

## Memo Writing Notes

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Memos are used within organizations to communicate everything from routine details to complete proposals and reports. Memos are often only a few short paragraphs, but they can be much longer, depending on their purpose. Here are some typical uses of memos:

- to inform others about new or changed policy, procedures, organizational details
- to announce meetings, events, changes
- to present decisions, directives, proposals, briefings
- to transmit documents (internal)

### Memo Format

Company and/or department name (without address)

Heading

- To (who gets it)
- From (who sent it)
- Subject (what it's about)
- Date (when it was sent)

Body (conveys message)

- Introduction
- Main points
- Close

### Memo Style

- **Concise:** Make your sentences, paragraph, and overall memo as brief and as focused as possible.
- **Clear:** 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).
- **Direct:** Speak directly to your reader, as you would in person or on the phone. Do not pad your ideas with unnecessary details. Think of what questions your reader wants answered, and then answer them.
- **Clean:** Reread, revise, copyedit, and proofread.

## **Memo Structure**

**Subject Line:** Summarizes the main idea; think of it as being preceded by the words "This memo is about."

**Introductory paragraph:** Quickly orients the reader to what the memo is about.

- Give your purpose for writing.
- Supply any relevant background information.
- Identify any task the memo is related to.

**Body:** Conveys the information and supporting details relevant to the memo's purpose

- Keep paragraphs short and focused; one main idea per paragraph.
- Keep sentences tight and informative
- Use bullets to list information

**Close:** End courteously (think of a phone call or face-to-face meeting), stating any expected outcome, action, or other information appropriate to your purpose. For example,

- "Please send me your comments and suggestions by January 16."
- "Let's meet next week to go over the next stage in the plan."