MODULE 7 · SKILL OF THE WEEK

Editorial Deeper Analysis

This is the technique we are building this week. A good editorial reader does not just understand what an article says - they break it down into a structure they can reuse in an answer. Use this six-part frame on any editorial.

The six-part frame

Element	Question to ask
1. Issue	What is the single core problem in one sentence?
2. Context	What background or event triggered this piece?
3. Stakeholders	Who is affected, and who decides?
4. Arguments	What are the strongest points on each side?
5. Constitutional / legal angle	Which articles, laws or judgments apply?
6. Way forward	What is a balanced, workable solution?

Worked example (partly filled): the Frontline wage article

Model breakdown

Issue: Prison wages are called "fair" but are set far below minimum wage, while heavy deductions shift the state's costs onto prisoners.

Context: Kerala's January 2026 hike, and the Model Prison Manual's three-year review norm.

Stakeholders: prisoners and their families; victims (compensation fund); the state; courts.

Constitutional / legal angle: Article 23 (no forced labour); the 1998 Supreme Court "equitable wages" judgment.

(Arguments and Way forward are left for you to complete below.)

Q7.1 Complete element 4 (Arguments): write the two strongest points FOR the wage system as it stands, and the two strongest points AGAINST it.

FOR ⇒ • It is a significant move by the government to respect the dignity of labor within a prison setting for years of tireless work • As the compensation for victims is deducted from the prisoner's wage, increase in wage directly lead to higher compensation to victims.

AGAINST ⇒ • If the government truly respects the dignity of labor, it should prioritize the health workers • using public money to provide high wages to those who have committed serials crimes feels like rewarding their behaviours.

good

stick to the argument about wage system itself. Not intersectoral comparison.

Ex: The wages remain far to below statutory minimum despite hike.

Q7.2 Complete element 6 (Way forward): propose one balanced reform to prison-wage policy. One clear idea, well defended.

score 2/4
needs work for upsc!
punitive [urview]
make it balanced!
Don't be Speculative

My plan is that in cases involving sexual offenses or destruction of public property, the entire wage of the prisoner during the initial years of the sentence should be diverted to victim as compensation. The prisoner should only begin receiving their share of wage once the full compensation amount has been satisfied. Otherwise the wage hike decision may motivate unemployed, desperate people to commit crimes inorder to get a 'good job'.

Now you do one

Apply all six elements of the frame to the Karnataka custodial-violence SOP (Module 4). Write the full breakdown below.

Issue

Procedural failure and delays in investigations of custodial deaths and violences.

Context

Rise in custodial death reports and lapses in local investigation.

Stakeholders

victims and their families, sincere Police officers, Judiciary, Public.

Police Dept. Accused police + CID.

Arguments FOR = The SOP reduces lapses in investigation and ensure justice to victims and their families

AGAINST ⇒ A DSP is not needed to investigate the case, instead he should oversee the investigation headed by an upright inspector. ✗ SOP requires DYSP or above. You can't argue against SOP's rule.

Legal angle

Section 196 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023. Section 218 of BNSS, section 170 of Karnataka Police Act, 1963.

Way forward

We must establish an independant 24 hour custodial violence wing to investigate cases immediately. Internal Investigations

Excellent

by a culprit's own colleagues may create loopholes ~~to~~ to shield one another from accountability.

Remember

1. Don't fight the Question.
2. Use exact key phrases - Ex: Conflict of interest
   Article 21
   D.K Basu.
   → Cos these are free marks.
3. Stake holders = Job not people