

EIND313 – Work Design and Analysis

Short Memo or Letter Reports

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Purpose of Communicating Work Via A Short Memo Format¹

Whenever work is conducted, it is essential that a record of the study and its findings be completed. While oral communication may suffice in very simple situations, the usual manner of communication is by a written report.

This written document establishes that you (From:) completed the work (Attachments) and communicated your findings (Subject:) to a specific person (To:) on a specific date (Date:) highlighting the reason (purpose), what you set out to achieve (objectives), what you found out (findings) and what your audience needs to know (conclusions/recommendations).

The specific format of the report will vary according to the subject matter and according to the amount of information to be transmitted. The report must be tailored to the needs and desires of the individual or group for which it is written. Know what your audience expected you to deliver (what was your goal of this work) and write at a level of detail that they can understand considering their educational background and/or position in the organization.

Engineers and scientists use memos to make requests, to give announcements, and to communicate reports. Memos are read quickly. As such, get to the point in the first sentence if possible. In other words, state what you did up front. Usually, you should single space your memos and use a serif typeface. Skip a line between paragraphs.

In memos that report engineering work you often include tables, attach appendices, and break the memo's text into sections. Most short memos contain the following sections:

- Heading
- An introductory statement
- Findings or Results
- Conclusions or Recommendations (if requested)

If references arise in the memo, you include a list at the end.

In general, try keep the sentence lengths and paragraph lengths relatively short. Sentences should average fewer than twenty words, and paragraphs should average fewer than seven lines. Also, keep the total memo length to under one page, if possible.

¹ The majority of this document used information about memo writing from the three principle sources:
Alley, M. (n.d.). Writing and speaking guidelines for engineering and science. Retrieved 5/12, 2015,
from <http://writing.engr.psu.edu/>

Alley, M. (1996). *The craft of scientific writing*. New York: Springer.

Alley, M. (2013). *The craft of scientific presentations: Critical steps to succeed and critical errors to avoid*. New York: Springer.

This is where you either place your company logo or nothing at all.

Date: Today's date
To: EIND313 Students
From: EIND313 Instructor
Subject: Short Memo Report Format

Comment [LP1]: You need to document when you sent this information.

Comment [LP2]: This must reflect that you know the audience you are writing to – read your lab instructions to find out.

Comment [LP3]: This must state your name!

State your objective and purpose for doing the work at the very start of the memo. Your EIND313 lab assignments contain this information. You then communicate, in writing, what you have been asked to deliver. The information on this page can be found in more detail at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/726/03/>.

Comment [LP4]: The subject states explicitly what the reader will know after reading the memo. It's the shortest summary of what you did. For example,

Comment [LP5]: Space your memo on the page so that it does not crowd the header.

Findings

Here you present your findings that specifically address the objectives you raised in the introduction. If they do not match, it means you failed to include the appropriate information in either the introduction or the findings, or you did not adequately complete your work (Table 1). You can should refer the reader to the specific attachment (e.g. Time Study Observation Form attached) where the work was recorded.

Comment [LP6]: You must present a summary of your findings here. It is not professional to refer the reader to tables or figures without you first stating a short summary of the findings. They requested and have paid for you to perform the work and report your results to them.

Table 1. Short Memo Report - Check for Completeness

	Objective 1	Objective 2	?
Stated in Introduction	Time standard Task#1	Measurement Error Task#1	?
Key Findings	12.8 sec/unit	?	125% Performance Rating
Reason for Discrepancy Between Sections	None	Failed to adequately complete the work or report the key finding	Failed to realize that performance rating was important in the objectives/purpose

Comment [LP7]: Indicates that this is where to find the full work.

Conclusion or Recommendation (may or may not be required)

If you are asked to deliver conclusions or recommendations, the final paragraphs of the memo reports tell readers what you recommend they do or what you have done for them.

Attachment.

Comment [LP8]: This is how you denote there is work attached. Use the plural to indicate more than one item was attached.

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Time Study Observation Form

Study No.:	Date:	Page of
Operation:	Operator:	Observer:

Element No. and Description	Note	Cycle	Element 1				Element 2				Element 3				Element 4				Element 5			
			R	W	OT	NT	R	W	OT	NT	R	W	OT	NT	R	W	OT	NT	R	W	OT	NT
1																						
2																						
3																						
4																						
5																						
6																						
7																						
8																						
9																						
10																						
11																						
12																						
13																						
14																						
15																						
16																						
17																						
18																						

Summary																						
Total OT																						
Rating																						
Total NT																						
No. Observations																						
Average NT																						
% Allowance																						
Elemental																						
No. Occurrences																						
Standard Time																						

Total Standard Time (sum standard time for all elements): _____

Foreign Elements				Time Check				Allowance Summary			
Sym	W1	W2	OT	Description	Finishing Time	Starting Time	Elapsed Time	Personal Needs	Basic Fatigue	Variable Fatigue	Special
A											
B											
C											
D											
E											
F											
G											
Rating Check				Total Recorded Time				Remarks:			
Synthetic Time				Unaccounted Time							
Observed Time				Recording Error %							

Comment [LP9]:
 Here you will
 1. scan the document at the library or Roberts Hall computer lab downstairs (ask the IT person at the help desk to borrow the scanner)
 2. insert the image of the paper documents you worked
 3. Make sure you refer (briefly) to this document in the text of the memo