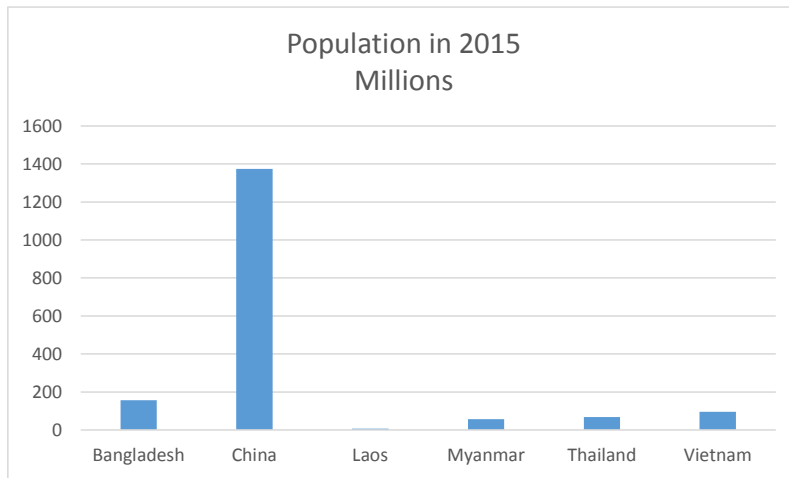
Burmese law is listed on <http://www.burmalibrary.org/show.php?cat=404>

One corporate and business law comparison site: <https://iclg.com/>

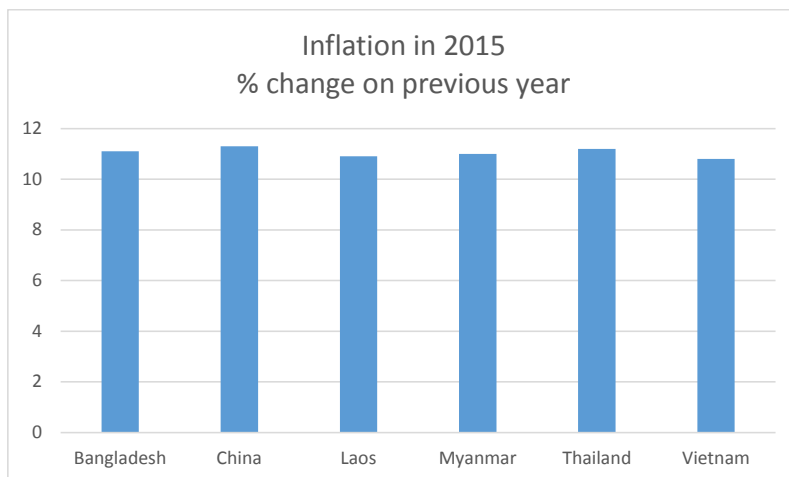
Yale Law School includes country by country guides to the legal systems: <http://library.law.yale.edu/all-countries>

Exercise: international comparisons

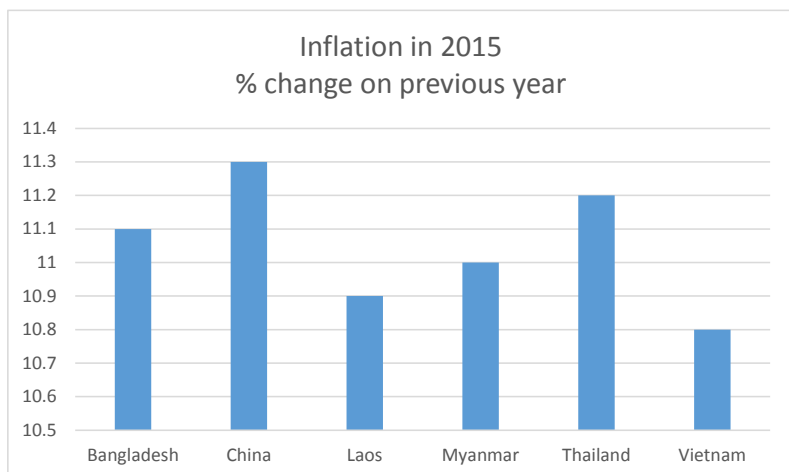
1. Identify what is wrong with the following comparison (and what is good about it):



2. Identify what is wrong with the following comparison (and what is good about it):



3. Identify what is wrong with the following comparison (and what is good about it):



Training: Using quotations and paraphrasing

Providing evidence for your claims is an important part of doing research in the Hluttaw. Quoting directly from sources or paraphrasing a source is a very useful way of providing evidence for your claims.

Quotations:

- The EXACT words that were used in the original source must be used. Do not change them.
- Sentences can be truncated (you can use part of the original quotation) by putting three full-stops around the quotation: "...quotation..."
- If you want to add an original quotation, you can do this by adding square brackets: "...quotation...[your addition]...quotation." Only do this if the quotation does not make any sense without an addition.
- You can quote a single word if you think it is particularly significant.
- If you are using a long quotation (longer than two lines of text) then you should use a block quote. This is a new paragraph, indented by one tab, and in a smaller font:

Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation
Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation
Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation Quotation

- You must **ALWAYS REFERENCE EVERY QUOTATION** with a footnote to the precise place in a book or the precise webpage this information came from.
- Always mention who said a quotation or where it came from immediately before the quote, or immediately after it. The Speaker said "quotation"; or "quotation" according to the Speaker.

Paraphrasing:

This is a way of describing what someone has said in a way which is clearer or suits your audience better.

- Paraphrasing makes a quotation shorter. If you are paraphrasing something and it ends up longer, consider re-writing.
- The paraphrased version must be easier to read than the original. For example:
 - Remove technical language
 - Use short sentences
 - Use numbers sparingly
- The convention in Pyithu is to put paraphrased sentences in quotation marker: "paraphrase". This is not the convention in other publications. If you want to make it clearer, consider putting paraphrase in single quotation marks: 'paraphrase'.
- You can put a single word in quotation marks from the original source into a paraphrased quotation if you think that is useful 'paraphrase "...quotation..." paraphrase'.
- Always reference your paraphrased sentence using a footnote at the end of the paraphrase.

- Always mention who said the original quote before or after the paraphrased version, but make it clear that it is not a direct quotation. Say something like ...The Speaker suggested that 'paraphrase'.

Training exercise: Using quotations and paraphrasing

Using the Myanmar e-Governance strategy document, practice your quotations and paraphrasing skills using the following exercises:

1. Directly quote the most important sentence from paragraph 2
2. Quote part of the last sentence from paragraph 3
3. Paraphrase paragraph 4
4. Paraphrase paragraph 5 but include a direct quotation in your paraphrased sentence.
5. Quote from anywhere in the document, but add some of your own words to improve meaning.

Training: writing conclusions

Conclusions come at the end of briefings. You do not always have to include a conclusion, for example in factual or statistical briefings. Normally, conclusions set out the author's opinion after all the evidence has been discussed. Briefings in the Hluttaw must not do this – **the conclusion must be impartial** and so must not reveal your opinions.

However, MPs often want a briefing to end with 'an answer', so sometimes conclusions can be valuable. Conclusions also provide an opportunity to very briefly repeat the main points that have been raised in the briefing.

Some general points about conclusions:

- Impartial – no reference to your opinions on the topic or what you think is the answer
- Short – no more than three paragraphs, and preferably only one paragraph long
- No new information – everything that you mention in your conclusion should be included somewhere in the briefing before. If it is not, then move it to an earlier section.
- Sometimes, you may include some thoughts about possible next steps or future problems (looking ahead is part of the role of conclusions)

What to include in a conclusion

You cannot give your opinions, and you cannot provide a decision which agrees with one side of an argument.

You can answer the following questions:

- Why is a topic important to Myanmar?
- What are the most important issues?
- What is the Government going to do? Or what has the Government done
- What do major stakeholders think the Government should do (including the Hluttaw)?

You can comment on arguments and other pieces of evidence in the following ways:

- Is something true or false?
- The usefulness of a piece of evidence or a report, or if it lacks clarity
- The likelihood of an event
- What evidence is missing
- The impact of a proposal (or possible impact)

If you cannot answer a question that has been suggested in your research or you feel that the evidence does not allow you to answer any of the questions above, then you must say so – this can be a valuable conclusion.

Phrases to think about in conclusions:

<i>Phrases not to use</i>	<i>Phrases to use</i>
I think that the evidence shows...	On balance, the evidence appears to suggest
This report does not make sense to me	This report lacks clarity and has inconsistencies
In the future this will happen	The evidence suggests that this is likely in the future
I don't know the answer/There is no answer	From the evidence, it is not clear whether...

Training – footnotes and references

References are information about the sources for the statements made in a document.

The main ways of providing references are as footnotes (which appear at the bottom of the page on which the statement is made) or endnotes (which appear at the end of the document.) There is no real difference between footnotes and endnotes – they serve the same function of providing information about sources. They have the same format, but footnotes are often preferable because the information is available to the reader without them having to turn to the back.

The *Guide to writing parliamentary research briefings* states that the Hluttaw uses footnotes (Page 25).

Note that the rules here should be used in both enquiry responses whenever you cite a specific source, and briefing papers.

Format

When you use footnotes for references, the format should always be exactly the same.

This is so that any reader can immediately identify the author or source or any other aspect of a source.

The format is

AUTHOR (or organisation that produced a document)

TITLE (normally in italics, but not essential)

PUBLISHER (if a book)

DATE of PUBLICATION

PAGE NUMBER (if relevant)

DATE ACCESSED (for softcopy documents) in square brackets

AUTHOR, TITLE, PUBLISHER, DATE, PAGE NUMBER, [DATE ACCESSED]

No footnotes should be included that do not have these components (with some exceptions – see below)

Examples:

George Orwell, *Burmese Days*, Penguin, 1934, p228

House of Commons Library, *Food Waste*, 30 August 2016, p12, [Accessed 20 March 2017]

C. H. Stefes, Journal of Democratization, *Democracy in South East Asia*, 30 November 2015, p23

Hyperlinks

When the document is a webpage, a url to the document must be provided. Do not present the url without integrating it into the text.

Use Ctrl and K to hyperlink the title.

Citing legislation

When you need to cite a specific law, you must use a slightly different format of citation. For a Myanmar law:

NAME of LAW (including date passed), SECTION or PAGE NUMBER

For a foreign law:

NAME of FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, NAME of LAW (including date passed), SECTION or PAGE NUMBER

Examples:

Citizenship Act 1982, p44

UK Government, Enterprise Act 2016, Section 8

(Note: an Act is a law that has been accepted by the Hluttaw; a Bill is a law that is still being discussed by the Hluttaw).

Exercise – footnotes and references

The following examples provide all the information you need to create a footnote. Use the format described to create a footnote.

1.



2.

Title:	Myanmar Engineering Council Law - Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 37/2013 (English)
Date of publication:	28 November 2013
Language:	English
Source/publisher:	Pyidaungsu Hluttaw
Format/size:	pdf (7K)
Date of entry/update:	05 June 2014

3.

The image shows the Myanmar Times website. At the top, it says 'HEARTBEAT OF THE NATION' above the large 'MYANMARTIMES' logo. Below the logo is a navigation bar with categories: 'ATIONAL NEWS', 'BUSINESS', 'PULSE', 'SPORTS', 'OPINION', 'IN DEPTH', 'SPECIAL FEATURES', and 'IN PIC'. The main article is titled 'Battle heats up for key seats in coming by-election' by Zaw Nyunt, dated Wednesday, 22 March 2017. To the left of the article is a thumbnail image of a newspaper cover with the number '89' in a blue triangle. Below the article title are social media sharing buttons: 'Like' (7), 'G+1' (0), 'Tweet', and 'Share'. The article text begins with 'As political parties approach the final leg of their campaigning for'.

4.

Lancaster, Carol.

Foreign aid : diplomacy, development, domestic politics / Carol Lancaster.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-226-47043-1 (cloth : alk. paper)—ISBN 0-226-47045-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Economic assistance. 2. International relations.

3. Diplomacy. 4. Economic development—International cooperation. 5. Economic assistance—Political aspects. I. Title.

HC60.L294 2007

327.1'11—dc22

2006020760

5.



legislation.gov.uk

Home About Us Browse Legislation New Legislation Changes To Legislation

Title: Year: Number: Type: All Legislation (excludi

Equality Act 2010

2010 c. 15 ▶ Introduction

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What Version [?](#)

- Latest available (Revised)
- Original (As enacted)

Advanced Features [?](#)


- Show Geographical Extent (e.g. England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland)
- Show Timeline of Changes

Opening Options [?](#)

More Resources [?](#)

- Original Print PDF
- Correction Slip - 24/02/2011 [View more...](#)

Changes to legislation: Equality Act 2010. Introductory Text is up to date with all of 2017. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been referenced with annotations. [?](#)



Equality Act 2010

2010 CHAPTER 15

An Act to make provision to require Ministers of the Crown and others when making strate... to reform and have...

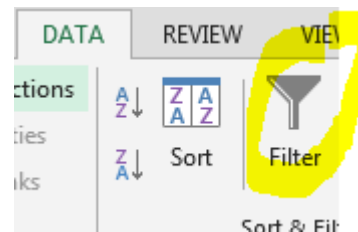
Excel and statistics

Training: Excel (1) – tips and tricks for better data manipulation

This training provides you with a range of skills so that you can analyse data and present statistics more quickly and effectively. We will be using a spreadsheet which contains data downloaded from the World Bank (this excel sheet, and an accompanying excel sheet with lots of the formulae used here included can be found in the electronic version of this training manual.)

Task 1. Filter the data so that it shows only GDP (current \$US)

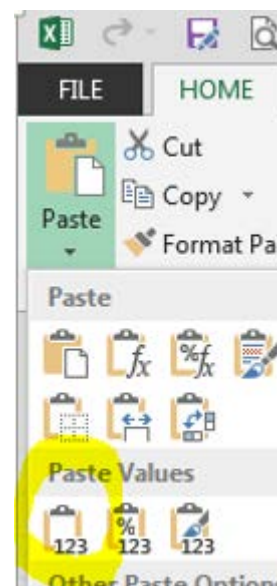
1. Click into the top row of data.
2. On the Data tab, click 'Filter'
3. Click on the small arrow in the Series name cell
4. Click select all to remove sections
5. Then select the category you are interested in.



Task 2: Copy the selected data to a new tab

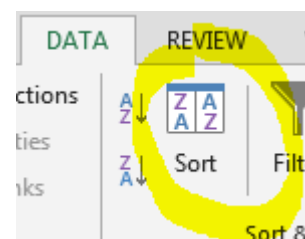
1. Create a new tab (click on the + symbol at the bottom of the Excel sheet).
2. On the data sheet, click on the triangle in the top left hand corner to select all cells
3. Press ctrl and c
4. On the new tab, Paste Values by clicking on the arrow below the Paste button, then clicking the '123' button

This has the effect of copying on the information you can see on the screen – it is also useful if you want to copy some data which is based on a formula but you don't want to copy the formula over.



Task 3: Order the data so that countries with highest GDP at top

1. Select all the cells with data in them by clicking in the top left cell, then pressing Ctrl, Shift, down arrow (at the same time), then Ctrl, Shift, right arrow.
2. On the Data tab, click Sort.
3. Click on the 'Column' drop down menu and select the column that you want to order the data using (in the is case '2015')
4. Then select from the 'Order' drop down menu – largest to smallest puts the largest data at the top.



Rows with no data will appear at the top. You can either ignore these completely or **delete the rows:**

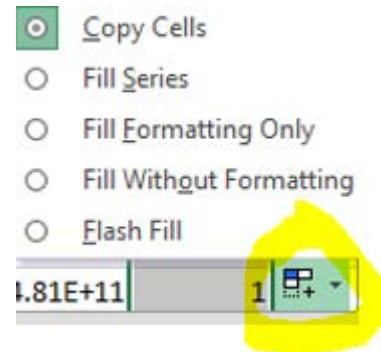
1. Select the entire row by clicking on the number of the row on the extreme left hand side. Select multiple rows by either pressing Ctrl and clicking another row or by pressing your left mouse button then dragging up the rows

2. Press Ctrl and – (the minus symbol). You can add rows by selecting a row and pressing Ctrl and + (the plus symbol). The same commands work for entire columns as well.

Task 4: Calculate what rank Myanmar is in this list

(There are two ways to do this – the quick way and the formula way)

1. Click in the cell next to the data at the top of the list and type 1 into the cell.
2. Then hover over the bottom right hand corner of the cell and double click when the cursor becomes a black cross.
3. You will then get a whole column of cells with 1 in them. Click on the options menu at the bottom right of the column.
4. Then click 'Fill series'. This will replace the 1s with the sequence of numbers. You can then find Myanmar (Ctrl and f then type in 'Myanmar and press Enter) and read its rank.



The more accurate way of finding the rank which would work even if you had not ordered the data first uses a formula:

1. Click in the cell next to the data at the top of the list and type **=RANK(**
2. Click on the cell next to this
3. Then type **,** and select the entire row of data you are interested in (you can do this by clicking in the top cell and then pressing Ctrl, Shift, down arrow)
4. Then **,** and double click on the '0 – descending' option in the cell. You then have the rank for one cell out of all the data you are interested in.
5. To get the rank for all the cells, hover over the bottom right hand corner of the cell and double click when the cursor becomes a black cross.
6. However, this data will not be accurate because as the formula is copied into each cell, the data it refers to will move down. You must 'fix' the data using the \$ symbol.

To fix data so that copying the formula refers to the same data:

- a. Double click in the top cell that you originally typed the formula into
- b. Click on any of the letters after the first comma and **press F4** (doing this will add \$ signs around the letters and numbers that you typed earlier)
- c. Then click on the letters after the colon and type **press F4** again
- d. Then press return, and then hover over the bottom right hand corner of the cell and double click when the cursor becomes a black cross.

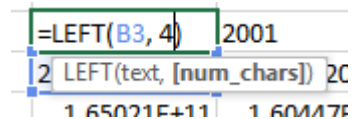
- If you ever make a mistake whilst editing a formula, you can press **Esc** and the formula will go back to how it was before.
- To undo any mistake press **Ctrl and z**

Task 5: Create a table of GDP in ASEAN countries

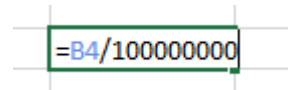
This could be done using the filter process, or you could use a formula called **vlookup** (which will be discussed later).

1. Use the filter method to select the countries you are interested in.
2. Copy the sheet and and paste values onto a new tab
3. Now delete some of the columns that you don't need using the Ctrl minus method (you can widen the columns by selecting them all and the double clicking on the line between each column in the heading.) Remove series name, series code and country code.
4. (Put a brief title at the top of the table to remind you what you are looking at – GDP \$)
5. Tidy up the year titles – remove the '[yr...]' bit from each cell by counting the number of characters you want to keep and using the **LEFT** formula:

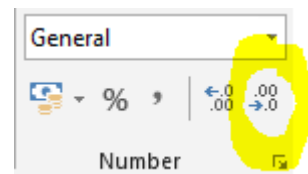
- a. Select all the year column headers
- b. In an empty cell near the near the column header, begin the formula '=LEFT('
- c. Then click on the cell of first of the column headers (2000 [YR2000])
- d. Then type , (comma) and the number of characters you want (four in this case)
- e. Then drag that formula along the whole row.
- f. Then copy and paste values over the old date row



6. Now convert the numbers to billions:
 - a. Select a cell in the same column as the 2000 figures, but below them
 - b. Type = and click in the first of the 2000 cells
 - c. They type /1000000000 and press return.
 - d. Then copy and paste values the new data over the old data.



7. Reduce the number of decimal points:
 - a. Select all the data
 - b. Click on the 'decrease decimal' button until you have the required number of decimals

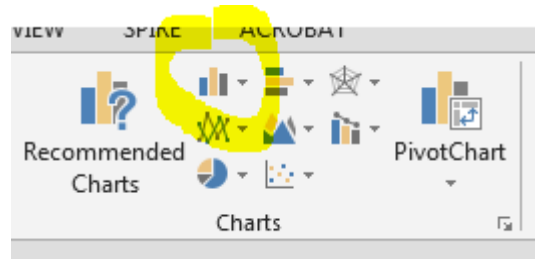


8. Then add lines at the top and bottom of the table and under the dates.
9. Ensure Title, data and source are added to the table

Task 6: Create Chart of GDP in ASEAN countries in 2015

1. Copy and paste the names of the countries and the 2015 data to a new tab:

- a. Select the names, then press Ctrl and select the data (add a brief title)



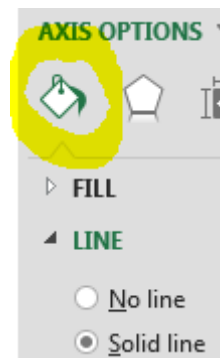
2. Now order the data so the country with the largest GDP is at the top (using **Sort** function)

3. Then select all the data and click on the Insert tab and Click on Bar chart symbol. Select the first option.

4. Now add a title (including the year and the unit)

5. Add a left had axis

- a. Click on data on left
- b. Right click and select 'format axis...'
- c. Click on the paint can, then select 'line', solid line, and the colour you want



6. Repeat this for the bottom axis

7. Now add a title (including date and units)

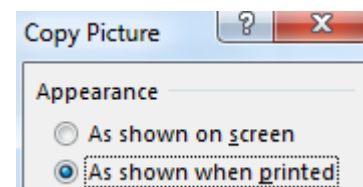
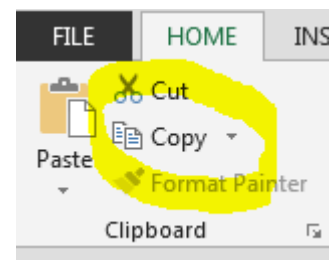
8. Now highlight Myanmar:

- a. Right click on the Myanmar bar in the chart (you may originally select all of the bars, so you may have to click again.)
- b. Then click on the paint can and then select the fill option
- c. Then select the solid fill and choose a different colour

Task 7: copy the chart and table into Word

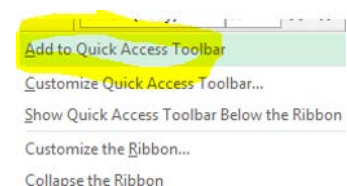
If you do a normal copy and paste (Ctrl and c, Ctrl and v) into Word from Excel, the formatting can look bad. It is better to **copy tables and charts as pictures**:

1. For a table select the whole area of the table. For a chart click on the outside border of the chart.
2. Then, instead of pressing Ctrl and c, click on the arrow by the copy button on the Home tab.
3. Then click 'Copy as picture...'
4. Then click 'As shown when printed' and press OK
5. Then go to Word and press Ctrl and v



If you use a particular command a lot you can save it as a favourite so it always appears on the top your Excel sheets:

1. Right Click on the command
2. Select 'Add to Quick Access toolbar'



Training: Excel (2) – useful formulae

Below are some formulae that you may find useful when using excel.

The key thing to remember is that all formulae start with the '=' (equals) symbol typed into a cell.

=sum(..) – this adds together all the numbers in the brackets. You can drag down a column of numbers or type the cell names in.

Alt and = - this sums all the numbers immediately above

=round() – this rounds all the numbers to the number of digits you specify ('2' would round to hundreds)

=right() – returns the number of characters you specify counting from the right. Works with left

=rank() – gives the rank of the selected cell in

=average() – gives the average value of a range of numbers

=vlookup() – returns the value of a cell in a row with the same label as the origin row

\$ (press F4) – Freezing cells. Many formulae in excel depend on referring to the same cell in multiple calculations. Copying a formula moves the reference cell, so you need to freeze it by clicking on the cell name in your formula and pressing F4.

Training: Statistics introduction

Expressing numbers in writing

Numbers often need to be converted into text so that they can be and more easily understood by readers. Often you will need to round numbers to do this effectively.

Rounding

Rounding involves increasing or decreasing a number to its nearest important value. You decide what is important (for example, you may think it is important to round to millions, or billions, or just one decimal point).

Generally you will not need to use very specific numbers, particularly if they are very big. You should also note that the below rules are a rough guide and a lot will depend on context – you should try to think if a reader needs to know a number in lots of detail. So:

- All bullet points should be rounded to no more than 1 decimal point. For example, $25.2531 = 25.3$, and $46.87612 = 46.9$. Note that you can also round to no decimal points. $25.2531 = 25$, and $46.87612 = 47$
- Leave numbers under 1,000 unrounded.
- Numbers between 1,000 and 9,900 should be rounded to hundreds. So, $8,732 = 8,700$. And $4,975 = 5,000$
- Numbers from 10,000 to 99,000 should be rounded to the nearest 1,000. $74,764 = 75,000$
- Numbers between 100,000 and 999,000 should be rounded to nearest 1,000. So $434,987 = 434,000$
- Millions should be rounded to 100,000. So $1,430,294 = 1,400,000$
- Billions should be rounded to nearest hundred million. So $1,364,876,563 = 1,400,000,000$

Converting numbers

When a number is over 10,000 it should be converted so that it is expressed clearly in words and text. So:

- 20,000 should be expressed as 20 thousand. And $28,657 = 29$ thousand.
- $3,500,000 = 3.5$ million
- $5,700,000,000 = 5.7$ billion

To calculate %:

x as a % of y = $(x/y)*100$

So to calculate 5 as a % of 10, divide 5 by 10 which is 0.5, times 100 = 50. So 5 is 50% of 10.

x% of y is $(y/100)*x$

To work out what 5% of 200 is, divide 200 by 100 (2) then times this by 5 = 10

x is y % of z, what is z = $(x/y)*100$

20 is 5% of something, divide 20 by 5 (4) then times 4 by 100, = 400

To calculate % change

% change is the difference between two numbers expressed as a % of the first number.

The percentage difference between x and y is $((y-x)/x)*100$. Or in Excel, $(y/x-1)*100$.

So the % difference between 5 and 10 is 100%, because 10 minus 5 is 5, and 5 divided by 5 is 1, times 100 is 100. (This makes sense as well because if you increase 5 by its entire amount (or 100%) you get 10).

Feedback

Training: the principles of providing feedback

Things to remember when reading a document

1. Do you know what the briefing is about?
2. Is the content of the briefing appropriate? Is the content impartial and informative, with none of the researcher's opinions and nothing too academic?
3. Does it feel complete? Are there any sources missing, sections missing or subjects missing?
4. Can you easily understand the sentences and the headings?
5. Use the review checklist at the end of this document.

Things to remember when giving feedback

1. The first thing you should do is mention something positive about the document, for example, something you learned or something you liked about it.
2. Then talk about your thoughts on the briefing overall, using some of the questions above (is it impartial, is it well structured?)
3. You will hand the paper copy of the briefing back to the researcher, so make sure any marks you have made on it are clear and understood by the researcher
4. After you have mentioned your overall thoughts, work through the briefing logically page by page
5. Take your time, pause to let the researcher take in what you say, and ask for clarification if you are not clear about something. Try to make it a conversation.
6. Be positive – if you see a problem, try to suggest a solution as well.
7. If you are giving feedback in pairs, don't overlap or contradict each other. Take turns to offer feedback.
8. Remember that you are the first stage of feedback. The document will be passed to Research Managers and Directors, who will also check for content and structural issues. You are saving them time by picking up detailed spelling, punctuation and grammar points mainly, with some mention of overall content.