

DISCUSSION PAPER

1  
2

Office Symbol  
Date

1  
2

SUBJECT: How to Prepare a Discussion Paper

1  
2

1. Issue: How to prepare discussion papers for the Chief of Staff and Vice Chief of Staff for use in discussions.

1  
2

2. Facts:

1  
2

a. A discussion paper will be prepared for the CSA or VCSA. The paper is a specialized information paper and can be used whenever it best serves the recipient's purpose.

b. Use a sharp writing style. Points should "jump off the paper." Avoid unnecessarily complex paragraphs.

c. Present facts in a smooth, logical flow. Tailor the paper for the audience.

(1) Determine the background that the audience needs.

(2) Avoid technical language and acronyms.

(3) Analyze target audience. Cite previous knowledge or discussions. Show how the subject affects the audience. If foreign nationals are expected in the audience, state what sensitive material cannot be discussed.

d. Preferred length is one page, no more than two. Avoid enclosures. Papers must include the action officer's name and telephone number in the lower right corner. Type the name of the approval authority below the action officer's name and number to indicate agency approval by principal, deputy, or director.

e. The discussion paper should be approved at the directorate level.

3. Key Points to be Stressed.

a. Present key points drawn from paragraph 2.

b. This is your opportunity to influence an action.

1  
2

Action Officer's Name/Phone #  
Approved by: COL Joseph P. Jones

---

Figure 20. Sample format for a discussion paper (8 1/2 x 11)

---