

Grand Challenge Analysis Exercise

Congratulations on securing a Grand Challenge topic! In order to understand the full scope of each of the Grand Challenges, teams will engage in a period of research and analysis of their Grand Challenge. In order to fully comprehend the complex, multifaceted nature of each topic, you will be using four “lenses”. The word analyze comes from the Greek, “to loosen, to undo”. We need to undo and break apart these topics in order to create deliberate, appropriate, and thoughtful goods, services, and business solutions.

Each team will divide into four “lens groups” in order to comprehensively approach their grand challenge. Each group will utilize one of the lenses for analysis. Ultimately you will come together as a large group to find the connections, issues, concerns and possibilities that exist within your Grand Challenge.

During the next 7 weeks, you will be completing

- An individual lens summary (Draft Due week of Oct 18th, Final Draft Due November 16th, 11pm)
- A group lens presentation (Draft Due Week of November 16th, Group Presentations due week of November 30th)

| The Lenses |

The Economic Lens

It’s all about the money. Or is it?

The Political Lens

Who controls the future?

The Scientific-Technological Lens

What’s going to happen next?

The Social Lens

Who really cares, anyway?

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The Political Lens

“... Our purpose in founding our state was not to promote the happiness of a single class, but so far as possible, of the whole community. Our idea was that we were most likely to justice in such a community, and so be able to decide the question we are trying to answer. We are therefore at the moment trying to construct what we think is a happy community by securing the happiness not of a select minority, but of a whole.”

–Plato

How should society and individual humans function in a political structure? You may have taken a political science class in high school or follow politicians as they speak on the campaign trail, or perhaps you have never been all that interested in politics. No matter how much you know about politics, through our Grand Challenge process, you will be able to examine how government structure forms and influences the architecture of our modern life.

At the most basic level, understanding politics helps you to understand how society, business and government work together. In fact, you’ve already benefited or been impacted by political organization if you’ve ever attended public school, applied for financial aid, voted in your first election, been to a park, or noticed the difference in gas prices from one week to the next. Understanding political behavior by individuals and groups, as well as understanding the nature and function of government will reveal that politics affect our lives from childhood to end of life, from our homes to our jobs, and in times of peace and times of war.

Why a Political Lens?

Government regulates, monitors and institutes laws that govern business, social welfare, technology, advancement, economic factors and education. It will be important to consider how politics are operating within your Grand Challenge. The study of politics focuses on understanding political behavior by individuals and groups as well as gathering and examining knowledge about how people organize and adhere to governing principles. At the most basic level, political study looks at what is required to be a good citizen.

Political study asks important questions such as:

- What is the role of politics in our daily lives?
- How does the government make decisions?
- What should the function of government be?
- What makes a “good” citizen?
- How does government improve life for its citizens?
- How does the government represent the values, interests, and goals of its citizenship?
- How should industry, economics, and personal welfare be regulated, protected, enforced, and monitored?

Political analysts answer the important questions by digging deep into the minds of individuals and the structure of government. Viewing your Grand Challenge through a political lens will be an important tool for examining the people, markets, possibilities, and impediments within your Grand Challenge topic.

Applying Political Analysis to Your Grand Challenge:

Step One: What's going on?

Each of the Grand Challenges has some underlying political component. By asking the right questions you'll begin to see how politics are operating within your topic.

Your first task is to identify your Political Lens **stakeholders**:

Who are the political Stakeholders in your Grand Challenge? These are the people, groups, organizations, and governmental departments that have an interest in your topic. In order to determine who the political stakeholders are, research and discuss the following questions until you have a list for each one:

- Does any governmental branch, department or political party have an interest or a stake in your Grand Challenge? What is it?
- Which governmental branch, department or organization is regulating, monitoring or protecting elements of your Grand Challenge? Does it look that that will change?
- What is the role of the citizen (individual) in conjunction with your Grand Challenge topic? Are there any grassroots (independently organized by citizens) organizations?
- Who should have the power to make decisions about your Grand Challenge?
- Is there a group that might oppose a particular solution to your grand challenge? How might they use the government to block action?

Make sure to be comprehensive in your exploration of political stakeholders. Consider local, state, national, and global interests. It is important that your entire lens group agrees upon a list of political lens stakeholders and their concerns. You might even find the governance and stakeholders don't exist yet, so you might need to speculate what the future of your Grand Challenge will bring.

Step Two: What does the research say?

Consult the FIRE library resource page for your Grand Challenge (available under Modules, Grand Challenges, in Canvas.) **Each person in your group should select two likely looking sources to read on their own.** No two people should look at the same source. You will be summarizing your two sources in your individual lens summary writing assignment with special attention to identifying and informing your view of the political stakeholders. You will need to have the first draft of this assignment for your class during the week of October 18th-22nd. During this class you will have the opportunity to share what you've learned from your sources with your group.