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## Analyzing Problems

**Identify some problem you need to reason through. Then complete the following:**

**What exactly is the problem?** (Study the problem to make clear the kind of problem you are dealing with. Figure out, for example, what sorts of things you are going to have to do to solve it. Distinguish problems over which you have some control from problems over which you have no control. Pay special attention to controversial issues in which it is essential to consider multiple points of view.)

**The key question that emerges from the problem is...** (State the question as clearly and precisely as you can. Details are very important.)

**My purpose in addressing the problem is...** (Know exactly what you are after. Make sure you are not operating with a hidden agenda and that your announced and real purposes are the same.)

**Actively seek the information most relevant to the question.** (Include in that information options for action, both short-term and long-term. Recognize limitations in terms of money, time, and power.)

**Some important assumptions I am using in my thinking are...** (Figure out what you are taking for granted. Watch out for self-serving or unjustified assumptions.)

**If we solve this problem, some important implications are... If we fail to solve this problem, some important implications are...** (Evaluate options, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of possible decisions before acting. What consequences are likely to follow from this or that decision?)

**The most important concepts, theories, or ideas I need to use in my thinking are...** (Figure out all significant ideas needed to understand and solve the problem. You may need to analyze these concepts. Use a good dictionary.)

**The point(s) of view is/are as follows:** (Know the point of view from which your thinking begins. Be especially careful to determine whether multiple points of view are relevant.)

**After reasoning through the parts of thinking above, the best solution (conclusion) to the problem is...** (If the problem involves multiple conflicting points of view, you will have to assess which solution is the best. If the problem is one-dimensional, there may be just one "correct" solution.)

## Analyzing

### The Problem of Pollution

**What is the problem?** The problem is pollution. It is not doing enough to reduce it, a host of new and increased medical problems, loss of animals, and the earth's water sources).

**Questions that emerge from the problem are...** Pollution? A related question is: What can we do to reduce pollution?

**My purpose in addressing the problem is...** To create a more healthy biosphere.

**The important information relevant to the question is...** Information about what is currently doing to increase pollution (such as driving a car, etc.), information about what I contribute to (such as locating recycling centers, etc.), information about transportation, etc.)

**Some important assumptions I am using in my thinking are...** Significant damage to the biosphere, that everyone else, have an obligation to make a difference.

**If many people were to reason well through the problem, there would be a longer and higher quality of life for plant and animal species and ecosystems. If many people fail to reason well through the problem, the implications would follow as well, including deforestation, etc.**

**If I, and many others, fail to reason well through the problem, we will unnecessarily contribute to pollution.**

**The most important concepts, or ideas, I need to use in my thinking are...** The concept of pollution, and that of a healthy biosphere. The concepts of further technical, ecological, and ethical dimensions of pollution and the ethical dimensions of pollution and the harmful effects entails.

**My point of view is as follows:** I am looking for ways to help reduce through many means.

**After reasoning through the parts of thinking above, the best solution to the problem will be to put into action the solution revealed.**

<sup>1</sup> This problem is presented without details and is intended to be used through the logic of a complex question. When using this problem, the analysis can be. Many layers of detail could then be added. Further background information on this particular problem is available.



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