

- ▶ memo style and register
- ▶ paragraph order
- ▶ writing a memo

2.5 Writing Memos

Discussion

1 First Northeast Bank has realized that many members of staff just ignore memos. Think of some reasons why memos often get ignored.

Model

2 Read the recommendations on memo style. Then answer the quiz that First Northeast sent to all their managers. Choose the option which best matches the style recommendations.

FIRST Northeast Bank

Recommendations – writing memos

- 1 Personalize your memos: use *I, you, we* to make people feel directly concerned.
- 2 Use active rather than passive verbs for a more conversational, reader-friendly style.
- 3 Use verbs in preference to nouns, and avoid jargon and technical terms; write sentences which 'your grandmother would understand'.
- 4 Make it clear and unambiguous what you want people to do and when.
- 5 Focus on the benefits to the reader, not on rigid rules or procedures.

Managers' quiz

- 1 A memo is a document that you send to people inside the company / a method of documentary communication for internal use.
- 2 The objective of a memo is to solicit decisions and policy or behavioural changes / to get people to do something.
- 3 In the past, we wrote memos on paper: now we often send them by email / electronic transmission has been widely adopted.
- 4 To write a good memo you need careful forethought, layout and revision / to plan, organize and edit your ideas carefully.
- 5 A good memo tells you clearly what you have to do and when you have to do it / is one in which both the desired outcome and the target time frame are specified.
- 6 The purpose of this quiz is to ensure that the principal rules of memo-writing are respected / to help you write effective memos.

Analysis

E Read the suggested format for memos. The paragraphs in the memo below are not in the correct order. Number the paragraphs 1–4.

Format for memos

- 1 Define the problem.
- 2 Tell the reader why they should feel concerned.
- 3 Say what result you want to get.
- 4 Say what you want the reader to do and when.

VAN DER HEYDEN B.V.

Subject: Unauthorized software

- I would like us all to carry out this check by 15 September latest. Please examine your laptop carefully, and delete any unauthorized software. If you need help, I will be available every afternoon between 1 and 5pm. Thank you for helping to protect our colleagues, our jobs and our company.
- If inspectors find unauthorized, copyright material on our systems, individual users, management and the company itself can face heavy fines and even criminal prosecution. It is in everybody's interest to avoid this risk.
- As you probably know, the European Commission is stepping up its fight against software piracy, and we expect to see systematic inspections of medium-sized companies like ours in the next six months.
- This is the reason why I'm asking every employee in the company to check that there is no unauthorized software on their computer. This could include unlicensed copies of business software, downloaded programmes and even mp3 music files.