

CHAPTER 8

MEMORANDUMS

Outline

1. Characteristics and Organization of a Memo
2. Uses of Memos
3. Grammar Review: Gerunds

Main Ideas

1. A memorandum is an in-house correspondence. It is used to convey informal messages or to share information within an organization. A memo consists of 3 parts: the heading, the subheadings, and the message. The language used in writing memos is concise, direct, and factual.

2. Memos are written for announcements and instructions, statements of policy, and informal reports.

3. Gerunds are elements of grammar that are useful for writing business correspondence effectively.

Objectives

Students are able to:

- 1. Write memos correctly and effectively.**
- 2. Write memos purposefully.**
- 3. Use gerunds correctly in writing business correspondence.**

Written communications within an organization are as important as those to be sent outside. Memos serve the need to share information and to convey messages among employees. Memos are usually more personal than a business letter. Because of their informality, the language used in writing memos is concise, factual, and direct. In other words, the language is like spoken English. Although they are circulated within the company, memos normally have a simplified, standardized format. The information, however, has to be complete and accurate. Courtesy always counts, no matter what kind of writing it may be.

1. Characteristics and Organization of a Memo

Memos are different from business letters in that they are not written on a company's letterhead. They do not have an inside address, salutation, or complimentary closing. Instead, a memo consists of 3 parts:

1.1 The heading. The heading of a memo includes the company's name and the term "Interoffice Memo", or "Memo".

The following are examples of a memo heading:

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS, INC.
Interoffice Memo

THE QUALITY ELECTRIC APPLIANCES
Memo

1.2 The Subheadings

The subheadings consist of 4 parts:

1.2.1 The TO: line shows the name of the person to whom the memo is sent. If the memo is addressed to a superior, courtesy titles (such as Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.) are used. Job titles, departments, and room numbers may be added for clarity. In cases where memos are sent to several people, a carbon copy notation (CC) may be used.

Examples of **the TO: line** are as follows:

TO: Ms. Teresa James

TO: Dr. Joan Jenkins, Department Head

TO: Bobby Williams

1.2.2 **The FROM: line** indicates the name of the person sending the memo. Usually, courtesy titles are omitted, but a job title, department, or extension number should be included to avoid confusion.

Examples of **the FROM: line** are as follows:

FROM: Melinda Hicks, Sales Department

FROM: Thomas Gage, Marketing Manager

FROM: Linda Hopkins, Ext. 419

1.2.3 **The DATE: line** shows the date on which the memo is sent. This part is essential for future reference and filing. Do not use numbers for the month, or they may create confusion.

Examples of **the DATE: line** are as follows:

DATE: 2 June 1997

DATE: June 2.1997

1.2.4 **The SUBJECT: line** indicates the content of the **memo**. The subject will not be a complete sentence. It **can** be a phrase or a word.

Examples of **the SUBJECT: line** are as follows:

SUBJECT: Discount

SUBJECT: Office Extension

SUBJECT: Office Supplies Inventory

The following are examples of memo forms:

AGRO GROUP LTD.	
Interoffice Memo	
TO:	FROM:
SUBJECT:	DATE:

International Skyline, Inc.

Memo

TO:
FROM:
SUBJECT:
DATE:

Some examples of writing the subheadings of a memo are as follows:

ALL EXPERTS, INC.

Memorandum

TO: Ms. Rebecca Myer
FROM: Linda Baker
SUBJECT: Approval of employee as a permanent staff
DATE: 8 June 1997

International Skyline, Inc.

Memo

TO: All Division Heads
FROM: James Baker
SUBJECT: Customs Clearance Section
DATE: 11 August 1997

Star Entertainment Co., Ltd.

Memo

TO: Michael Lee, Office Manager
FROM: Gloria Tang, Treasurer
SUBJECT: Handling of Fax Transmissions
DATE: 17 July 1997

1.3 The Message

The message of memos varies according to the subject matter or types of memo. Some memos may have only one paragraph, others may include 1 or 2 pages. Usually, a memo has about 3 paragraphs:

- 1.3.1 The introduction states the main idea or purpose of the memo.
- 1.3.2 A detailed discussion presents the actual information being conveyed.
- 1.3.3 A conclusion may make recommendations or calls for further actions.

Study the following memos as examples for your own memo writing.

	Heading }	Richardson & Sons, Inc.
		Interoffice Memorandum
Subheadings }	TO: All Staff	FROM: Richard West
	SUBJECT: Handling of Fax Transmissions	DATE: 19 June 1997
Purpose }	We have encountered several problems with fax communications, and I want you to respect the following new rules:	
Detailed Information }	In the column "NO. OF PAGE(S)" please mark the number of each page and the total number of pages, in order to make sure that all copies of each fax are sent out and can be properly double-checked against the fax transmission report. Example: P. 1/3, P. 2/3, P.3/3, etc.	
Suggest future actions	As of today, no one is allowed to send out copies of product rate sheets unless approved by an executive. We have wasted a lot of money on unnecessary transmissions and I must urge you to reduce the unusually high communication cost, and send the product rate sheets by mail unless it is absolutely necessary to use fax. Ms. Wendy is requested to do spot checks on actual fax transmissions made, at least once a week.	
	Please inform all staff accordingly. Thank you.	

Alexander Tang Co., Ltd.

Interoffice Memo

TO: All Staff

FROM: Christina Bayes

SUBJECT: Additional Topics

DATE: 1 March 1997

This will remind you that we agreed to add two more topics for discussions at our annual meeting. The schedule is as follows:

April 2 • Speaker : Professor Serge Lalonde, Notre Dame University

Subject: “Management Tools”

April 3 • Speaker : Mr. Raymond Coach, East Asia Foundation

Subject: “Public Relations with Service Mind”

All sessions will start at 9.00 am. in the Assembly Hall. If you are unable to attend any of these meetings, please let me know before 20 March.

It is important to note **that** memos are usually not signed, the writers of memos may sign their initials over the typed initials below the message or at the FROM: line.

Activity 1 A

Write the SUBJECT: line of the following memos.

1.

Charleston & Alice Inc.

Memo

TO: All Department Supervisors FROM: Adams Smith
SUBJECT: DATE: 7 August 1997

We have so far been using department code 3 for both the Marketing Department and the Finance Department, In order to get separate statistics in the future, I request that the Marketing Department use the new department code 4 for all future invoices starting immediately. The Finance Department will continue to use department code 3, as at the moment.

Please inform all staff concerned, accordingly. Thank you.

II.

TRAFALGAR FLYAWAY

Memo

TO: All Staff

FROM: Jennifer Wilson

SUBJECT:

DATE: 1 March 1997

Please re-check the quantity of office supplies in each division. The June 1 inventory should show that we have on hand at least two dozen of each office supply.

May I have your report by the end of the week?

Activity 1 B

Write a memo asking for information about employment figures for a new plant in Denton before the meeting on 25 July.

Activity 1 C

Write a memo providing the information requested in the memo in activity 1 B.

2. Uses of Memos

Although circulated within an organization, memos serve many purposes. They are written for announcements and instructions, statements of policy, and informal reports. No matter what the purpose of memos is, remember to write them concisely, directly, and politely. Despite their informality in conveying messages, **memos** which are politely and carefully written show the writer's good manners and courtesy.

The following is an example of a memo that announces:

Powell & Jones

Interoffice Memo

TO: All Department Supervisors

FROM: Adams Smith

SUBJECT: In-house English Training

DATE: 7 August 1997

We will organize an in-house English training program for interested staff. The program runs from 1 to 30 September 1997. The details for place and time are as follows:

Group 1 **Beginner's** Level: Auditorium 1 5.00 - 7.00 p.m. M, W, F

Group 2 Intermediate Level: Room 106 5.00 - 7.00 p.m. M, W, F

Group 3 Advanced Level: Room 20 1 **5.00 - 7.00** p.m. TU, TH

Interested personnel are encouraged to sign up for the placement test from today until 5 August. The test will be held on 28 August at Auditorium 1 at 5.00 p.m.

The following is an example of a memo that instructs:

Stevens & Sons

Memo

TO: All Staff

FROM: Robin Stevens, Jr.

SUBJECT: New Lunch Turns

DATE: 5 September 1997

To increase **efficiency** and effectiveness in our service, I would like staff in every department to plan to rotate their lunch breaks proportionately. At least three people must be at work in each department during the normal lunch hour (from 12.00 to 1.00 pm).

New lunch turns will begin on 6 September 1997. Thank you.

The following is an example of a memo that states the company's policy:

Quality Department Store

Memo

TO: All employees

FROM: **Melin** Dayes, Chief Accountant

SUBJECT: Staffs Discount Policy

DATE: 1 December 1997

Our store has a new policy regarding staff discount. Starting 1 December 1997, all employees are entitled to a 15 percent discount when they show their name tags

Please keep the receipts for all your purchases, for a double check if need be.

Please be informed accordingly. Thank you.

The following is an example of a memo that reports:

Grants Travel Inc.

Memo

TO: All Staff FROM: Jean Hicks, Secretary
SUBJECT: New Working Hours DATE: 10 June 1997

We have now completed a research on new working hours for our staff. The results of the questionnaires show that 80% of all staff prefer to work five days a week and that 70% of staff would like to have Wednesday off. Regarding the starting hour, 85% would rather start working at 10.00 AM. and finish at 6.00 PM.

The Board of Directors had a meeting with the Accounts Department to discuss the research findings and agreed to begin a trial period of one year starting 10 July 1997. We believe that the new system may work better for us. Changes in the working schedule will enable our employees to avoid the rush hour. Besides, a weekday off will enable them to complete personal errands in places that close on weekends without taking leave of absence.

The conclusion we reached after careful analysis of the information provided in answers to the questions, is that a 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. schedule will be beneficial to both our staff and the company as a whole, both financially and morally. We therefore recommended its introduction next month.

Learning to write memos is as important as learning to write **other** types of business correspondence, Keep in mind the form of memos and practice writing them concisely, directly, and politely. The language of memos is like informal, everyday messages. Review the uses of memos and carefully practice writing each type. Only through regular practice will-you succeed in writing memos effectively.

Activity 2 A

Write a memo from Mary Hobbs, Manager of Jewell & Hobbs, to all department supervisors asking for a mid-vear stock checking.

Activity 2 B

Write a memo from Steven Sawyer, Director of Sawyer & Sons, to all staff stating a new vacation policy.

3. Grammar Review: Gerunds

Gerunds are elements of grammar that function as a noun and may be used as a subject, an object, or an object of a preposition. The knowledge of gerunds will help you to write business correspondence effectively and correctly. Review the rules of how to use gerunds and do the following activities.

Activity 3 A

Complete the following sentences with gerunds.

1. The manager admitted

2. All department supervisors suggest
3. The president recalls
4. All employees appreciate
5. His supervisor appreciated Alfred's
6. The brochure recommends
7. Mrs. Melinda Jones cannot tolerate George's
8. The shipping company delays
9. The bank does not want to risk
10. Our customers enjoy

Activity 3 B

Complete the following with the correct form of the infinitive or the gerund.

1. James finished (work) at 5.00 p.m.
2. Would you mind (turn) down your microphone?

3. John decided (risk, not) after (have)such a successful career, (lose) his license.
4. I always end my letter that “I look forward to (hear) from you soon.”
5. My company needs (paint)
6. Jake is always dedicated to (work) so hard.
7. After six hours of (meet).....the committee decided (tire) two mechanics for stealing auto parts.
8. The company cannot afford, due to certain circumstances, (purchase) new furnishings.
9. Mary did not get that job because she was unable, even in normal situations, (express) herself clearly.
10. Our policy is to improve our personnel by (provide)in-house training programs.

*Writing well requires a writer to think clearly, to be thorough, and to say what he or she has to say in a single, straightforward way. Good writing is impossible without good thinking-without focusing on a topic, defining it, and developing it logically and **fully**. Readers expect writers to have something to tell them, something they need or want to know, and readers want to be able to get that information without undue **effort**.*

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Editing Technical Writing, 6.