

How to Write a Memorandum

..... a practical handout

What is a Memorandum?

A memorandum, also known as a memo, is informing a group or organization in an email or letter of a specific problem and/or solution. A memo should have an action plan with specific steps on how to carry out the plan. Memorandums should be short, concise, and easy to read.

Heading

The heading in an email or letter should include:

To: Who is the letter/email for

From: Your name

Date: Month day, year

Subject line: **Be as Specific as Possible**

Example:

To: Sarah Martin

From: Montse Enriquez

Date: January 27th, 2019

Subject line: How to Structure a Business Memo

Introduction

This paragraph will address the “what” in a Memo.

Thesis and Key Points (1-3 sentences)

The thesis statement solves a problem or proposes a solution and then expands into key points if needed.

Background and Overview (3-5 sentences)

This informs the reader of information they need to know that IS NOT mentioned in the body of the memo.

This paragraph is optional.

Example:

“We are two months away from our deadline and our client wants to bump our deadline by three weeks. Our client sees a critical unforeseen market change and if we do not meet the new deadline, our full years’ worth of project will be worthless. This deadline will be challenging since some of our team members had personal vacation and training plans during our new timeframe.”

Body / Key Points

In this section, explain the key points in a concise manner. Start with the important information then move towards the least important. (4–10 lines or 3–5 sentences)

- Do not be redundant
- Use white space
- Use bullet points, bold, or number any key words (if necessary)
- One key point per paragraph

Example:

“I would like to schedule a meeting tomorrow at 10:00 am to discuss the deadline and everyone's task. During this meeting I would like to have an update of this project by each department and discuss the obstacles we are going to face as a team. By the end of this meeting, everyone will have their task and will have a solution to any obstacles they will face with this deadline.”

Summary

The summary section is only to be used if the memo is more than one page. This section summarizes the key points of the memo (Similar to a conclusion paragraph).

Call to Action

This section explains what the reader must do after they are finished reading the memo. The call to action can be a short paragraph of 2-3 sentences, or it can be listed in bullets or numbering if more than a couple of sentences.

Example:

“Please call Pa before January 30th to confirm or decline the invitation at (123) 456-6778. The invitations that need to be sent out to our employees are on my desk. After handling the invitations, I will give you a list of candidates to interview for the Finance department before this quarter ends. Also,”

Example:

- 1. Call Pa at (123) 456-6778 before January 30th to confirm or decline the invitation.*
- 2. Interview at least 10 candidates for the Finance department before this quarter ends.*
- 3. Send out the invitations on my desk to the employees*
- 4. Plan for next week's meeting*
- 5. Give an update on guest attending the event*

Attachments

If you are writing an email - attach pictures, files, or hyperlinks to make it easy for the reader to access it. If attaching a chart to the email, make sure the chart is easy to read.

- To emphasize comparisons, use a bar chart
- To emphasize trends, use a line graph
- To emphasize specific values, use a table

References

Purdue Writing Lab. (2018). Parts of a Memo // Purdue Writing Lab. Retrieved from

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/memos/parts_of_a_memo.html

Stettner, M. (1998, Dec 24). How to write A memo that gets results. Investor's Business Daily Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/BdTXof>

Turabian, K. (2007). A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers (Seventh ed., Chicago guides to writing, editing, and publishing).