



Lesson Plan 13

Reading Memos

CLB Level(s): 4-5

CLB Skill(s): Reading

Essential Skill(s): Reading Text, Document Use

<p>Objective(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To be able to recognize formatting conventions of memos ■ To be able to scan memos to identify intended readership ■ To be able to identify and understand key information and action required 	<p>Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learners who are not familiar with the formatting conventions of memos ■ Learners who are not comfortable interpreting information conveyed in memo format.
<p>Grammar/Language Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ conventions used to write dates 	<p>Time Required</p> <p>1.5 to 2.0 hours</p>
<p>Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ phrases commonly used in business writing to identify purpose, actions required and opportunities to get additional information and clarification 	<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Copies of Appendices 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1 for each learner
<p>Workplace Culture</p> <p>These Canadian workplace expectations may be different than the expectations faced by learners in their home countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the distinctions between memos and letters ■ how memos are distributed ■ the purposes for memos and workplace communications in general 	



Learning Activities

Activity I: Memo Features

1. Distribute Appendix I.1, an example of a workplace memo. Ask questions to generate discussion about this type of workplace communication, e.g.
 - Have you seen these kinds of texts?
 - Where have you seen them?
 - What are they usually about?
2. Confirm that the sample is a memo. Explain that the word ‘memo’ is an abbreviated form of ‘memorandum’ which means “a written message in business or diplomacy”, or “a note to record something”. (Oxford Compact English Dictionary). Point out the words “message” and “note” from the definitions.
3. Discuss differences between memos and business letters. Write a list on the board that outlines when memos are used. Answers may include:
 - for internal communications
 - rarely more than one page; often ½ page or less of text.
 - may have a wide audience
 - may be posted rather than sent directly to individual workers
 - may have a less formal tone than a letter
4. Draw learners’ attention to formatting features (top portion with addressee, date, middle portion with text, often no formal signature line, etc.) Enlist their help in identifying what the unique formatting features of memos are. Write them on the board, and have learners identify those features on their example. These should include:
 - To
 - From
 - CC
 - Date
 - Re / Subject
 - Closing line
 - Signature (may be first and last, only first, depending on size of organization)
5. Address date conventions that are used on memos. For example:
 - June 27, 2010
 - 27/06/10 (Canadian)
 - 06/27/10 (American)



Learning Activities

Activity 2: Scanning Memo Headers

1. Ask learners how they know who is supposed to read the memo on Appendix 1.1
2. (e.g., the 'To' line, the subject, where it is posted). Reinforce with learners that the top portion can be quickly scanned so workers can decide whether the memo is intended for them.
3. Distribute Appendix 2.1. Have learners work in pairs or small groups to read the headers and answer the questions.
4. Discuss responses as a group. Emphasize the importance of workers being able to identify when and what to read on the job, and how memo headers can help to do that.

Activity 3: Skimming Memos

1. Point out that memos can serve a number of purposes. Write the following common purposes for memos on the board:
 - to give information or an update on a topic
 - to communicate a change (e.g. to policies or procedures)
 - to introduce a new initiative
 - to confirm the results of a conversation or agreement
 - to request information or action

Point out that memos often require some action on the part of the intended audience.

2. Draw learners' attention back to Appendix 1.1.
3. Ask learners to identify the purpose of the memo (to update employees on vacation policy) and to identify action required (submit request forms by June 18)
4. Distribute Appendix 3.1.
5. Discuss vocabulary used in memos to help the reader identify the memo's purpose. This information is typically at the beginning of the memo, but may not be the first sentence. Ask learners to scan sample memos on Appendix 3.1 to find examples. Generate additional examples as a group. Write responses on the board, which may include the following:
 - Please be advised
 - This is to inform...
 - Please note that
6. Distribute Appendix 3.2.



Learning Activities

7. Discuss vocabulary used in memos to help the reader identify the actions required. This information is often found at the end of a memo. Ask learners to scan sample memos on Appendix 3.2 to find examples. Generate additional examples as a group. Write responses on the board, which may include the following:
 - must...
 - employees are asked ...
 - ...at your earliest convenience
 - ...will come into effect
 - Please contact

8. Point out that some memos also include directions for the audience to get additional information or clarification. Discuss vocabulary used in memos for this purpose. Write responses on the board, which may include the following:
 - Should you have any questions ...
 - If you have any questions'...
 - For further information ...

9. Explain and discuss the meaning of new vocabulary and phrases as necessary.

Activity 4: Reading Memos for Key Information & Required Actions

1. Distribute Appendix 4.1. Ensure learners understand the questions and vocabulary.

2. Have learners work independently to read the memos on Appendices 3.1 and 3.2 to answer the questions on Appendix 4.1. Remind learners that they do not have to understand every word in order to be able to answer the questions.

3. Collect Appendix 2.3.
Answers:
 1. (b) Human resources manager
 2. (c) Service staff
 3. (a) New meeting method
 4. (b) Memo B & (c) Memo C & (d) Memo D
 5. (b) occupants of the building
 6. (c) Memo C
 7. Answers will vary



Learning Activities

Additional and/or Extended Learning Activities

- Create reading comprehension questions associated with the memos in this lesson. Have learners work independently to read and answer the questions. Debrief as a group.
- Collect samples of memos from the school. Have learner scan the messages to identify the purpose, actions required (if applicable) and how to get additional information (if applicable).
- Have learners use these memos as models to draft their own.
- Obtain public service or school announcements. Have learners listen for the same or similar phrases to identify the purpose, actions required and how to get additional information or clarification.

Reflective Evaluation

Collect and review Appendix 2.3 to determine if learners:

- are able to read sample memos to identify the intended readers, main idea and action required in sample memos.

Debriefing/Wrap-up

- Review the vocabulary and phrases used in memos to identify the purpose, the actions required and opportunities to get additional information or clarification.
- Brainstorm as a group other communications formats that use these phrases in addition to memos. Answers may include:
 - Letters
 - E-mails
 - Announcements
- Suggest that learners pay attention to television, radio and school announcements to listen for the use of these or similar phrases



Skill Descriptors	
Canadian Language Benchmarks Skill(s)	Essential Skill(s)
<p>Reading</p> <p>What the person can do (Business/Service texts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Get information from short business brochures, notices, form letters and flyers. (CLB 4) ■ Identify factual details and some inferred meanings in moderately complex business/service texts, including formatted texts. (CLB 5) ■ Identifies type and purpose of text. (CLB 4 and 5) 	<p>Document Use</p> <p>Complexity of the Document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One document or multiple documents of the same type. (ES 2) <p>Complexity of Finding Information (Information Search)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locating one or two pieces of information using one or more or two search criteria (e.g. using menu headings to find vegetarian choices) (ES 2) <p>Complexity of Finding Information (Thinking Process)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A low-level of inference is required. Information found or entered in the document(s) is a synonymous match (i.e. obviously related) to the information required. (ES 2) <hr/> <p>Reading Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reads simpler texts to locate a multiple pieces of information. (ES 2)

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Williams Products

MEMORANDUM


To: Warehouse Employees
From: Maria Longo, Human Resources Manager
CC: Vince LaPlante, Warehouse Manager
Date: May 14, 2010
Re: vacation requests

Please note that there has been a change to the vacation policy. Employees wishing to take vacation days during the summer months of July and August must submit request forms by June 18. Employees who do not submit their requests in writing will not be permitted to take vacation until September.

Thank you for your cooperation.

M. Longo

A



Q solutions
123 Main St. Saskatoon, SK

memo

To: Martin Siegal, Valerie Antonelli
From: Abe Vos, CEO
Subject: company reorganization
Date: June 27, 2009

B

Memorandum

To: Sales Staff
From: M. Tobins
Re: company sale's projects
Date: February 2, 2010

C

VIBRATRONICS

Memo

To: Elizabeth Van Stetter, Benefits Manager
From: Steven Hoffman
Subject: Nadia Kim's employment contract
Date: 06/09/10

Scan the header section to answer the question

Circle one

1. Which memo is written to one person only?	A	B	C
2. Which memo concerns a worker's employment situation?	A	B	C
3. Which memo should be read by all staff in one department?	A	B	C
4. Which memo concerns the entire company?	A	B	C

A

 **Marsten Insurance**

MEMORANDUM

To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

We hope that employees have been able to take advantage of the new benefits plan. Please be advised that as of March 31, 2010 an additional 3% will be deducted from part-time employees' pay. This is to offset the costs of the new benefits plan. Employees will see changes to their pay on the April 8 payroll.

B

MEMO

To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

This is to inform you that the automotive service department will offer training on VH-2 diagnostic software on October 14-15, 2010. While not compulsory, staff are encouraged to attend the training. For further information or to register, contact Katie in the office by October 1.

C



To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

It has come to my attention that attendance at monthly sales meetings has been lower than expected in recent months. ComAir Products started these meetings to make communication and information sharing easier. I understand that the travel requirements may make these meetings difficult; therefore, meetings will now be held via video conferencing.

Each sales staff member will receive all the equipment required to participate in the new meeting format. Meetings will continue to take place on the last Thursday of each month.

For assistance with the new technology please contact Bill Hutcheons, training coordinator, at 613-555-1214 at least one week before the next meeting.

D

MEMO

To:
From:
Date:
Subject:

This is to inform all staff of the childcare centre on the 3rd floor that the building will be undergoing renovations between March 17 and 20, 2010. During that time, employees are asked to avoid the main lobby area. Elevators will remain in service; however, please expect some interruption in service due to electrical work.

Read the headers and the text in Memos A, B, C and D to answer the questions below.

1. Who do you think wrote Memo A?
 - a. Training manager
 - b. Human resources manager
 - c. Sales manager

2. Who do you think received Memo B?
 - a. Sales staff
 - b. Supervisory staff
 - c. Service staff

3. What is the best "Subject" line for Memo C?
 - a. New meeting method
 - b. New training dates
 - c. New equipment available

4. Which memo requires the readers to act? Circle all that apply.
 - a. Memo A
 - b. Memo B
 - c. Memo C
 - d. Memo D

5. Who should read Memo D?
 - a. construction workers
 - b. occupants of the building
 - c. landlord of the building
 - d. occupants of the 3rd floor

6. Which memo has a deadline associated with it?
 - a. Memo A
 - b. Memo B
 - c. Memo C
 - d. Memo D

7. Write your own subject line for Memos A and Memo B.

Memo A – Subject: _____

Memo D – Subject: _____