

The Memo Revision Assignment

Presented by
Student Success Center

Refining and Refocusing Your Topic

- Choose a topic is relevant and researchable
 - Can I identify my community/audience?
 - Will I be able to find outside information to inform my analysis?
- Avoid being too narrow or too broad
- If you have already committed to your topic, decide whether it needs to be refocused to become broader or narrower

Topic Selection Tips

- Choose a real company, not an imaginary one.
- Choose a company that you can do research on
 - Company should be too small, because you won't be able to find information
 - Company should be from a country that does not make information publically available
- The problem should be complex – you don't know the solution(s) yet
- The scope of the problem should not be too broad. If you're working with a very large company, try to focus on a specific department or branch.

Responding to Instructor Feedback

- Pay close attention to your instructor's feedback on your initial memo assignment.
 - He/she will be looking to see that you have reviewed and addressed these comments.
 - Instructor comments will help to trigger your own ideas about how to improve your memo.
- If you did not receive detailed feedback or have any specific questions, feel free to ask your instructor – they are here to help!

Organizing Your Memo

- Follow your instructor's guidelines for page length – sometimes the requirement is 2 pages, sometimes 1 page
- The paper is shorter than the initial memo, and the recommended structure is simpler
 - Initial memo: Background, Reasons, Research plan/Timeline, Needs
 - Revised Memo: Problem/Purpose, Research Plan
- Condense your analysis, but do not leave out any major components

Using the Rubric as a Guide

- Be sure to understand the sections and criteria of your rubric – this is how your paper is scored!
- The rubric is helpful for *drafting* the content of your memo and also for *revising/proofreading* your memo before you submit it

Rubric: Content/Assignment Parameters

- The purpose of your memo should be clear from the *very first sentence*!
- It is not enough to state a problem; you need to *prove* that the problem exists and is significant
- In your memo, you do not need to solve the problem, but you need to provide a *strategy* and *timeline* for solving it
- Be realistic about the budget and resources that you are requesting – don't be afraid to ask for what practical and necessary to complete your proposal

Rubric: Audience

- Who are the specific decision makers that you are addressing in your proposal?
- Do they work within the department or group within your company that would handle issues related to your topic?
- Have you anticipated and addressed their major concerns and possible objections in your memo?
- Think of your instructor as part of your audience, too. Have you provided him/her with enough context to understand your proposal?

Rubric: Organization

- Do you have an introduction that will draw your audience in?
- Are your paragraphs clear and developed? If there are any sentences that do not advance the paragraph, they can be deleted!
- Are you using section headings and white space to improve readability and skim value?
- Do the transitions between sections make sense?
- Does your conclusion resolve your paper in a satisfying way?

Rubric: Mechanics, Format, Design

- Language and syntax
 - Your sentences should be direct, concise, and clear, but also sophisticated. Show an advanced knowledge of your topic.
 - Proofread your paper for spelling and grammar before submitting it – try reading it out loud to yourself!
 - Make sure that any listed/bulleted items have *parallel structure*
- Is there a way to improve the aesthetics of your document without being unnecessarily fancy?
- Have you maximized skim value?

Additional Resources

- Ask a question or make an appointment with a librarian:
<http://guides.library.jhu.edu/hebusiness>
- Make a tutoring appointment:
carey.jhu.edu/ssc
- Email us: carey.tutoring@jhu.edu