

Lecture 18

18.1. 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.

18.1.1. 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.

18.1.1.1. 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.

18.1.1.2. 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 in Figure 1.

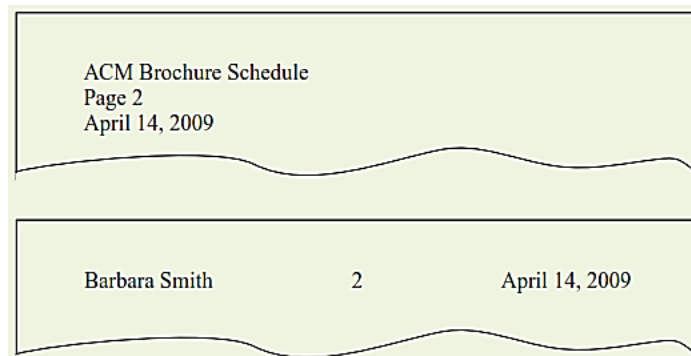


Figure 1 Memo header

18.1.2. Inner Frame

Text structure refers to how the information within a written text is organized.

18.1.2.1. 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 In practice, specifying full name was an integral practice but has become outdated, depending on the type of the organization.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.



Memorandum

To:

From:

Copy to:

Date:

Subject:

Message

Figure 2 A sample memo. Source: Alred, G. J. Brusaw, C. T. Oliu, W. E., Handbook of Technical Writing, 10th Ed., St. Martin's Press. p.329

18.1.2.2. 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 difference 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.

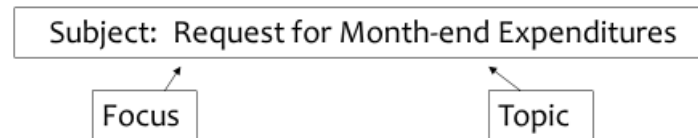
18.1.2.3. Date

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.

18.1.2.4. 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”.



These general guidelines are usually applicable but the order of placement of these headings may vary from organization to organization. For example, the “To” lines furnish the need for a salutation, as may be evident from the opening, “Dear Mrs. Bernstein”.

18.1.2.5. 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.

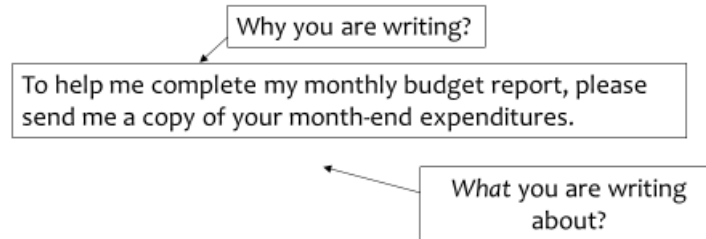
18.1.2.6. Summary

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.

18.1.2.7. Introduction

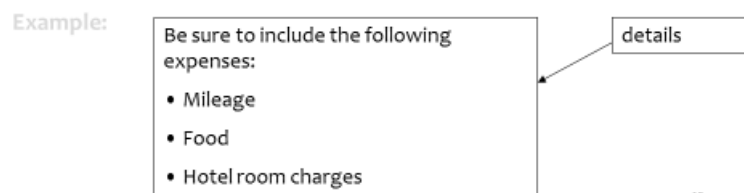
The introduction consists of memo’s purpose and scope. It may be used to ask questions or to provide answers, and even to thank the readers. If the memo concerns refusal of a request, be sure to give out a

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.



18.1.2.8. Discussion

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



18.1.2.9. 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?

18.1.2.9.1. Scientific Analysis

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

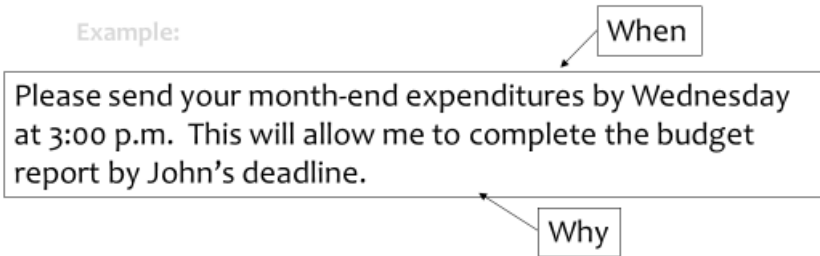
18.1.2.9.2. Significance of Data

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.

18.1.2.10. 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.

Example:



18.1.2.11. 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.

18.1.2.12. Distribution List

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

18.1.2.13. Attachments

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

18.2. Copies

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