

TDW COMMUNICATIONS

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WEEK 5—Memo: Informational

What is an informational memo?

An informational memo tells employees about information that they need to know. The readers do not need to take any action on the information that the memo gives them.

Some examples of informational memos are to make an announcement, to explain a policy, or to present a short report of a project.

When should I write an informational memo?

Write an informational memo when you need to communicate with members inside your organization about a formal matter, such as a policy or a procedure, or to distribute information such as the record of a meeting. If you need to communicate something short and informal, use e-mail instead.

How to write an informational memo

Choose the subject of your memo. What is the main topic that you want to discuss? If you have more than one main topic that you need to discuss, then send another memo.

Once you decide on the subject, create a list of points that are important for the reader to know. For example, if the subject of your memo is the policy for reimbursement for travel expenses, your list of points could include (1) employees must fill out expense reports, (2) employees must include receipts, and (3) the limits for meal expenses.

Organize the paragraphs around the points that you want to make. In the first paragraph, introduce your subject and state your main point clearly. Then, write one paragraph for each of your other points.

Finally, write a closing paragraph where you repeat your main point and summarize what you have written.

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What kind of writing style should I use?

Be sure to keep your writing clear and simple. Write like you are having a conversation with the reader. Don't be afraid to use contractions (like "don't") to make your language more informal.

WRONG: The number of students enrolled is expected to expand as more and more students are accepted into the university, and the prediction is proposed that by the end of three years, the matriculation rate will increase by the amount of 5%.

RIGHT: We predict that student enrollment will increase 5% over the next three years.

Structure of an Informational Memo

To: All Employees in the Admissions Office
From: (you)
Date: March 15, 2013
Re: The New Dress Code Policy

Paragraph #1: Introduction describing the subject

Paragraph #2: Describe one point

Paragraph #3: Describe another point

Paragraph #4: Describe another point

...More paragraphs if you need them...

Closing paragraph: Summarize the memo and repeat the main subject

What do I do after I write my memo?

After you have written a first draft of your memo, you are ready to revise it. Read through the memo to make sure that it accomplishes what you want. You may need to revise your memo two or three times

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before it is ready to be sent. Use the following checklist to help you revise your memo:

- Do you introduce your subject in the first paragraph?
- Look back at the list of your points that you want the reader to know. Does your memo have one paragraph for each point?
- Are the paragraphs organized from most important point to least important point?
- Check the grammar and punctuation, and look up what you are unsure about.
- Run a spellcheck to catch anything you might have missed.

Now let's put what we learned into practice!

Assignment

A visiting professor is giving a seminar next week. Write an informational memo (maximum one page) to the faculty members to let them know about the seminar. Describe the seminar topic, tell a little about the professor's background, and give the reader the information they need to know if they want to attend the seminar. Follow the format presented in Week 4 (Memo: The Basics).

Complete this assignment and submit it to your instructor by Friday, March 29th.

Next week, we will learn how to write an instructional memo.