



UNIT-12

Writing Memos

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss how to write memos effectively

Unit 12

Writing Memos

The Anatomy of a Memo

Another item that you may have to write for your business is a memo. A memo (short for memorandum) is the traditional way of relaying information through an office in a written form.

Let's take a look at a sample memo:

Memo 1

To: Marketing Department
CC: Executive Committee 2
From: Barb Smith, VP of Marketing
Date: August 4
Re: New Marketing Coordinator

3
This is to inform all staff that our new marketing coordinator, Elmer Fudd, will be joining us for our company lunch today. Please ensure that you attend and greet him warmly; and please, no rabbit jokes.

This memo was created using a basic template from Microsoft Word. Here's a look at the three parts:

1. Title identifying the document as a memo
2. Standard fields, including to, from, date, and subject
3. Body of the memo

When writing memos, the same rules that we have been discussing apply. In addition, memos should be kept short (typically no longer than a page) and should not discuss extremely sensitive information or information that is likely to change. (This type of information is better dealt with in person.) A memo should also be kept to one topic.

Reviewing Your Writing

Checking Back

We've covered a good amount of material so far in this course, so let's look back to the beginning and apply what you've learned so far. This is the type of review that you can do over all your writing projects to make sure that you are producing a document that meets the four C's and is the best work that you can do.

Scan

This is the technique that most readers use, so make sure you look at your document from this perspective. You want to ensure that it looks appealing to read.

- Ñ Is there some balance between white space and text, or did you make the margins narrow and fill the page with text?
- Ñ Have you used one (or at most two) fonts that are easy to read?
- Ñ Are diagrams and tables appealing?

Clear

- Ñ Did you say what you wanted to say?
- Ñ Did you eliminate ambiguous terms (many, less, etc.)?
- Ñ Are your paragraphs linked?
- Ñ Are your recommendations or conclusions easy to locate?

Concise

- Ñ Did you cut out all the fluff?
- Ñ Did you use an active voice as much as you could?

Complete

- Ñ Is all the necessary information there?
- Ñ Can you look at it and identify the five W's and How?
- Ñ Will your readers know what is going to happen next/what they are responsible for?
- Ñ Are references included (if needed)?

Correct

- Ñ Did you check grammar, punctuation, and spelling?
- Ñ Are your facts and figures all correct?
- Ñ Are the reader's name, title, company name, and address all correct?

Writing Challenges

Test Your Knowledge

What is the best opening sentence for a letter?

How do you address multiple subjects?

When should you capitalize?

What are the most suitable salutations?

What is the correct format of the “Re:” line?

What is the proper use of Enclosure(s)?

What is the correct notation for copy?

Other Points

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Oxford Dictionary of English (3rd Edition)*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- ✓ Strunk, William, and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style (4th Edition)*. Longman, 1999.
- ✓ Truss, Lynne. *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*. Gotham Books, 2006.
- ✓ Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well*. Collins, 2006.