Assignment: Technical Report Writing

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Memorandum

The word memorandum (plural: memoranda) is a Latin word, which means "something to remember" Or "reminder" it is often shortened to 'memo' (plural: memos). Memo is an informal type of report. Memo may be a note, document or other communication that helps memory by recording events or observations on a topic, such as may be used in an organization. With this background, it might helpful to note that a memo is also called "*in house communication*".

Thus, memos are generally used for internal communication between executives and subordinates or between the officers of the same level of an organization. It is also called as inter-office memorandum. As they may convey important information, clarity, careful arrangement, and neatness. A memo does not require a salutation and closing remarks. However, it is alright to initial the memo – beside the name types at the top or at the bottom of the memo – or even sign your name at the bottom. The style and tone of your memo should be the same, whether you are writing to your colleague or your superior. An over-friendly memo in an informal style to the manager may be a sign of disrespect. Paragraphs, however short, must always be numbered to make it easy to read. Memo is also used as a covering note.

15.1. Structure

A memorandum is considered the primary source of correspondence within an organization, just as a letter is the primary corresponding document between organizations. In this way, memo is an informal type of report, whereas a letter may be a formal report.

Some organizations have their own printed memo format and template. In case there is no printed memo form, then you write a memo or interoffice correspondence at the center and top of the page. Your memo must be brief and simple. If your memo is long, then it may be sent as an attachment. The information should be directed.

15.2. Key Points

- **Avoid personal statements:** Focus on objectivity without personal bias, preference, or interest on display. Avoid subjectivity**.** Stick to the relevant material.
- **Use a professional tone:** Your tone should be courteous and professional always, and it should convey strength and confidence.

Flawed Example	Better Example
This letter is to inform you that you will attend the upcoming mandatory meeting	We appreciate your attendance at the upcoming mandatory meeting.
You did not assemble the parts correctly, and so the product is malfunctioning.	The product may not work correctly if any errors occur during assembly

- **Use easy to understand language:** Language is always more powerful when you use active, rather than passive verbs. For example, say "agricultural runoff worsens eutrophication" instead of "eutrophication is worsened by agricultural runoff."

- **Conciseness and clarity should go in line with adequate development of thought:** Make your sentences, paragraph, and overall memo as brief and as focused as possible. Get your purpose straight before you start, then plan what you want to say and in what order. Use your memo layout to help your reader (headings, bulleted lists, white space, as appropriate).

15.3. Purpose

The main purpose that a memorandum fulfills is that it aims to record and relay information, and to make brief appeals. Memo is written to persuade others to take action, give feedback on an issue, or react to a situation. However, most memos communicate basic information, such as meeting times or due dates.

In addition, memo is used to establish accountability of things and saves you hassle and time, compared to writing a letter or a detailed, long report. A memorandum is also essential in the field of business as it helps build good relationships between higher authority and employees. In establishments and offices, memos are used to relay information to employees regarding events or any other changes that have been made in the company. Memos are generally less formal than a letter. Memos are an effective way to announce events such as office parties, death, incentives, new employees and holidays etc. Though such activities aren't directly work related, they do serve to unite employees and boost morale.

15.4. Elements of an Effective Memo

An effective memo:

- grabs the reader's attention
- provides information, makes a recommendation, or asks for action
- supports your position or explains benefits to reader
- mentions next steps and deadlines

When composing a memo, always consider the three stages of writing: plan what you want to say, write a draft, revise the draft, edit and proofread it and then finally publish it.

15.5. Audience analysis

Audience analysis involves assessing the audience to make sure the information provided to them is at the appropriate level. If you have typical audience, e.g., co-workers and colleagues, their focus will be on the main point since they share a similar background as you. Known if talk about Separate department they are less familiar about the issue, project or event so they provided by detailed back gourd information. It is better to provider a context because if someone out outside the organization want to know about the project they have some context in form of information so that they know what is going on.

15.6. Conclusion

By following these memo examples and addressing your audience in clear, concise language, you'll be able to effectively communicate with your coworkers in all your correspondence.

To: All Staff
From: The Manager
Date: May 27, 2010
Subject: Inappropriate use of time on Google Doodle games
Coworkers,
It has come to my attention that many in the office have been spending time on the Google home page microgames. This memo is a reminder to use your work hours for work.

According to a recent article, the estimated daily cost of people collectively playing these games instead of working is over $120 million—which is calculated based on the daily average increased time spent on the Google home page (36 seconds).

If these estimates are applied to our 600 office employees, this results in a nearly $700 weekly loss. This is a conservative estimate considering the extensive discussions that occur about beating the office's current high score. The extra cost quickly adds up.

Of course, we don't want you to view our organization as a place of drudgery and draconian rules. I encourage a fun and competitive environment, and I recognize that we certainly won't be profitable if you are unhappy or dissatisfied with your jobs. This is just a reminder to be careful with your use of company time.

Thank you,
The Manager

Example of general office memo

15.7. Guidelines and Tips

- **Clear subject line:** The subject line should be very specific to the topic or purpose of the memo. Subject lines are important to memos (as well as emails) because they have a large impact on whether or not the recipient reads the message. A vague subject line could cause the recipient to discard the memo (or delete the email) without reading it.
- **State your purpose in the first paragraph:** This is clubbed under the pre-writing stage of the memo. In this stage, an audience analysis should be kept in mind and purpose of writing a memo should be well-identified. Supply any relevant background information. Identify any task the memo is related to.
- **Summarize any potential objections:** Convey the information and supporting details relevant to the memo's purpose. Keep sentences tight and informative. Use bullets to list information.
- **Keep paragraphs short:** Keep paragraphs short and focused; one main idea per paragraph is a good rule of thumb for easy reading.
- **Use subheads between paragraph groups:** In long memos, headings are a great way to divide the material into manageable segments. They not only call attention to main topics but they let the reader know when there is a change in topic.
- **Use bulleted and numbered lists:** These help in clarification and ease of reading. It is easy to lose track in long lists separated by comas.
- **Request action:** With a closing, be precise on what needs to be done.

- **Be concise:** Include as much information as necessary. Memos should be short and concise; try to keep them to one page. If it is necessary to include lists, charts and graphs at the end, mention how these attachments are important to your memo.

15.8. Types of Memorandum

There are many types of memos and may roughly be categorized as either one of the following:

- Information Memo
- Problem Solving Memo
- Persuasion Memo
- Internal Memo Proposal
- Directive Memo
- Response to an Inquiry Memo
- Trip Report Memo
- Field Report/Lab Report Memo

15.8.1. Information Memo

Information memo is used to deliver or request information or assistance.

Structure:

- First part provides main idea.
- Second part expands on the details.
- Third part outlines the action required.

_____Better Widget Makers, Inc._____

MEMO

TO: Finance Committee Members   **DATE:** October 20, 2003

FROM: Ida Mae Knott   **SUBJECT:** Bakery Bid Report

As agreed upon at the September 19th meeting of the Finance Committee, bids to outsource the bakery product needs of our new cafeteria were solicited from three area vendors. I have met with representatives from each and carefully examined their proposals.

Since it is company policy to avoid the lowest and highest bids, the revised operating budget and supplementary information attached to this memo is based on numbers furnished by the Golden Bread Company.

Included for your review and approval are the following items:

Golden Bread Co. Information

- Wholesale price sheets
- Quantity cost break formulas
- Delivery and other service charges
- Annual contract discount structure
- Annual contract and credit application

Accounting Department Information

- In house vs. outside contract comparison report
- Bakery product line-item expenditure worksheets
- Revised payroll/payroll burden worksheets
- Revised pro forma and annual cafeteria operating budget proposal

I have met with the Golden Bread Company's sales manager and their Vice President of Sales and Marketing and have been assured that that we will receive excellent service. It is my recommendation that we sign them to an annual contract. They are located here in Silver City and doing so will be in keeping with our established policy to support the local business community.

Should it be necessary, I will be available this afternoon during the regularly scheduled finance meeting and will be happy to sit in and answer any questions. My office extension is # 29.

15.8.2. Problem Solving Memo

This type of memo suggests a specific action to improve a situation.

Structure:

- First part states the problem and gets right to it.
- Second part analyzes the problem with details pertaining to who and what is affected by the problem.
- Third part makes a recommendation. When making a recommendation, include not only the positive details but also the drawbacks and diffuse them yourself to minimize the problem.

15.8.3. Persuasion Memo

Persuasion memo is used to encourage the reader to cooperate in a desired action.

Structure:

- First part begins with an agreeable point
- Second part introduces the idea
- Third part states benefit to the reader
- Fourth part outlines the action required
- Final part ends with a call to action

15.3.4. Internal Proposal Memo

Such a memo is used to convey suggestions to senior management.

Structure:

- First part states reason for writing
- Second part outlines present situation and states writer's proposal
- Third part describes advantage(s)
- Fourth part mentions and diffuses disadvantage(s)
- Fifth part ends with a call to action

15.3.5. Directive Memo

A directive memo states a policy or procedure you want the reader or co-worker to follow.

Structure:

- Length depends on space required for explanation. This is determined by nature of the audiences.
- The memo should begin with a clear and concise statement of purpose. Example: The purpose of this memo is to let all members of the ABC Department know that doughnuts will be provided every Friday morning at 9:00 AM.
- Purpose is followed by statements providing a rationale.

15.3.6. Response to an Inquiry Memo

The purpose of this memo is to provide the audience with desired information.

Structure:

- First part states purpose statement, which is to respond to a request.
- Second part summarizes the requested information.
- Third part has a discussion, highlighting and emphasizing the important information.
- Final part is call to action.

15.3.7. Trip Report Memo

In professional scenarios, a trip memo is used for a supervisor after an employee returns from a business venture.

Structure:

- First part has statement of purposes, i.e., provides information on trip.
- Second summarizes clearly and concisely (ideally!) outline of your trip.
- Third part involves a discussion, which highlights and emphasizes important information.
- Final part includes action to be taken to rightly address the issue.

15.3.8. Field Report Memo

Memos are often used to report on inspection and procedures. These memos, known as field or lab reports, include the problem, methods, results, and conclusions, but spend less time on the methods section.

Structure:

Naturally, a field or report memo should begin with a purpose. This varies according to nature of work. In the next section, a summary of the complete memo should be provided. Problem leading to the decision to perform the procedure is discussed next followed by methods, results, conclusions and recommendations. The details for these have already been extensively discussed.

16.1. Format

A format is pre-established lay out for data and assumes the role of a pattern, plan or arrangement. This may generally be categorized in global or outer settings and inner or local settings.

16.1.1. Outer Frame

Generally, memorandum have 1-inch margins around the page. All lines of memorandum begin from the left side. The text begins two spaces after the subject line. The body of memo is single spaced with two spaces between paragraphs.

16.1.1.1. Sender's details

The sender usually signs the memo using initials, first name or complete name at the end. It is important to keep in mind the designations and ranks of people who will be reading the memorandum. In electronic copy of memorandum, signature or initials are not required because the sender's name is already visible. The memo, short for memorandum, contains the organization's name, its logo and, sometimes, other details.

16.1.1.2. Additional page

In case the memo exceeds one page, a header is used to develop a link between the pages by specifying page numbering. Thus, a header may contain recipient name, page number and date as shown

16.1.2.1. Recipients

For informal memos, the receiver name is enough. In case there are two people with the same name within an organization, specifying designation or department may be necessary. In formal memos, if receiver is in another department, it is necessary to specify designation and department. In practice, specifying full name was an integral practice but has become outdated, depending on the type of the organization. If the memo is sent to several people, they are listed after "To". If the recipient's list

exceeds a dozen, then it is preferable to write their names at the end of the memo. This should be referenced in the "To" line.

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U N I V E R S I T Y

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Memorandum

To:

From:

Copy to:

Date:

Subject:

Message

16.1.2.2. Sender

The "From" section contains the name of the sender. The writer's name and professional title come after this heading. For informal memos, the sender's first name usually suffices, again, but may be necessary to add further details if there are two people with the same name. If the memo is not formal, then you skip titles, which include Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms. or Miss. By the way, there is a fundamental different between the use of Ms. and Miss. Be sure to know them before hand and these vary from country to country.

In more formal memos, the use of full name is mandatory. Some organizations may require details regarding designation and department, as well, if this is not specified on the letter head. However, again, if the receiver(s) is/are from another department, then details pertaining to designation and department are usually required.

16.1.2.3. Date

Organizations use date for record-keeping and it helps with organizing past events and information. Thus, writing up a date is mandatory. Preferably, write the month or its abbreviation to avoid confusion between British and American date system.

16.1.2.4. Subject

A subject line is the introduction that identifies the emails intent. This subject line, displayed to the email user or recipient, when they look at their list of messages in their inbox, it should tell the recipient what the message is about, what the sender wants to convey.

Use the exact topic words in subject to communicate the point of memo. For example, "Changes in Employee Medical Benefits" is more specific than "Employees Benefits Program".

16.1.2.5. Message

The content of memo should have a concise introduction, middle paragraph for details and a brief conclusion. Some memos are as short as one paragraph or even one sentence. Memo length is set by purpose and audience. Unless the memo is a brief note, a well-organized memo message should contain situation, a problem, a solution, action and politeness.

A long memo has different sub-sections. These are explained hereafter.

16.1.2.6. Summary

For longer memos, a summary is placed at the beginning of the memo. This summary should condense the subject in five or ten lines with simple language.

16.1.2.7. Introduction

The introduction consists of memo's purpose and scope. It may be used to ask questions or to provide answers, and even to thank the readers. If the memo concerns refusal of a request, be sure to give out a reason prior to a blunt no. This stems from the need to cushion unwelcoming news. In analytical memos, your tone should be unemotional and objective. Explain what you are writing and why there is a need for it.
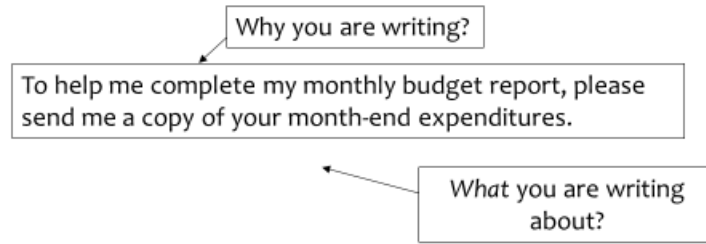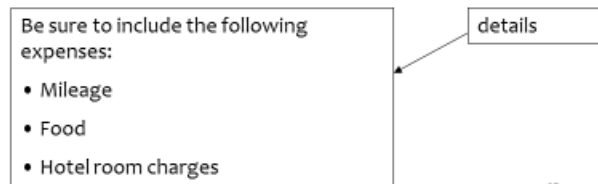
16.1.2.8. Discussion

The facts of a situation need to be accurately identified and the arguments should be supported carefully.

16.1.2.9. Analysis

Before undergoing an analysis, you need to inform your readers the following:

- **Data:** What date will you be using? How did you get the data? Where was it collected from?
- **Method:** What is the procedure for analyzing your data?
- **Assumptions:** Are there some key assumptions in your analysis?

16.1.2.9.1. Scientific Analysis

The scientific analysis is a process of studying the nature of an abstract or tangle concept or determine its essential features and its relations with its environment.

16.1.2.9.2. Significance of Data

Most analytical reports require the incorporation of data to be convincing. This encourages objectivity. Data are usually expressed in either tables or graphs. All tables and graphs should have a title and a numerical reference.

16.1.2.10. Conclusion

The conclusion summarizes the main points and discuss what action is required of the reader. At this stage, you may want to mention when you expect a follow-up or why that date is important.
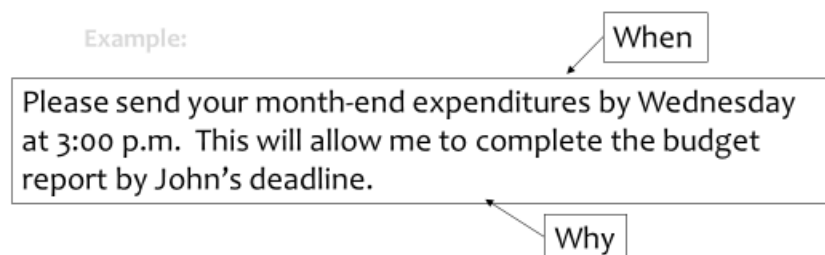
16.1.2.11. Writer's Initials

A memo is completed by the writer's initials and usually not by his/her signatures immediately after the last sentence. The "from" line eliminates the need for a complementary close.

16.1.2.12. Distribution List

Names on the distribution list are usually typed in alphabetical or by seniority in designation.

16.1.2.13. Attachments

If you've attachments, you may list them at the top of the memo or at the end.

16.2. Copies

A duplicate copy of the memo should be held for the future reference.