

Internal communications: minutes and memos

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3210X

LANGUAGE
English






Goals

- Can recognise and understand formal phrases for giving instructions and providing information
- Can use new terminology and understanding to take basic minutes in a business meeting and write a short memo





Have you ever left an exciting meeting and thought: wait, what just happened?

Two key skills, **taking minutes** and **sharing memos**, help to create a record of the discussions and decisions in business meetings.



Preview and warm-up

- **Minutes** and **memos** are separate text types that **go hand-in-hand**. **Minutes** provide a record of a meeting, while **memos** tend to summarise and establish next steps.



In this lesson you'll learn all about **minutes** and **memos**.

minutes

Minutes are not only a unit of time, but a term for **notes taken during a meeting**. They provide an **orderly account** of what happened.



I usually take **minutes** at our department's monthly meeting.



Discuss

What sort of things do you think are included in the minutes of a meeting?



Why do you think minutes are useful?



Minutes: what to include

- Minutes should tell you all the **important details** about a meeting.
- They should answer the following questions: **who, what, where, when** and **why**.
- They should also summarise the **agenda** (i.e. what happened) and what the **results** and **outcomes** of the meeting were.

- What type of meeting was it?
- Where, when and why was the meeting held?
- Who was in attendance?

- Who opened the meeting?
- What was the agenda? What was discussed and in what order?
- What was decided upon at the end?



- Remember: your minutes should present an overview of the key parts of the meeting. You're aiming to **summarise** rather than provide a **word-for-word** account.



Useful phrases for minutes: the agenda

to open a
meeting

Anna **opened the meeting** with an update about the finance department.

to put forward an
idea

Felicia **put forward** the following **ideas** to improve employee retention:...

to recommend

Maria **recommended** that the amount of annual leave be increased.

to argue

Liam **argued** that increasing annual leave was impossible.

to remind

Anna **reminded** everyone about the next meeting.

to add

Daniel **added** that the latest marketing campaign was a success.



Useful phrases for minutes: the outcomes

The following action points were decided upon.

At the end of the meeting, **the following action points were decided upon:...**

to research

Daisy will **research** the impact of increased annual leave.

to draw up a list

Anna will **draw up a list** of prospective candidates for the Head of Operations role as soon as possible.

to look into

Ben will **look into** increasing the marketing budget.

to write a report

Daniel will **write a report** on how to increase employee retention by Friday next week.

to speak to

Liam will **speak to** the investors about the next round of funding.



Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the vocabulary in the boxes.

put forward
the idea

opened the
meeting

recommended

argued

added that

- I. The biannual meeting of the University Alumni Board took place on 24th July at 10.30 a.m. in the Winslow Room of Hedgerow Hall.
- II. Chairperson Fred Burroughs _____ at 10.40 a.m. Secretary Brian Gibbons recorded the minutes.

Item 1: *status of Annual Student Prize recipient*

Anna and Paul McNeill _____ five students as finalists for the prize. They _____ that we should invite finalists to speak at our autumn meeting.

This motion was discussed by attendees. Frank Graham _____ that five speakers would make the meeting needlessly long. Johanna Beard _____ students might not want to speak to a crowd of strangers.





From jumbled notes to useful minutes

Your friend sends you an email with notes from a meeting you missed. Unfortunately, they aren't very clear. You decide to help her out by turning her notes into minutes.

Read the email to obtain information about the meeting.

	-	□	×
To: outreachcoordinator@sgps.co.uk			
Subject: Friday 18 th May meeting about the annual gala			
<p>Hey,</p> <p>Sorry you couldn't make it to the meeting this morning. Chris, Joan and I were there. We met in the conference room around 9.45 a.m. and chatted about the weekend till around 10 when our mean old manager, Margaret, told us to get started and started talking about our current progress.</p> <p>Then we reviewed the budget for the annual gala. Chris is in charge of that, so he gave a little talk on it. Margaret wants to spend less on food, but Chris and I told her that food is really important! Then Joan showed us the short-list for live entertainment. We all agreed that having a Beatles cover band would be a laugh. She said she'd give them a call.</p> <p>Those were the main things. Oh! We all have to come same time next week with four ideas to increase ticket sales. Yikes!</p> <p>Cheers,</p> <p>Rachel</p>			



Writing minutes

Use these prompts to help you create minutes about the meeting described in Rachel's email.

You can also use the vocabulary on p. 8 and 9 to help you.

When and where did the meeting take place?

Who was present?

Who opened the meeting?

What was discussed?

What were the outcomes?

Will there be another meeting?
When?

A blank sheet of lined paper with a spiral binding on the left side, intended for writing minutes.



Minutes

Now read the minutes below. How do your minutes compare?

Annual Gala Planning Meeting
Conference Room

10.00 a.m. Friday 18th May

Present: Margaret Jones (chairperson), Rachel Samuels, Chris Holmes and Joan Clark

Margaret Jones opened the meeting by presenting her team's current progress on the annual gala.

Chris Holmes presented his ideas about the budget. Margaret put forward the idea that less should be spent on food, but Chris and Rachel Samuels argued that food is an important element of the gala.

Joan Clark reminded everyone that a short-list for live entertainment had been created, and all present at the meeting agreed that the gala should have a Beatles cover band.

The following action points were decided upon:

Joan will speak to the Beatles cover band.

Everyone will draw up a list of four ideas to increase ticket sales.

Date of next meeting: **Friday 25th May, 10 a.m., Conference Room**

memo

A **memo** is normally an intra-office communication. **Memos** are typically used to give information, request information and give instructions.



Memos are also useful regarding meetings. You can report the outcomes of a meeting to the whole of the company by sending everyone a **memo**.



Memos: useful vocabulary

- Here are some useful phrases that you can use, depending on the function of your memo.

giving information

- We are delighted to inform you that...
- We would like to remind you...
- You will be happy to hear that...

requesting information

- Please provide us with...
- If you have any questions, please...
- Could you please provide us with...

giving instructions

- We kindly request that...
- Please make sure that...
- Please read...



Memos: recommending options

- You can also use a memo to **provide options** and **recommendations** for a specific course of action.
- The box below provides some examples of how you might **express your opinion**.

- **We recommend** instituting a bring-your-dog-to-work policy.
- **It is in the best interest of the company** to implement this policy.
- **We suggest that** this policy be implemented as soon as possible.





Memos in the workplace

**Do you and your
colleagues write
memos?**

**If so, what topics do you
write about?**

company policy

important
notices

deadlines



Match the type of memo to the sample text

A

Could you please provide me with the record of last month's donations?

B

We kindly request that all staff update their computer software as soon as possible.

C

We recommend that management consider a flexible work policy.

D

We are delighted to inform you that we have received more funding.

1. giving information

2. requesting information

3. giving instructions

4. Recommending options



Memo language in use

1. We have received several complaints about loud music in the office. We _____ you to wear headphones if you'd like to listen to music during the workday.

a. demand b. would like to remind c. admit d. are happy to inform you

2. On the basis of potential increased employee satisfaction, _____ home office policies are implemented.

a. please make sure that b. provide c. in the best interest of the company d. inform

3. Payroll must process all travel receipts by the end of the month. _____ us with your department's travel receipts by Friday at 5.00 p.m.

a. We request that b. We recommend that c. Please provide d. Please read

4. _____ the attached document, which details our new strategic plan.

a. We would like to remind you that b. Please read c. Please provide d. We are happy to share



Putting it all together

- You now have an idea about the type of language that is used in **memos**.
- See below for some other important things that need to be considered.

- Include a **date**.
- Include a suitable **subject line** that gives enough information about your memo's content.
- Consider your **audience**: who needs to read this memo?
- Remember that memos should be **concise** and **to the point**.





Example memo

Read the memo below.

Notice how it is formatted and what style it is written in.

MEMO

DATE 23rd June
TO All staff
FROM Steven Gadd, CEO
SUBJECT Hello to our new COO

This memo **gives information** (new COO) and **requests information** (an RSVP).

I am happy to inform you that we have hired Mr Jeremy Flynn as our new Chief Operating Officer. Mr Flynn brings over a decade of executive leadership experience and we're delighted to welcome him to our office.

His first day will be Monday 30th July. We'd like to invite everyone to join us on this day for coffee and cake in the canteen, where he will have a chance to introduce himself. Please let my assistant, Tanya, know whether you will attend by Thursday this week.

Steven Gadd



Summarising feedback

You've been asked to look into improving the office canteen, so you've asked your colleagues to submit comments on the issue. Read their comments and summarise the main points.



Healthier options, please! Fruits and veggies!

Could we do organic or fair trade coffee and tea? It makes a difference!

Would love some more light – it's so dark in there!

Need more healthy snack options.

We desperately need a new coffee maker.

Fine as it is!

Coffee maker is often broken.



Write a memo

Based on feedback from your colleagues, you must write a memo for the human resources department. They will consider your ideas and then decide whether they can implement them.

Brainstorm the following questions.

What is the **purpose** of your memo?

What do you want to **communicate** with your audience?

Who is your **audience**?

A spiral-bound notebook with lined pages and faint circular patterns, intended for brainstorming answers to the questions.



Send your memo

Write your memo below.

If you need to, use the example memo on p. 21 to help you.



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!



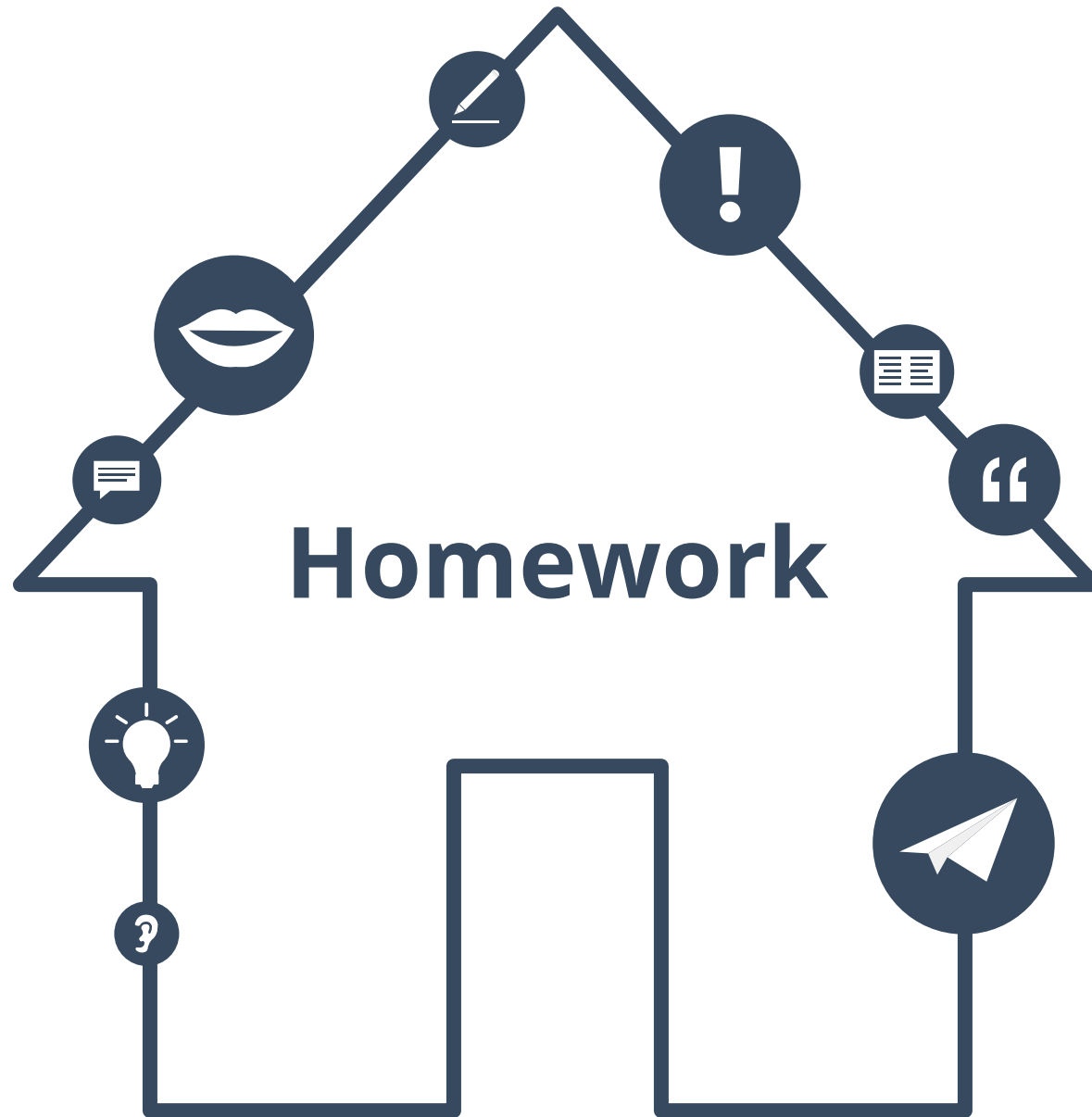


Answer key

Exercise p. 19
1b, 2a, 3c, 4d

Exercise p. 18
1d, 2a, 3b, 4c

Exercise p. 10
Opened the meeting, recommended, put forward the idea, argued that, added that



[illegible][illegible]

to argue

to research

The following action points were decided upon.

to open a meeting

to put forward an idea

to draw up a list

to write a report

to add

to remind

to look into



Remember to include a date and subject line.

It is in the best
interests...

29



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 28

Agenda: to argue, to open a meeting, to put forward an idea, to add, to remind
Outcomes: to research, the following action points were decided upon, to draw up a
list, to write a report, to look into



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