

The purpose of meaningful sociological research is to locate problems in society, identify the factors that influence said problems, and finally, recommend policy solutions to improve the situation. With that in mind, for your final exam I would like you to imagine that you were working for Congressman Elijah Cummings in the spring of 2015. At the time, Cummings represented the people of Maryland's 7th Congressional District, which includes Baltimore City.

For the last several weeks your office has been keeping a close eye on the rioting that emerged in the wake of Freddie Gray's death. Although the riots were clearly spurred by Gray's passing, many perceive his death to be just another case in a long wave of instances of police brutality against minorities and in particular, African Americans. Constituents from across your district have been writing letters demanding that you address the situation. As a result, Congressman Cummings has asked you to prepare a 2-page, single-spaced report briefing him on the social factors underpinning urban riots in Baltimore. In addition, he requested that you include a 1-page, single-spaced policy that outlines specific policies that could help reduce the likelihood of urban riots in the future.

Congressman Cummings asks that you base your policy brief on facts that come from empirical research and peer-reviewed material.

Criteria to keep in mind:

- Three-page limit (single spaced). Anything over three-pages will not be read.
- Given the page limit, you will need to use very concise, to-the-point language. (Try to avoid superfluous phrases and useless analogies.)
- Concise writing requires careful planning. With that in mind, map out your main points *before* you start writing!
- Cite your sources with in-text citations. (Author Date: page)
- Include a bibliography. (Does not count towards page total.)
- Edit your report multiple times! (There is little tolerance for grammar/punctuation errors when you work for a congressional representative!)
- Turn in a physical copy of your report on or prior to the deadline.

Please turn in your report to **MCD 384 by Friday, December 16th by 5:00pm**. You may turn in your report early but late reports will not be considered.