

The Overloaded State

Research and political reasoning



State capacity, public-service implementation and lawful accountability

Your task

Start without advance reading. Use the explanations inside the activity. A government can fund a benefit and still struggle to deliver it. In this inquiry, you advise a commission examining fictional Riverbend's flood-recovery service. Your job is to explain how particular work, skills, procedures and decisions could produce the observed delay. Start with your own account and a serious alternative. Use the two sources to sharpen the links in that account, then ask what each office record actually measures. A sample of delayed files, a weekly completion count and an applicant interview answer different questions. You will build a measurement ledger, defend one feasible pilot, and design a protected comparison rather than promise an improvement. A second agency then tests whether your reasoning travels to unfamiliar work and powers. Keep your first predictions visible when new evidence arrives. A justified decision to retain, narrow, change or suspend an account can all be strong. Your final brief should show which evidence changed your conclusion and what remains uncertain.

Explain the studies using the in-app explanations

Article A · Explain the study

Use the Article A explanation here; no journal reading is required.

1. What did the researchers compare, and how did they describe the work agencies face and their ability to deliver it?
2. Explain how shared responsibility for resources and practical feedback from staff could connect policy promises with delivery.
3. Name one finding and one limit. Use the research explanation, keeping Riverbend's invented numbers separate.

Article B · Explain the study

Use the Article B explanation here; no journal reading is required.

1. Choose one process from Moynihan's essay: repeated procedures or political pressure.
2. Trace how it could change staff behavior or the information officials receive, and then affect public services.
3. What evidence does the essay bring together? What does it leave uncertain, given that it is not a new experiment?

Use both studies

Use the two article explanations here; no journal reading is required.

1. Choose one conclusion about public services that either reading alone might suggest.
2. Use a specific feature of the comparison study and a process from the essay to improve that conclusion. Consider who gets credit, who does the work, and who can act on warnings.
3. Separate what the research shows from a connection you would still need to test in the invented case.

Before you start

No advance student reading is required. Use the simplified explanations inside the activity, with time for questions, analysis and saved continuation across sessions.

Read both assigned source explanations and the specified article sections. Note each source's question, evidence, positive finding and limit.

Have paper or a digital notebook ready for fractions, units and an account of entries and exits. Leave unavailable quantities unknown.

Check the instructor's assigned requirements and where the final file belongs in Canvas. Allow additional independent time beyond the guided session.

Work through the inquiry

State an account and a rival

Name the actors, the work they must perform and one outcome to explain. Trace your proposed process in order. Give a credible alternative explaining that same outcome, and predict an observation on which the two accounts differ.

Give each source a distinct job

Explain the comparative study and the research-informed essay separately. Identify a specific finding or mechanism, how it was supported and its scope. Explain how their different contributions change one conclusion about the case; use your own source notes later.

Predict, open and inspect records

Before opening a record, say what it could distinguish. After opening it, record the date, included population, observed action and missing information. Use at least two records in supporting and complicating roles. Keep an allegation or possible motive separate from a documented action.

Measure and defend a Riverbend pilot

Complete the measurement ledger and numerical explanations with named bases and units. Build the pilot memo before writing its connected defense. Choose exactly one complete 120-hour package, defend the strongest actual left for later offer, and define rights, outcomes, assignment assumptions, follow-up and a stopping condition.

Work through the new water case

Generate district-specific processes, for the same result rivals and differing predictions before committing your provisional response. Open the later record only when the app makes it available. Then complete the water ledger: one current pilot per district, all added labour within each 100-hour ceiling, and a protection rule matching the action you now select.

Synthesize and dispatch

Complete the assigned evidence checks and final brief. Connect your source notes, ledger and pilot choices rather than copying every cell. Explain a warranted conclusion, an important uncertainty and the observation that could change your decision. Review the saved histories and export the work you will submit.

Vocabulary

Implementation burden

The work an agency must do to apply, monitor and enforce its assigned policies. Adding responsibilities can change this work.

Administrative capacity

The potential to perform relevant public tasks, including usable expertise, resources, organization and information. A headcount alone is incomplete evidence.

Vertical policy-process integration

Connections between policy designers and implementers through responsibility for delivery and practical feedback that can inform decisions.

Unresolved stock

The number of cases still unresolved at a particular date. Its change depends on the starting stock and every relevant entry and exit.

Flow

A count entering, leaving or moving through a process during a stated period. Name the unit and counting rule.

Throughput

Observed work completed during a period. It describes performance and may include both approvals and denials.

Applicant burden

The expense, time, effort or difficulty a person faces when seeking a service. It differs from the agency's implementation work.

Sample passport

A short account of a sample's date, inclusion rule, excluded people, measured outcome and relationship to other samples.

Rival explanation

A different process that could explain the same outcome. A useful test identifies an observation its expectations do not share with your account.

Stopping rule

A chosen before seeing the results observable condition requiring an authorized actor to suspend, redesign or escalate the current action to protect a right or standard.

Read and explain the graph

Read the title, outcome, unit, follow-up period and inclusion rule before comparing marks. Identify exactly which people form each denominator.

Match each plotted value to the exact accessible table. Write the numerator and its own base before converting a count to a rate.

Check the axis scale and compare like quantities. Label differences in percentage points separately from percentage changes.

Explain the descriptive comparison, then list the assignment, case-mix or capacity information needed for a stronger conclusion. Keep unknown outcomes visible.

Six assessment criteria

Your instructor reviews these six actual criteria once each on a 0 to 3 scale, for a maximum of 18. Completion and factual checks record work; they do not grade the argument. A supported retention of an earlier account can earn full credit.

1. Source contribution
2. Bounded positive finding
3. Same-outcome rival discrimination
4. Lawful feasible decision
5. Numerical interpretation and representation
6. Unfamiliar transfer and revision

The shared progression is 0 for missing or materially inaccurate work, 1 for emerging reasoning, 2 for developed reasoning, and 3 for convincing, specific and bounded reasoning. Your evidence, assumptions and feasible comparison matter; political agreement, prose polish, help use and changing your mind are not grading criteria.

Save and export your work

Use the app's local save and export functions regularly. Local progress belongs to the current browser and device; clearing browser data can remove it.

Export a progress backup before changing device or browser. Use the app's import option and inspect the restored record before continuing.

Reuse your own saved source and inquiry notes deliberately. Review copied text, keep its where the evidence came from and revise it into the argument you now defend.

Keep the final readable print or text export as well as a progress backup. Check that your required workspaces, rationales and final brief appear in the file.

Optional private online saving

Online saving is optional. Connecting to a saving service does not upload or submit the device draft. Use Save online personal draft only when you want to create or update that personal copy; keep its private recovery key and your local JSON backup.

A personal online draft is not an instructor submission. To submit through a configured hosted class, find the class with its student submission code, review the destination, apply the assignment switches if requested, complete the Class record and save the

current version online. Tick the explicit consent box and use Submit this response snapshot.

Submission sends that version to the identified class. Later edits stay personal until you explicitly submit again. This hosted-class route is separate from the Canvas assignment and its upload confirmation.

Submit separately to Canvas

When your assigned work is complete, use Print to save a readable PDF or use the text export, as your instructor requests. Open that file and check the required ledgers, explanations and final brief. Then go to the separate Canvas assignment and upload the requested file. Saving or exporting inside the module does not submit an assignment to Canvas.