

HOW TO DEAL WITH CASES

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What is a case?

A case is a description of a (singular) event that is meaningful in the sense that it tells us a story from which we can learn.

But since cases are *descriptive* by nature, they are equally *prescriptive* in that they tell what to do and not do.

How is a case written?

A case is constructed around a number of facts and events that a researcher, the case writer, has collected so as to put the case together.

In this respect it is a mythically-biased description since some facts or events will seem to be more important than others. This is a *first reason* for carrying further research around the issue at hand.

How to study a case?

Studying a case involves understanding and interpreting what the case describes – reading comprehension - and this becomes something very personal.

Thus *there is no one way of looking at a study* (within the limits the study itself provides); what is actually interesting in a case study is to bring forward a number of interpretations even though these might be conflicting.

Typically, case studies are accompanied by questions or tasks to carry out so as to discover specific aspects of the case. But such questions and tasks are limited to cover the case in its entirety. But since they are set relatively to the internal coherence and structure of the case, they are in a way related: it is therefore necessary to provide the links between the questions. This is, therefore, a *second reason* for carrying out additional research around the issue at hand so as to get the most of the case.

When do we learn with a case?

Overall, learning with a case occurs when we go beyond reading comprehension, that is, when the case presents itself as an opportunity to inquire further into an issue and discover novel ideas.