Policy Memo Writing Criteria

- **Content:**
  - Accurate and relevant information
  - Recommendations with stated limitations
  - Use of logic and cited facts to support main points
  - Avoidance of logical fallacies

- **Structure:**
  - **Header**, which includes the to, from, date, and subject of the memo (usually leading with RE: )
  - **Executive summary**, a single paragraph that summarizes the rest of the memo and its main points and recommendations. Open with a clear, concise statement of your recommendations on the issue (your “ask”)
  - **Subheadings**, titles to the subsequent sections of the memo

- **Organization:**
  - Follows the “inverted pyramid style” (journalistic), where the most important information is at the top and the less significant details follow toward the bottom

- **Word Choice:**
  - Avoid vague and theoretical words for concrete, specific terms
    - Facilitate vs. assist/help
    - Concept vs. idea
    - Indicates vs. shows/states

- **Clarity:**
  - Gets directly to the point
  - Leads with central claims
  - Presents context and recommendations immediately in short, concise sentences