Professional Correspondence
What is a Memo?

• A memo is any document (regardless of length) the has “memo heads” at the top
  • Date, To, From, Subject

• The subject line should always relate the contents to the reader’s needs
What are Memos Used For?

- Memos are used to report everything from results of tests to announcements of meetings
- Your ability to write a memo clearly and quickly tells a reader (your boss!) a great deal about your abilities as a problem-solver and decision-maker
Memo Format

• The memo format consists of specific lines placed at the top of a page (called the Heading)
  • Date, To, From, Subject

• The memo report follows the heading
  • Can be from one or two sentences in length to one or two pages in length
  • Shorter length is most common
DATE: December 6, 2011
TO: E. J. Mentzer
FROM: Jane Thompson

SUBJECT: REMODELING OF THE OFFICE COMPLEX

Here is a preliminary recommendation on which ...
December 6, 2011

To:   E. J. Mentzer
cc:   Judy Davis
From: Jane Thompson

Subject: Remodeling of the Office Complex

Here is a preliminary recommendation on which ...
December 6, 2011

To:   E. J. Mentzer
From: Jane Thompson

Subject: Remodeling of the Office Complex

Here is a preliminary recommendation on which ...
Memo Body

• Start with the purpose of the memo
• Include some text that identifies or establishes the credibility of the writer
• Follow with the basic conclusion
• Then present data to support the conclusion
• General tone is friendly and informal
Memo Example

DATE: September 6, 2011
TO: E. J. Mentzer
FROM: Jane Thompson

SUBJECT: Remodeling of the Office Complex

Here is a preliminary recommendation on which brand of open-top range to purchase for the Food Service Department. After comparing the specification sheets of several brands, I found that two brands satisfy our needs: Montague and Franklin, but Montague is the better choice.

The Montague is cheaper ($499 vs. $512). It is more energy efficient; it has an overall rating of 103,000 BTU/hour, whereas the Franklin has a rating of 138,000 BTU/hour. The Montague has several design features not found on the Franklin, including a 3-position rack, a removable oven bottom, a continuous-cleaning oven, and a solid hot top. I will provide a detailed report next week.
Business Letters

• Business letters represent you or your company in a professional, often legal, and sometimes emotional, situation
• They are presented within an agreed-upon set of conventions
• The key to all types of letters is to treat the reader appropriately – as you would want to be treated
The Three Basic Letter Formats

• Block Format
  • All the letter’s elements are placed flush left
  • Do not indent the first word of each paragraph

• Semiblock Format
  • Same as full block, except the heading, close, and signature are placed on the right
  • Modified Semiblock - first line of every paragraph is indented five spaces

• Simplified Format
  • No salutation or close, but with a subject line
Dear Ms. Wardell:

Attached is my final report on the type of milling machine you should purchase for your plant. I recommend that you purchase Ironton’s #02119-BTUA.

As we discussed on my site visit last month, I have researched the appropriate literature on this subject, talked to several sales reps, and observed three different demonstrations of the 02119 and its two competitors. You were particularly concerned about size and power - the 02119 will do the job for you.

I have enjoyed our work together and look forward to working with you in the future. I have found your staff particularly helpful with filling my several requests about your plant.

Sincerely yours,

John K. Palmer, Treasurer

abv
enc:(2)
c: Ms. Louise Black
The heading is your address
Spell out words such as Avenue, Street, East, North, and Apartment
Put an apartment number to the right of the street address. If the street address is too long, put the apartment number on the next line
Spell out numbered street names up to and including Twelfth
Use the two-letter U.S. Postal Service Zip Code abbreviation – no periods!
The zip code follows one space after the state
Date

• One of two forms:
  • December 6, 2011
  • 6 December 2011

• Spell out the month

• Do not use ordinal indicators, such as 1st or 24th
Inside Address

- The inside address is the same as the address that appears on the envelope
- Use the correct personal title (Mr., Ms., Dr., Professor) and business title (Director, Manager, Treasurer)
- Write the firm’s name *exactly*, adhering to its practice of abbreviating or spelling out such words as *Company* or *Corporation*
- Place the recipient’s business title after his or her name or on a line by itself, whichever best balances the inside address
Attention Line

- Attention lines are generally used only when you cannot name the reader
  - Attention Human Resources Manager
  - Attention Payroll Department
- Place the line two spaces below the inside address
- Place the word *Attention* against the left margin. *Do not* follow it by a colon.
Salutation

• The salutation always agrees with the first line of the inside address

• If the first line names an individual (Ms. Susan Wardell), say, “Dear Ms. Wardell:”
  • If the name is gender neutral (Pat Jones), say “Dear Pat Jones:”

• If the first line names a company (Acme Bolt and Fastener Co.), use the simplified format with a subject line or repeat the name of the company (“Dear Acme Bolt and Fastener Co.:”)
Closing and Signature

- Close business letters with “Sincerely” or “Sincerely yours”
- Add your company name if policy requires it
- Capitalize only the first word of the closing
- Place the company’s name directly after the closing (if necessary)
- Allow three lines for the handwritten signature
- Place the writer’s title or department, or both, below his or her typed name
Optional Lines

• Place optional lines below the typed signature
• Place the typist’s initials in lowercase letters, flush left
• Add an enclosure line if the envelope contains additional material. Use “Enclosure:” or “enc:”
  • enc:(2)
  • Enclosure:resume
• If copies are sent to other people, place “c:” (for copy) at the left margin and place the names to the right
  • c: Joanne Koehler
Succeeding Pages

• For succeeding pages of a letter, place the name of the addressee, the page number, and the date in a heading

Susan Wardell -2- December 6, 2011

Blah, blah, blah, ...
Planning Business Letters

- **Consider Your Audience**
  - Assess knowledge level and need for the information

- **Consider Your Tone**
  - Use plain English!
  - Be as unambiguous as possible

- **Consider Format**
  - Choose several short paragraphs rather than one long paragraph
Checklist for Preparing a Business Letter

• Analyze the audience
  – Who will receive this letter?
  – Why do they need it? What will they do as a result of receiving it?
  – What do you want to happen after the reader reads the letter?

• Use the simplified format for more impersonal or more routine situations

• State your main points succinctly
Evaluating a Business Letter

• Is the letter free of spelling and grammatical errors?
• Are the facts accurate?
• Does the inside address contain the recipient’s correct name, title, corporation title, and address?
• Does the salutation repeat the recipient’s name?
• If the recipient’s name is not known, is there a subject line?
Evaluating a Business Letter

• Is the closing “Sincerely” or “Sincerely yours”?
• Is the typed name three lines below the closing?
• Is the letter signed?
• Is the signature between the closing and the typed name?