



Assignment #3: A3 Memo Report

Due Dates:

Draft A3.1 due 2/18

Draft A3.2 due 2/22

Readings:

Chapter 15 pages 340-354.

Chapter 22-23 pages 516-580.

Explanation of Task

The memo report will present information about what you've done and what you have found while pursuing our "What Is Technical Communication?" Project (see Assignment A2 for details). As a "memo report" this document will be something of a hybrid. First, it will be written in memo format, which is condensed and to the point. However, I'm going to ask that you follow the outline of an Analytic Report.

Memo Features: As Chapter 15 describes, a memo is a condensed piece of communication typically created for a practical purpose. In the case of this assignment, you will be reporting to your teacher what you've done and what you have found while working on this project. As an "informational report," this memo does not exactly fit the examples of progress reports, periodic activity reports, or meeting minutes. Nor as an "analytic report," does it exactly fit a feasibility report, recommendation report, or justification report. However, you will find looking at these different types of memo and analytic reports helpful in putting your report together.

Follow closely the **Guidelines for Memos** found on page 351 as you put together your memo report.

Analytic Report Features: Chapter 23 describes the features of formal analytic reports. Although we are not doing a full and long analytic report, I will ask that you follow the general Outline for an Analytic Report found on page 549. This type of report has three main sections: introduction, collected data, conclusion. I will require that you use our four questions around which our project revolves as the "topics for investigation" to be used in the collected data section.

Other Projects Details and Requirements:

- make an effort to present this as a professional looking memo--you may use a memo template or create the memo on your own
- use 12 pt. Arial or Calibri font
- keep the length to between 2-4 pages
- edit your final draft carefully, especially for the editing topics we have covered so far.
- address the Memo Report to me

This assignment is basically like a "research paper." I will insist that you "document" your sources correctly following either MLA or APA Documentation Format. Memos that are not documented will be returned to be rewritten.



GUIDANCE on Creating the A3 Memo Report

POINT 1) You are REPORTING

—that means you are re-presenting information without (as much as that is possible) infusing it with your opinion or bias.

You KNOW and are communicating this knowledge to inform those WHO DO NOT KNOW or do not know as well as you do. You have done the work to go through the information, and your report presents a “processed, analyzed, and synthesized” version of the information so it is consumable for your less informed audience.

POINT 2) You are REPORTING on four main questions

1. What is technical communication? (What characterizes it? What is its subject matter? What might distinguish it from other forms of communication? Why even is it important?)
2. What forms does technical communication take? What are the common types or kinds of “texts” considered to be technical communication?
3. What tools are needed to produce these various kinds of technical communication?
4. What skills are needed to produce these various kinds of technical communication?

Be sure and make each main section of your “Collected Data” part of your report (each “topic of investigation”) focus on these questions. DON’T SKIP a question. That means you should have four sections in the body of your report. See pg. 549.

POINT 3) The Introduction is important

--hit all the points, but be direct and concise (no more than 1/2 to 2/3rds of the 1st page)
Here are further glosses on the parts of the introduction

1. Definition, Description, and Background on Report
 - i.e. it was generated out of a classroom project in your Tech Writing Class
 - short explanation of the project behind the report
2. Purpose of the Memo Report
 - to report on what you have found and learned from the project
 - intended for professor but also to other’s uninformed about TC
3. Method of Inquiry
 - describe what the various sources of information are that went into this report and where you got the information that went into this report
4. Limitations of Study
 - here you are open with your audience about the limits of the study (such as limited number of sources and your own limited knowledge coming into it); this is work done by a novice in the field who is just learning about it
5. Working Definitions—not sure? SKIP.
6. Scope of the Inquiry
 - here you post the questions that this report focuses on
 - also tell the reader about the structure and sequence of your report



7. Conclusion

--present a one sentence (or maybe two) concise, thoughtful, synthesized ANSWER to the key questions of inquiry—What is Technical Communication? It is a one sentence version of “what this report adds up to”

Length?—try to keep your Introduction brief. In this two to four page report, I would say no longer than the first page.

POINT 4) Each “Topic of Investigation” section should have three parts

1. **Definition**—define and explain what this particular topic investigates—i.e. what the question of investigation is and means. This question asks _____
2. **Findings**—here you present “raw” data: that is, you present information from your various sources on the topic of investigation.
BE SURE AND PRESENT INFORMATION FROM MOST ALL YOUR SOURCES—at least three for each topic of investigation
3. **Interpretation of findings**—you will also pull together some understanding of this data in terms of your topic of investigation (the question). How are these various views the same? How different? What seems significant in this data? What are the implications? What larger perspective is revealed?

POINT 5) ANALYZE and study your data; KNOW IT so you can report on it

I have a suggestion for analyzing your data. Create “data sheets” with one sheet focused on each question (or maybe multiple sheets). Then put the information from our various sources for each question on those separate sheets. Here might be an example:

Question 1: What is technical communication? (What characterizes it? What is its subject matter? What might distinguish it from other forms of communication? Why even is it important?)	
STC Job Ads	Record thoughts and impressions on this site
Textbook	
Web definition(s)	
STC profiles	
Shriver	
Occupational Handbook	
Guest Technical Communicator	

How do you make sense of this data? Constant comparison—compare the various bits of information for likenesses and differences and let that guide your conclusions and interpretations.

POINT 6) You must properly “document” your sources in this report following either MLA or APA Documentation form. ANY words you did not write must be inside quotation marks and documented.