MEMOS

Two Types of Memos
1. Informative for response or knowledge acquisition
   o This type of memo gives needed information to an individual/individuals. For example, an instructor may require students to write memos of project on class work, an employer may request an employee to create a memo to inform the employer of research and data, etc.
   o This memo begins with an informative statement in the introductory paragraph—one that informs the reader what information is given—and why. If action or a response is required, this is communicated in the introductory paragraph as well.

2. Action-oriented
   o This type of memo demands action of the reader(s). For example, a technician may report test results to an employer in order to convince the employer to make necessary/requested changes, an employer may communicate bad feedback from customers to employees in order to require customer-service changes, etc.

Purpose
• Internal communication
• Unceremonious; less formal than letters
• Non-sensitive information
• Short and to-the-point: direct style

Format

Memorandum

To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

Use left-block format for memos. This means a straight left alignment. Use a one-inch margin throughout.

Double-space between paragraphs. Do not use a full justification (justifying your text on the right). Use a left-justification with a ragged right margin.

Use 11-point Arial or Times New Roman. You may use 12-point if you have little text.
Content

- All memo information is to be in top-down format: The most important information is to be given first, and the least important information is to be given last. It is assumed, rightly or not, that the text at the end of a memo is not always read.
- All non-sensitive memos should begin with a “bottom-line statement”: This is a short, right-to-the-point statement.
- If there is more than one bottom-line-statement in the memo, each statement should be set off by headings or bullets
- State your purpose first, before giving details.
- Subject versus Purpose: The purpose of your memo includes the subject. The subject of your memo does not include your purpose. Remember that. Include special information or information that is questionable in an appendix or attachment—and notify your reader of this.
- In a longer and more complex memo, your bottom-line-statement may include several subheadings. Note: If your memo exceeds one page, consider writing multiple memos: You may have more than one issue that needs to be addressed. By including too much information in one memo, you take the chance that some information may be overlooked.
- If your memo exceeds one page, do not repeat the letterhead or Date/To/From/Subject. Instead, include the name(s) of the receiver(s) flush left, page number in center, and date at right margin.

Audience

- Who is your audience?
- How is your audience (reader) situated within the organization?
- What do they know?
- What do they need to know?
- What might they want to know?
- What type of environment is it in which they work?

Attachments

- Notify your reader by including “Attachments.”
- Include this at the very end of your memo, flush left, just above the bottom margin.

Language

- Business-like tone, but not formal
- First person (I or we)
- Short, simple words
- Concise, not long sentences like letters
- Coherent, keeping each paragraph to one idea. Keep sentences short but not choppy.

Closing

- Initial over your name: With a pen, write your initials over your name on the memo (top)
- This may not always be done, but it does serve as a preventative legal loophole.

Editing

- Edit your work.
- Use Spell Check and use Grammar Check
- Have someone else read it (quality control)

Rhetorical Appeals

- Logos: What is the purpose, and what needs to ‘stand out’?
- Pathos: What tone should be used, and what should/should not be said?
- Ethos: How will you build your credibility using content, format, etc.?
Main Criteria

- Distinguishing memo format ("Memo," To, From, Date, Subject)
- For hard-copy memo, initial (in pen) over or next to your name (in "From" line)
- First paragraph imperative (or—sometimes—first paragraph main point): For this assignment, you are to have a first-paragraph imperative—something specific that needs to be done.
- This must be 'spelled out' very clearly. This is extremely important.
- Clear and concise language: This may include inserting headings and bullet points.
- Important information inserted first
- Only one main concern per memo