

Try some of the following scenarios to practice your skills in writing memos and e-mails. You will be provided with the necessary information to create a new piece of correspondence for each scenario; however, it is up to you to add the details.

Memos

Informative

1. As the owner of a small company, you are organizing a ballgame and picnic in two weeks' time for your employees and their families. There are many fun activities that you have planned. For the children there will be games like three-legged races and kite-flying. For the adults, besides the baseball game in the afternoon, there will also be bingo and horseshoes. There will be prizes for the winners of all the events. Lunch should be around noon, and you are generously providing all the food and drinks, so let your employees know that they do not need to bring anything.

Write a memo requesting, but not demanding, that employees attend the picnic. Also ask your employees to let you know at least one week in advance whether they are coming or not, and also how many guests they are bringing, and make sure employees know when and how to respond to you. Be sure to list the activities for that day as well.

2. As the resident computer technician, you have installed a new software program on the company computers. Write a memo to all the staff, including your managers, letting them know that they need to come see you for a half-hour training and information session within the next week. Be sure to include what times you are available as well as where and how you can be reached. Below is an example of an informative memo.

To: ALL STAFF
From: Haley Clarke, Computer Technician H.C.
Date: September 18, 2006
Subject: OLD OFFICE PRINTER BEING REPLACED TOMORROW

A new office printer is being installed tomorrow, replacing the old one. The previous printer was inadequate for meeting your needs; the new one should solve many of the problems you have reported.

Because the old printer needs to be removed before the new one can be installed, you will be unable to print any documents between 12 noon and 1 p.m. tomorrow. However, since the installation will occur during lunch, it should not pose much of a problem.

If the installation will cause problems for any of you, please send me an e-mail at hclarke@discoverymail.ca before 5 p.m. today, and we can make new arrangements.

Request Information

1. You and three other employees are working closely in a small group to create a report on how plants in the workplace affect the employees' morale. Create a memo asking what plants they would like to study, how many employees they should survey, who will be doing what task, what time they should meet each week, and when they want the report to be done by. Below is an example of a request for information memo.

To: ALL STAFF
From: Haley Clarke, Computer Technician H.C.
Date: September 2, 2006
Subject: PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT PRINTER

Have you been having trouble when using the office printer lately? If so, please confirm this by sending me an e-mail answering the following questions:

1. What problems have you had when using the printer?
2. How often have you had these problems?
3. On what day(s) did the problems occur?
4. Were you able to resolve the problem?

Your responses to this memo will determine whether or not the office needs a new printer, so please send your replies to hclarke@discoverymail.ca by September 6.

Persuasive

1. At work, there is very little healthy food to eat in the cafeteria, and you would like that to change. Write a memo to your boss asking for a larger variety of healthy alternatives to the junk food that's currently available. Stress a recent survey that states that healthy employees are more productive, and show that the business would have to spend less on insurance if the employees are healthier. Below is an example of a persuasive memo.

To: Stan Barre, Technology Division Director
From: Haley Clarke, Computer Technician H.C.
Date: September 5, 2006
Subject: REQUEST FOR A NEW PRINTER

In the beginning of August, you held a seminar about increasing productivity among employees and invited suggestions to that effect from the employees.

I have recently been receiving numerous complaints regarding the printer used by the employees, which is seriously affecting how well they can do their job. Last week, I sent a survey asking about any printer-related problems they have been having.

Here is a brief summary of the responses from those surveyed:

- 88% of the staff have had problems with the printer.
- 80% have had more than one problem.
- 73% feel that these problems are interfering with their productivity.
- 78% believe the problems have been getting steadily worse since August.

Given this information, I believe it would be best for the company to replace the old printer, which is quickly deteriorating.

Our office suppliers are holding a sale this month and are offering a two-month supply of legal paper, plus a free colour ink cartridge with the purchase of their PAL-9000 colour printer, so now would be a perfect time to purchase a new one.

Delivering Bad News

1. The cafeteria at work is raising the price of the food, and you, as manager of the cafeteria, have the unlucky job of informing all the other employees in the organization. The price of drinks is going up by 5%, desserts by 15%, salad by 7% and everything else by 10%. To minimize the bad news, remind the other employees of the positive side; with raised prices, the cafeteria will have better, higher quality food (use specific examples). Below is an example of a memo that delivers bad news.

To: David Poole, Administrative Assistant
From: Haley Clarke, Computer Technician H.C.
Date: September 18, 2006
Subject: RE: YOUR REQUEST TO PRINT DURING LUNCH BREAK

Thank you for contacting me so quickly about your situation. The swiftness of your response gives me the chance to make arrangements that will help you.

While I'm afraid I can't let you print at any point during the lunch break tomorrow, the new printer will be working by 1 p.m., and I will make sure that the other employees know to let you finish your printing before using the new printer themselves.

The new printer should print about 10 times faster than the old one, so you will be able to finish printing your report before your presentation at 3 p.m.

Confirmation

1. You've recently had a conversation with a potential mulch supplier for your tree nursery. Over the phone, you both reached an agreement about the price, types, and amount of mulch you will receive. Write a memo and send it to Mulch Makers Inc. to clarify a few of these points and to create a written record of the discussion. Below is an example of a confirmation memo.

To: Haley Clarke, Computer Technician
From: Stan Barre, TD Director SB
Date: September 6, 2006
SUBJECT: RE: PRINTER REQUEST

I got your memo, and I'll discuss your request for a new printer with the other directors. It might be a few days before a decision is reached, though.

E-Mails

1. Next week you will be attending a conference about safety in the workplace. Send an e-mail to your boss letting him or her know what the conference will be about, when and where it will be held, and how long it will last.

2. THIS SHOULD BE A PERSUASIVE SCENARIO.

3. Ask your three co-workers, whom you are working on a project with, when they will be available for working on the project. The meetings have to be for at least one hour twice a week, and there is one month to complete the project. You are only available from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. between Monday and Thursday, and you are not available at all on Friday.

MEMOS & E-MAILS

Practice Scenarios

4. The company you work for recently decided that employees should be trained in First Aid, and you were assigned to arrange the training. Let your employer know that the training session will begin one month from the date of the memo and that it will take three days to complete. It will cost the company \$110 per employee, and up to 30 people can attend. Also, if over 20 people go, the cost will be lowered to \$100 per employee.

From: fbowman@address.com
To: hclarke@discoverymail.ca
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: RE: PROBLEMS WITH PRINTER MEMO

Haley, I've had a few problems with the printer within the last couple of weeks. Here's my response to the questionnaire.

1. Problems with the printer:
 - a) When printing 10 or more copies of a document, the printer jams.
 - b) Printing in colour causes the ink to blur.
2. The paper has jammed about $\frac{1}{2}$ a dozen of times in the past two weeks, and the blurring with the coloured ink is getting worse and worse.
3. Both problems have occurred repeatedly since the middle of August.
4. With a little effort, I'm able to eventually unjam the paper, but I've given up on printing in colour.

Thanks for looking into this, Haley. I hope the printer can either be fixed or replaced.