

National Health Insurance Passage

Sample Outline Analysis:

- (1) State the descriptive or prescriptive **Conclusion**
- (2) List the **Reasons**
- (3) Explain the **ambiguous terms** that hurt the argument
- (4) Analyze the quality of evidence (right type accurate, sufficient?)
- (4) Notice the **indicator words** that point to the conclusion, as well as the **emotionally loaded words** that bias the argument in one direction.

¶1: "In putting forth his **pussy-footed** program of ten principles for **national health insurance**, the president would have us consider **only** the details of coverage, cost and administration. He **skips nimbly** over the threshold question: Should we have national health insurance at all?"

¶2: To justify so **radical a departure** from traditional forms of health care, proponents might reasonably begin by arguing that health services in America are so poor that greater governmental **intrusion** is imperative. Since 1970, infant mortality has dropped 25 percent, life expectancy has risen by a year and a half, and nine of the ten leading causes of death have declined.

¶3: Public opinion polls indicate that Americans **overwhelmingly are satisfied** with the care they receive.

¶4: Nevertheless, do the people want a program of national health insurance? It depends upon how the question is put. Phrased in terms of "free" medical care, the question understandably draws an affirmative response. But when an NBC survey asked about a program paid for "through increased taxation," it was a different matter altogether. **There simply is no convincing evidence** of public demand for the kind of program that the president would **impose** on the country."

Issue: "Should we have national health insurance at all?" (¶1) Prescriptive
Indicator words that point to the **conclusion:** "There simply is no convincing evidence..." (¶4)

Conclusion:

We should not have a national health care program. (Prescriptive)

Reasons:

1. Three statistics show that health care is not so bad that we need government intrusion. (¶2)
 - a. Infant mortality down
 - b. Life expectancy up
 - c. 9 out of 10 leading causes of death down

This "evidence" is not relevant to issue of *need* for insurance. No way to tell if accurate either— and no citation.
2. Opinion polls show the public doesn't want it.
[An opinion poll might be the right type of evidence, but too much is unknown about the source of poll or how it was conducted.]
3. "There simply is no convincing evidence of public demand for the kind of program that the president would impose on the country." [¶4—restates **reason #2**, sounds very much like the **conclusion**) **There well may be convincing evidence, but he chose to ignore it.**

Ambiguous terms:

1. **national health insurance:** just what the principles/details are of the president's proposed program, especially the ones that are objectionable, is never revealed.
2. **radical a departure:** this alarming term never provides the "radicalness" needed to support its claim.
3. **overwhelmingly are satisfied:** In what ways are the people "**satisfied**," and what percentage of how many people are "**overwhelmingly satisfied**?"

[The **Descriptive Question**, "do the people want a program of national health insurance?" and its answer ("NO") is only part of a *reason* for the **prescriptive** conclusion, which is "Don't adopt the president's program."]

A critique of the “National Health Care Argument”

<p><u>My thesis/ conclusion</u></p> <p>My three main reasons.</p> <p><i>My evidence for my reason #1</i></p> <p><i>My evidence for my reason #1</i></p> <p><i>My evidence for my reason #3</i></p> <p>My thesis/ conclusion restated</p>	<p><u>The writer of this argument against implementing any program of national health insurance fails to convince even a reader who might be willing to agree with him.</u> His sarcastic tone in using emotionally loaded language criticizing the President’s proposed program, his use of irrelevant “evidence” and his failure to provide any details of the program leave the reader frustrated because we’ve been given no good reason to either accept or reject the proposal.</p> <p>He indicates his bias early on by calling the President’s program “pussy-footed” and a “radical departure” [i.e., dangerous] from tradition, and an unwelcome “intrusion” on our freedom. <u>Yet he fails to provide any details of just what the program is and why it is so dangerous.</u></p> <p>He argues against any national health insurance at all by citing <u>statistics</u> claiming health care isn’t so poor that a program is needed. But those statistics regarding infant mortality rates and life expectancy, etc. are not very comforting to the person who has no health insurance at all. Moreover, they are unrelated to the essential argument, since he doesn’t relate those statistics to whether those improvements have had to do with access to care with or without health insurance.</p> <p>His final reason is an attempt to show, by vague <u>opinion polls</u> that Americans don’t want such a program. Well, by what “overwhelming majority” is that? And how was the poll conducted? And of how many and which Americans? Those with health insurance?</p> <p>He will have to provide <u>more evidence</u> and more <u>objective</u> analysis in order for this writer to be convinced of his <u>credibility</u> and his claims.</p>
--	--

Government Purchases: Passage for Analysis:

- (1) State the descriptive or prescriptive **CONCLUSION**
- (2) List the **REASONS**
- (3) Explain the **AMBIGUOUS TERMS** that hurt the argument

¶1: "When governmental bodies make purchases, they often try to improve the efficiency of their purchasing activities by requiring potential sellers to submit bids.

¶2: The defense department is one of the governmental agencies that **claims** to engage in this type of competitive bidding process.

¶3: They **supposedly** examine the submitted bids and choose the best bid, awarding the contract to the private firm who makes that bid.

¶4: Yet, **apparently**, the defense department does not abide by its own rules. The contractor I represent made the lowest bid for a missile system and failed to receive the contract for the system.

¶5: We are understandably disappointed and are requesting a reversal of the contract award to a firm that submitted a higher bid."

Government Purchases: Sample Outline Analysis:

Conclusion: The defense department **should** reverse its decision and award the bid to my company
(Prescriptive)

Reason: The defense dept is supposed to award contracts to the **best** bid but

Reason: my bid was the **lowest** and didn't get the contract.

[This **reason** is a mini-argument itself: a descriptive conclusion and reason working together as a reason for the prescriptive conclusion]

Ambiguous term: "best bid." Actually, this term is an equivocation fallacy: making it seem as if "best bid" can only mean "lowest bid."

.....

OR did you analyze this way?

Conclusion: The defense department doesn't follow its own rules. (descriptive)

Reason: The defense dept is supposed to award contracts to the best bid.

Reason: We submitted the lowest bid and didn't get the contract.

[But this analysis leaves out what the contractor **wants**: for the defense department to change its decision and award him the contract—which is **prescriptive!**]

Ambiguous term? **best bid** Does "best bid" = "lowest bid?" Or something else, like most reliable, accurate, clear, realistic? (which is really the proper meaning for evaluating bid proposals.)

(This is actually a **fallacy of equivocation**— making two unequal terms seem equal, a deceptive tactic, which destroys the writer's ethos/credibility.)