

Memo purpose and goals

- Purpose:
 - Inform a **policy maker** about the **consequences of an action**
- Content:
 - **Facts** and **supported inferences** – not opinions or speculation
 - **Authoritative** – able to be trusted as accurate and reliable
 - **Concise** and **focused** – avoid minor or tangential issues
- Quality:
 1. Good: to be **read** and **understood**
 2. Better: make sure the policy maker is **well informed**
 3. Best: policy maker **forwards the memo** to others

Authoritative, forwardable memos

- **Characteristics:**

- Understandable by itself
- Clear about starting facts
- Clear about inferences
- Avoids speculation

- **Contents:**

- Current situation
- Explanation of proposal
- Sketch of analysis
- Key results

- **Exposition**

- Be concise
- Avoid “we” and “you”
- Logical paragraphs
- Use whitespace well
- Correct grammar
- Correct spelling
- Don’t worksplain
- Avoid hyperbole
- Limit jargon when possible

High level structure

1. Overview of current situation (BAU)
2. Short synopsis of proposed change
3. Analysis and inferences
4. Short summary and caveats