

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