Case Analysis Brief

Use these guidelines for individual and group analyses of cases.

1. Facts
   a. List the pertinent facts
   b. Focus on the what, where, when, and why of the case

2. Issues
   a. List the primary problem and issue
   b. List any secondary or related problems and issues
   c. Identify the sources or causes of the problems/issues

3. Actors
   a. Names, titles, position, etc. of pertinent players
   b. Identify any important traits of the actors that could shed light on the decision-making process

4. Analysis
   a. Identify the resources and formal/legal constraints and issues (staff & budgetary resources, rules & regulations, job responsibilities, etc.
   b. Identify the ethical constraints and issues
   c. Identify the political constraints and issues
   d. Attempt to identify any “unknowns”

5. Group Analysis
   a. In small groups, discuss Step 4 (consider having group members play the roles of different actors in the case and/or different community or interest groups impacted by the issue and possible courses of action)
   b. If conflict arises in the group, consider suitable approaches to conflict resolution, cooperation, and coordination

6. Courses of Action
   a. Consider precedents or models/paradigms to guide the decision
   b. List three possible courses of action and develop criteria to rank them

7. Decision
   a. Select and recommend a course of action
   b. Provide a short overview of the decision and the rationale or justification for it

[Adapted from Robert P. Watson, ed., Public Administration: Cases in Managerial Role-Playing (NY: Longman, 2002).]