



# Technical Communication

## Memo Analyzing Workplace Communication

- Due week 2
- 350–400 words
- Written component
- 10% of final grade

Practitioners in every field must communicate with various audiences for various purposes, whether to share content among colleagues, report information to supervisors, deliver material to the public, or persuade customers and clients. For your first write-up of English 314, you will compose a memo about how professionals within your chosen discipline communicate and the various genres they use to do so.

### Purpose of the memo

The memo that you will be writing has two purposes:

- The **primary** purpose is to inform graduating students in your major about the various genres circulating within your professional field.
- The **secondary** purpose is to build a good image of the sender (you). As you prepare and before you submit your memo, use the assignment rubric to ensure that your memo achieves the assignment's goals.

Read carefully through the entire assignment sheet and rubric before you begin and refer to the rubric often as you prepare and complete the assignment.

### Step 1: Choose your content

- What are the various kinds of documents that you might compose or encounter in your career? Will you compose long reports? Proposals? Instructions? Websites? Letters and emails? Lab reports? Academic research articles? Reviews? Technical specifications? Lesson plans? Contracts? Public relations materials? Videos? What are the purposes of these documents?
- What are the various genre features of these documents? What do they usually look like? What kinds of information do they contain? How are they typically organized or structured?
- Who are the various audiences and purposes of these documents? Who will read them? Why? Where will readers encounter these documents? What do they expect to gain from reading?

### Step 2: Find five or six examples

Once you have chosen a few genres of communication to discuss, you need to find five or six examples that are representative of those genres. You can use [the Library Guide to find examples](#).

### **Step 3: Read and analyze examples**

Read carefully through your examples and answer the following questions about each example:

- Who are the main audiences for this type of workplace communication?
- What is the purpose of this type of workplace communication?
- What content must it include (for example, an executive summary, a description of work)?
- What sorts of evidence or reasoning are appropriate (and thus expected)?
- What contextual variables (for example, the audience's familiarity with the topic) affect the data and reasoning included in this type of workplace communication?

### **Step 4: Organize your memo**

Your job in this memo is to explore as deeply as possible the various genres of communication that occur within your professional field, keeping an emphasis on purposes, audiences, and genre features. Thus, you need an introductory paragraph that contextualizes your field and defines your desired position within it. The body of your essay will then describe 2 or 3 common genres in your field and explore their purposes, audiences, and features.

### **Step 5: Draft your memo**

Be certain to refer to the rubric for this assignment while preparing it, and compare your work against the criteria for effective performance. Make sure that you refer to the sources from which you found your examples. For example, "The proposal that I found on NASA's website illustrates that proposals typically begin with an executive summary."

### **Step 6: Choose memo template**

Find a memo template for the document you will draft. Microsoft Word, for example, has multiple options under File > New from Template. In your memo's "To:" line, write "Seniors preparing for a career in [Your Field]".

You will submit your memo to the course Blackboard during the second week of class.