

WRITING THE MEMO

The Assignment:

1. Using our best writing practices, compose a polished, one- to two-page draft memo that pitches your ideas to your audience.
 - Be sure to use your first paragraph to outline your purpose and let your audience know the scope and subject of your entire capstone project. This paragraph, and the rest of the memo that follows, will set up the way your audience understands your Capstone submission.
2. Submit this polished draft for peer grading, and grade and comment on at least two other learners' memos.

Congratulations on your Effective Communication journey! There's nothing more rewarding for educators like us than having dedicated students like you.

You probably remember in Business Writing that I chunked your assignments for you. You never wrote an entire memo. Rather, you worked on the parts of a successful document in different portions of the course: in quizzes, discussion forums, and peer review. You also watched me write (and struggle!) to outline and compose parts of the pitch memo.

I chunked your assignments intentionally, to provide you a chance to focus on building the individual pieces that make a strong document. Remember those lessons, because:

The time for chunking is over.

You're in the Capstone now. It's time for you to conquer your blank page.

It's time for you to stitch all that learning together to compose a one- or two-page memo on a topic of your choice. Some of you have chosen to work on the Clarity Guitar assignment, and some of you have decided to tackle the Challenge Capstone. As you know, it doesn't matter which track you've taken, because the principles of good writing always stay the same.

So, how to begin?

CLARITY ABOVE ALL.

Work relentlessly to create a good experience for your reader.

First, review. I've uploaded some of the key videos and readings from Business Writing to refresh your memory on the critical principles of good writing. I've also provided the final pitch memo in the introductory module (at last!) and a video in this module in which I show the scaffold that underlies my memo. Watch this video not just to review, but to understand the scaffold in action. As you work through the Capstone, always remember that you can revisit Business Writing for additional review.

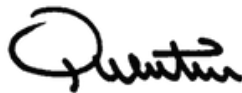
Second, plan. You watched me outline the pitch memo. Now it's your turn. Start with the purpose of your Capstone project and let everything flow from there. Decide on your key points, put them in order, and outline supporting points for each of those.

Third, draft. You've created an outline. Now follow it. Develop your roadmap in your first paragraph. Make sure every body paragraph has a strong topic sentence that 1) refers back to the roadmap, and 2) introduces the single topic of that paragraph. And your conclusion? It concludes.

Fourth, revise. Then revise and revise and revise. Details matter! Look at every paragraph, every sentence, every single word. Remember your lessons and our principles. The happier you are with the work that you submit for peer grading, the more valuable that feedback will be. If you submit work and you already know what the flaws are, the peer feedback won't help you. The best learning comes when we can accept critiques of what we think of as our best effort.

Be honest, but kind and constructive in your feedback to your fellow learners, and be fearless in your own work, my friends. This is a learning opportunity for you—the more effort you put in, the more you push yourself to excellence, the more you'll get out of it. The lessons you gather here will apply to everything else you write. You're taking a pivotal step in your journey to becoming a great writer and to projecting your wonderful intellect and best self to the world! Go for it, because you deserve nothing less.

I wish you, always, the best of success!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Quentin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'Q' at the beginning.