

Communication in Your Field Memo and Presentation

Objectives:

- Do primary research by conducting an interview
- Understand the different types of writing and the amount of writing required in your prospective field
- Practice oral presentation skills by sharing your findings with the class

1. Define Your Occupation

Think about what kind of job you might be interested in pursuing after graduating from college (and completing any further education you plan on pursuing). If you would like some ideas about possible jobs in your field, consult the Occupational Outlook Handbook (published by the United States Department of Labor) at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh>.

2. Interview a Professional

Identify an individual who does this job. Consider relatives, family friends, parents of your friends, and others. It is preferable to interview this professional in person, but if this is not possible, you may set up a video-conferencing interview, or, if you *absolutely* must, a phone interview. *Best practice: Professionals are busy people and may need to cancel, so contact this person ASAP to schedule the interview.* You should plan to meet and/or talk with this professional for about 45 minutes. During the interview, include questions to acquire information about

- a. The person's job title, responsibilities, and employer
- b. What makes a resume and cover letter most winsome in this field
- c. What types of bad news s/he must deliver and what strategies s/he uses to communicate something that will disappoint the audience
- d. What types of documents s/he writes that require persuasion and what strategies s/he uses to be persuasive
- e. The audience, purpose, and type of social media writing, if any, done for his/her position and the strategies used for social media writing
- f. The genres of documents that s/he writes for his/her job and the purposes and audiences of each genre of document
- g. The steps s/he takes when writing a document
- h. The amount of time s/he spends writing each day; the percentage of his/her work time spent writing
- i. How and when s/he revises and edits his or her writing
- j. The types of presentations that s/he gives, as well as the purposes and audiences for the presentations
- k. What distinguishes an excellent presentation from an average one in his/her company
- l. The types of communication issues a young professional entering this field should consider
- m. What frustrates him/her as a recipient of professional correspondence and documents in this field

During the interview, record it or take detailed notes.

3. Describe Your Findings

Write a full two-page (minimum), single-spaced (one space between paragraphs) memo to me, describing all that you learned about communication in your field from your interview. Use headings to indicate the various communication topics that you discussed. Submit an electronic copy to Canvas before class on the day of your presentation.

4. Prepare a Presentation

Prepare a three to five-minute oral presentation, summarizing the most important, helpful pieces of information you learned about communication in your field. Number these points, make eye contact with the audience, and present them without notes in your hands. Be prepared to share this information with us in an engaging way so that we can all learn about different types of writing that are required in business.

Send me one high-quality picture that depicts a major part of your presentation. It will display on the screen at the front of the class as a background during your presentation.

Please keep track of your presentation date by noting it on your syllabus and calendar. If you miss your presentation date, you will receive a zero for this daily grade. Your classmates will give you feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of your presentation.

Requirements for an A Grade**Memo**

- Is formatted as a memo
- Meets the minimum full two-page single-spaced (one space between paragraphs) requirement
- Answers most of the previously listed questions
- Uses headings to organize the information
- Is written clearly, correctly, and concisely
- Gives interesting, specific information that evidences a thorough interview

Presentation (SOME FIB)

- Story (*Tell at least one story that your interviewee told you, or make some of the information into a hypothetical story.*)
- Organization (*Number points and use transitions.*)
- Movement (*Don't stand in just one spot.*)
- Eye contact (*Look at each person in the classroom for two to three seconds.*)
- Fillers (*Avoid um, uh, like, so, well.*)
- Involvement of audience
- Body language (*Use open posture, and make your body big.*)

The memo and presentation will each count as a daily grade.