

Template for Technical Memo

To: Name and title of recipient (Physics TA)
From: Your name and title (relationship to recipient)
Date: Date submitted
Subject: Meaningful phrase that announces the topic

Introduction: Identify your purpose for writing and summarize the memo.

Identify why you are writing the memo: what is significant about your results to the reader? Next identify what your memo will do. Use a form of the verb that clearly announces what you want the memo to accomplish (such as “present,” “analyze,” “explain,” etc.). Also, describe briefly how you conducted the experiment (1 or 2 sentences), summarizing what the objectives included. Next summarize the main ideas presented in the memo, in this case the key results of your experiment. Do not summarize the entire lab experiment, only the body of the memo. Therefore, you must have completed the experiment and written up the results and analysis (i.e., the body of the memo) **BEFORE** you can summarize it. Last state the bottom line—what is presented in the conclusion, i.e., the significance of your results (what impact does it have on future experiments, research, etc.).

**Hint: Since you must summarize the body and conclusion in the introduction, write the body and conclusion BEFORE you write the introduction. Also, as you summarize the results, consider what is MOST important TO THE RECIPIENT. (The introduction works like an executive summary.)*

Body: Organize and present your results.

Organize this section according to the key findings discovered in your analysis of the data. The results will be supported by the graphics and any corresponding formulas you used to derive the data. Make sure that your graphics are correctly labeled, are inserted as close as possible to the text that explains them, and are cross-referenced in the text. For each finding, interpret your results and all kinds and sources of error along with their implications. Remember: the discussion should emphasize what your data show, not how you got them (your reader does not want to know the “story” of the data, i.e., what you did to get the results).

Conclusion: Close by summarizing your interpretation of the results.

Offer what is most important about your interpretation of the data, in this case, the sources of error you found and their significance.

Tips:

- Use design tools (first- and second-level headings, bolding, underlining, italics, type size, etc.) to set off what is most important and to increase readability.
- Remember to write, organize, design, and revise the memo to emphasize what the data mean not how you got the data.

- Write and re-write your memo so that each section clearly supports the other sections. In other words, refine your writing so that ideas are tightly connected through precise diction, and well-developed and coherent paragraphs.