

# Memo Writing: Introduction

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Memos are typically used for communication within a company or organization. They can be semi-formal or formal, depending on the recipient. Memos are often used when a large group of people is being addressed at the same time or when a hard copy (rather than an email) needs to be transmitted or posted.

The format and overall tone of a memo are different from a business letter. Memos do not include a formal salutation or complimentary closing; instead, they use “*To*,” “*From*,” “*Date*” and “*Subject*” headings. Often a company uses a specific template or letterhead for this internal communication.

An effective memo usually states its purpose in the first sentence, briefly discusses details of the situation, and states the expected result or action in the last sentence. Bulleted lists, point form and short sentences are often used to make the message clear and concise. The language used is polite and professional.

When writing a memo, it is important to address it to the person(s) that you expect to take action on the subject. Anyone else who needs to know about the action should receive a copy as well, and be listed under the *Cc* notation. If you need to communicate any additional information, include it as a separate attachment.

## 1 Read the memo below and answer the questions.

### MEMO

To: All staff  
From: Aida Nolan  
Date: November 1, 2010  
Subject: New incident reporting protocol

As of January 1, we will no longer be using the incident report forms that were distributed to all staff last year.

We are introducing a new incident-reporting protocol to speed up the review process for all work-related incidents. Detailed information about the protocol and the new report forms are attached.

Please discard the old forms. You can contact me if you need clarification on specific documents or procedures.

1. What is the relationship between the sender and the recipients of the memo?
2. What is the purpose of the memo?
3. What are the details of the situation? In which paragraph are the details presented?
4. What makes this memo effective?