

## INTRODUCING THE MEMO

### Student/Class Goal

Learners need to be familiar with written communication documents in the workplace and in their community. Understanding how a memo is set up and its purpose will improve performance on the job and increase awareness in their community.

### Outcome *(lesson objective)*

Learners will examine memos to locate information and answer comprehension questions.

### Time Frame

2 hours

### Standard *Read with Understanding*

### NRS EFL 3-4

Purpose	Benchmarks	Word Knowledge	Benchmarks	Comprehension	Benchmarks
Purpose for reading	3.1, 4.1	Decoding skills	3.3, 4.3	Strategy use	3.11, 4.11
Select text		Word parts		Text structural elements	3.12, 4.12
		Context clues	3.5, 4.5	Genres	
		Reference materials		Literary analysis	
		Word relationships		Drawing conclusions	3.15, 4.15
		Content vocabulary	3.8, 4.8	Making connections	3.16, 4.16
		Figurative language			
		Fluency			

### Materials

Sample Memorandum  
*A Moment In The Sun Tanning Salons Memo*  
*A Moment In The Sun Tanning Salons* Comprehension Questions  
 Introducing the Memo Learning Objects

### Learner Prior Knowledge

Knowledge of different types of written communication (letters, notes, reference letter, resume, etc.); when written communication is used as opposed to oral communication and the reasons why.

### Instructional Activities

Step 1 - As a large group discuss the term "memo." Let the students give examples of when they have seen one and what it was about. Explain that the term "memo" is an abbreviated version of the actual term, "memorandum." As a group come up with a definition of the term. Invite someone to look it up in the dictionary and share with the group the dictionary definition. Ask if any changes or additions need to be made to the group's definition of the term. Continue the discussion asking why, when, and where memos might be used.

Step 2 - Introduce new vocabulary (see below). Working in pairs let students brainstorm what they think each term could mean. This allows them to think about what they already know about each word and link it to prior knowledge. Let them to create their own definitions of each term and write them down.

**Heading Segment** – includes readers' names and job titles, writer's name and job title, complete and current date, and what the memo is about

**Opening Segment** – purpose, problem, and task or assignment of the memo is stated.

**Task statement** – describes what you are going to do to help solve the problem

**Purpose statement** – gives your reason for writing and forecasts what is in the rest of the memo

**Summary Segment** – brief statement of key recommendations, may include references to methods and sources you have used in your research

**Discussion Segments** – all the juicy details that support your ideas (begins with the most important information and move to the general – strongest to weakest)

**Closing Segment** – states the action you want your reader to take

**Attachments** - necessary detailed information or documentation of your findings (is not included in the document)

Step 3 - Let students share their definitions with the group. When everyone has had a chance to share, pass out the *Sample Memorandum* handout that has the different parts identified and labeled. Give the learners time to read the memo individually. Define each term as you go over each part of the memo. Have them correct any definitions they created that were not accurate.

Step 4 - In a group discussion explain that real life documents such as memos can show up on the GED test and need to be read carefully to fully comprehend the information presented. Go over some example comprehension questions using the information read in the sample memo. (Sample questions)

- Who is writing this memo?
- Describe the author's purpose for writing this memo.
- State one fact the author used to support lowering the building temperature.
- What would be the result if the company decided to lower the air temperature each day during normal business hours?
- What can you infer from the statement, "However, most people would find 60 degrees too cool for extended work."
- If you were an employee who worked weekends at this company, what would be your opinion about the idea of lowering the air temperature?

Step 5 - Distribute the memo *A Moment in the Sun Tanning Salons*. Allow the students to individually read the memo. Ask for volunteers to help identify the various parts of the memo that were defined earlier. Hand out the comprehension question worksheet and allow the students to work on them individually or with partners.

When everyone is finished go over the questions and let the students share their answers with the group. Allow students to support the answers they have written. Correct any incorrect responses.

**WRITING STANDARD EXTENSION** Have students write a memo. They could use their own ideas or the teacher could supply the necessary information to include in the document. If students wanted to use the computer to type their document, it would build their technology skills as well as their writing skills. Real memos could be provided as samples.

**Assessment/Evidence** *(based on outcome)*

Group definition of Memo

Teacher notes of class discussion

Students created definitions

Corrected definitions of Memo terms

Class responses to sample comprehension questions

*A Moment In The Sun Tanning Salons* Comprehension Questions

**Teacher Reflection/Lesson Evaluation**

*Not yet completed.*

**Next Steps**

Introducing the Memo Learning Objects will give students additional practice formatting a memo.

**Technology Integration**

**Purposeful/Transparent**

Many people in workplaces communicate with the use of memos. Students need to be able to read and understand the information presented and act accordingly. The introduction to memos and their purposes will aid students in being aware of important information being conveyed through written text.

**Contextual**

All memos used in the lesson are authentic examples of written communication in the workplace.

**Building Expertise**

Building necessary vocabulary will help students to understand how a memo is set up and what information is contained in each section. This will help them begin to know where to look for information within the document. As example memos are used in instruction, learners' expertise will develop through the experience of working with the documents.

## Sample Memorandum

Date: December 13, 1996

To: Annette T. Califero

From: Kyle B. Abrams

Subject: A Low-Cost Way to Reduce Energy Use

*Heading Segment*

Purpose Statement

As you requested, I've investigated low-cost ways to reduce our energy use. Reducing the building temperature on weekends is a change that we could make immediately, that would cost nothing, and that would cut our energy use by about 6%.

*Opening Segment*

### The Energy Savings from a Lower Weekend Temperature

Lowering the temperature from 68 degrees to 60 degrees from 8 p.m. Friday evening to 4 a.m. Monday morning could cut our total consumption by 6%. It is not feasible to lower the temperature on week nights because a great many staff members work late; the cleaning crew also is on duty from 6 p.m. to midnight. Turning the temperature down for only four hours would not result in a significant heat saving.

Task Statement

Turning the heat back up at 4 p.m. will allow the building temperature to be back to 68 degrees by 9 a.m. Our furnace already has computerized controls that can be set to automatically lower and raise the temperature.

*Summary Segment*

### How a Lower Temperature Would Affect Employees

A survey of employees shows that only 7 people use the building every weekend or almost every weekend. Eighteen percent of our staff have worked at least one weekend day in the last two months; 52% say they "occasionally" come in on weekends.

People who come in for an hour or less on weekends could cope with the lower temperature just by wearing warm clothes. However, most people would find 60 degrees too cool for extended work. Employees who work regularly on weekends might want to install space heaters.

*Discussion Segment*

### Action Needed to Implement the Change

Would you also like me to check into the cost of buying a dozen portable space heaters? Providing them would allow us to choose units that our wiring can handle and would be a nice gesture towards employees who give up the weekends to work. I could have a report to you in two weeks.

We can begin saving energy immediately. Just authorize the lower temperature, and I'll see that the controls are reset for this weekend.

*Closing Segment*

Attachments: Survey Results  
Authorization Form

# A Moment In The Sun Tanning Salons

## Memo

Date: December 14, 1998  
To: T.R. Soleau  
From: Ray Ban  
Re: Marketing Plan Review

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As you requested, the Marketing Plan Review process has been established and is ready to be put in motion.

Initial meetings with all divisions, salons, and marketing & sales staff have been scheduled to begin early next month and will continue until March. Here is the schedule for the meetings:

Southwest	Century City Hotel, Los Angeles	Jan. 3 to 7
Northwest	Raddison Hotel, Portland	Jan. 15-19
West	Sheraton Stratford Hotel, Boise	Feb. 1-4
Midwest	Chicago Carlton Hotel, Chicago	Feb. 10-14
South	Atlanta Belle Hotel, Atlanta	Feb. 20-24
Northeast	Central Park Central Hotel, New York	March 5-9
Southeast	New Century Hotel, Tampa	March 15-19

Attendees will discuss the new marketing plan and give their opinions. In particular, we are anxious to have the following questions answered:

- \* Will the plan work in all areas?
- \* Are any regional adjustments needed?
- \* How does each region react to our new image?
- \* What is each region's gut-level reaction to the plan?

I have prepared a 16 page questionnaire to be distributed at the meetings. Hopefully, we will receive input for everyone. I've attached a copy of the questionnaire.

Thus far, Harry Hampton and I are scheduled to attend all of the meetings. However, I think it would be advisable to have substitute available if Harry or I find ourselves ill or otherwise unable to travel.

Please let me know if you have any questions.  
Attachment: Questionnaire

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Comprehension Questions

*A Moment In The Sun Tanning Salons*

1. From the information in the heading segment what can you suppose the content of the memo will be about?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What conclusions, from the information presented in the memo, can you draw about how this company values its employees input and ideas?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. At this point, what do you think would happen if Mr. Hampton or Mr. Ban became ill during one of the scheduled meetings?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Can you identify the opening segment of the memo by circling the sentence or sentences in the document?

5. Give one other way you could gather input from employees besides a 16 page questionnaire.

6. How many years ago did Mr. Ban write this memo?

7. In what state is the meeting taking place on February 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>?

8. Suppose you could ask Mr. Ban any relevant question regarding his memo, what would you ask?



<http://www.wisconline.org>

**Creating and Formatting a Memo**

**Author:** Deborah Seline

**School:** Northeast Wisconsin Technical College **Date:** 4/2/2002

**Description:** Students read about the different reasons to write a memo and how to create it.

[http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index\\_tj.asp?objID=WCN3902](http://www.wisc-online.com/objects/index_tj.asp?objID=WCN3902)

**Introducing the Memo Learning Objects**