

Business Writing: How to Write a Memo

UWF Writing Lab

A memorandum, or memo, is a document used to convey a simple and relatively small bit of information. Within an organization or business, a memo is used to relay information ranging from company/organization announcements to payroll changes.

A memo should be simple and short. A memo is not an in-depth explanation or description. Typically, memos are used within an organization. They are not formal letters; however, clear and correct language should be used. A memo may be typed on the organization's letterhead or on plain 8½ x 11-inch paper.

A memo's format will vary from organization to organization. You may find that your organization will have a preset format that it would like to use; however, all memos will include the following information in this order:

- The heading "MEMORANDUM." This heading may be centered or flush left. This heading and the succeeding fields are usually typed in upper case. They may be in bold or regular type. Each field is followed by a colon. The four fields may be single- or double-spaced.
- The "TO" field, indicating the appropriate recipient of the memo. The memo may address all employees, department heads only, one specific department, or one individual. Always be specific. If you are addressing a memo to the CEO of your company, use that individual's name. If you are addressing a large group of people, you may address a memo to "All Employees" or "Faculty of the Department of English and Foreign Languages."
- The "FROM" field, indicating the individual sending the memo. If someone else is typing the memo for you, be sure to initial it.
- The "DATE" field, indicating the date that the memo is being sent.
- The "SUBJECT" field, listing a brief title or header indicating the subject matter of the memo. The "SUBJECT" should be as specific as possible. For example, don't say "parking" if the memo is about the new mandatory parking permit policy. A subject such as "New Parking Permits" would be more appropriate.
- The body of the memo. Just like an essay, this part of your memo will contain the message you are sending out to your recipient(s). The body of the memo should be single-spaced. The number of paragraphs is determined by the amount of information.
- Your memo may also include a "cc," indicating that you are sending a copy of your memo to someone other than the individual listed in your "TO" field. In this case, the "cc" should appear at the bottom of the memo.

Although it is an informal means of company communication, a memo is an official document. Often, memos are used to record company activity. Remember to keep them as professional as possible

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL DEPARTMENT MANAGERS

FROM: JANE S. BOSS
DATE: APRIL 20, 2003
SUBJECT: PARKING LOT POLICY

Recently, there has been a problem with associates parking in unauthorized places. Associates are parking in fire zones and on the grassy areas surrounding parking lots.

Please inform your associates that any vehicles parked in unauthorized zones will be towed. WRITE Technologies is working to alleviate the current parking shortage by building a parking garage. Until the parking garage is complete, please remind your associates that they are to park in designated parking spots only.