

# **ADMINISTRATIVE WRITINGS INDUCTION COURSE**



- **EDWIN BARNES**

# OBJECTIVE

- By the end of the session, the Participants will be introduced to what Administrative Writings and some of the Do's and Don'ts relating to them.
- Session will not involve any exercise in the preparation of these Writings but serve to introduce participants to these tools they will encounter in their work in the Service.

# OUTLINE

- What are Administrative Writings?
- Examples of Administrative Writings.
- Some do's and don'ts

# INTRODUCTION

- **DEFINITION:** Administrative Writings are ‘formal written instruments/documents used to pass on messages in the Civil/Public Service’.
- **TYPES:** Memo, Handing Over Notes, Reports, Circulars, Letters, Minutes on letters and of meetings.

# MEMORANDUM

- Memorandum – Latin word coming from the root *memorare* which translates as *to mention or call to mind*.
- Basically, a memo may be considered as a document which is used to remind people of something
- Memos bring attention to problems and also provide solutions to them

# MEMOS IN THE OFFICE

- Memos are essentially documents used in internal communication
- They may be used between various parts of the organisations even if located in diverse places
- Used when information has to be written – not to be used to avoid face-to-face contact
- Should be clear and brief

# MEMOS – THEIR USE

Memos are used in the following situations

- Instruction – about new procedures, new policies, etc.
- Reminder – about events or actions that need to be taken
- Information – changes in staff roles, promotions, salary adjustments, etc.

# MEMO FORMAT

- **NAME OF MDA**
- **REFERENCE NUMBER**
- **TO** – indicate person(s) memo being sent to – name(s) and job title(s)
- **FROM** – person sending memo (name and title)
- **DATE** – on which memo is being sent
- **SUBJECT** – issue being dealt with by memo – may be underlined or presented in **bold** form
- **BODY OF MESSAGE** – information being sent
- **END OF MEMO** – signed or initialled



# MEMO FORMAT

- Body of memo to contain message
- Message to be brief and clear
- Language should be appropriate to recipients
- Careful about grammar, punctuation, spelling etc.

# LETTERS

These are communications with persons or organisations outside the MDA

## OBJECTIVES (SIMILAR TO MEMO)

- To convey instructions or directives
- To provide information
- To submit proposals on an issue
- To provide a feedback on an issue

# MEMO & LETTER - DIFFERENCE

LETTER	MEMO
1. On official letterhead.	1. Generally NOT on letterhead.
2. Inside address & salutation.	2. NO Inside address & salutation.
3. Body / text of the letter starts with a formal sentence	3. Starts straight with the main idea.
4. Body ends with a formal closing sentence.	4. NO formal closing sentence.
5. Complimentary close is an important part of the letter.	5. Complimentary close NOT needed.

# MEMOS AND LETTERS

## Reference numbers

Very important to ensure that these are on memos and letters for easy filing and future referencing. PRAAD has provided lists of reference numbers to make this easy

## Copying

Both memos and letters may be copied to other people who may need to know about their contents but need not take action on them

# CIRCULARS



While memos may be deemed to have limited circulation within an MDA, a circular may be a letter or memo intended for a wider circulation.

For instance, the Chief Director of the Ministry or the Head of the Department may issue a circular inviting to a staff durbar.

# CIRCULARS

As with memos and letters, it is important for circulars to be addressed to all those for whom action is expected of the contents and copied to those who need to be informed. For instance, with respect to the circular for the durbar, the Minister may be copied if he does not have to be present.

# REPORTS

- An account presented usually in detail
- A formal account of the proceedings or transactions of a group
- Reports may refer to specific periods, events, occurrences or subjects, and may be communicated or presented in oral or written form.

# REPORTS

## DEFINITION

- A document that presents information in an organised format for a specific audience and purpose.

## TYPES OF REPORTS

- Memos, minutes, laboratory reports, book reports, annual reports, progress reports, staff reports, compliance reports



# REPORTS

- A report has an **Originator**, deals with a **subject matter** and has an **audience**
- Report may be presented orally or in writing.

# AIM OF MINUTES

Minutes aim at answering following questions:

- When was the meeting held?
- Who attended?
- Who did not attend?
- What issues were discussed?
- What was decided?
- What actions were agreed upon?

# AIM OF MINUTES

- Who is to complete the actions and by when?
- Were materials distributed at the meeting; if so, are copies or is a link available?
- Is there anything special the reader of the minutes should know or do?
- Is a follow up meeting scheduled? If so, when? where? why?

# HINTS TO GOOD MINUTES

- Minutes have to be concise and coherent
- Language has to be simple
- Use technicalities only when absolutely necessary
- Check spelling, grammar and punctuation

# ADMINISTRATIVE MINUTES

These represent short notes from a senior to a junior indicating actions to be taken on a letter/memo/report/document within the Ministry or Department. Abbreviations tend to be used whenever necessary for such communication.

Typical ones include:

- ptna/tna – (please) take necessary action
- Nat – necessary action taken
- pa – put away
- bu – bring up (on file)
- kiv – keep in view

# ADMINISTRATIVE MINUTES

## Presentation of minutes

- Title of officer minute is meant for, preceded by a number indicating the order in which the minute refers. First person will have the number (2) before his name
- Instructions/Information constituting body of document
- Signature or initials of officer
- Date of minute.

# GUIDE TO GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE WRITING

- Speak to the reader of the writing to understand clearly what is expected of you
- Be accurate and use words the meanings of which are clear to everyone who reads the report
- Be brief, precise and concise – not the chance to show off with big words – **NO BIG WORDS HERE**

# GUIDE TO GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE WRITING

- Be simple and do not use jargons
- Express new ideas in new paragraphs
- Keep sentences short
- Be careful about spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Be original in style and do not try to imitate anyone's style
- Sign and date writings – Own the writing



# GUIDES TO GOOD ADMINISTRATIVE WRITING

- Where a writing is meant to be classified, indicate this on the report – Top secret, secret, confidential, restricted, etc.
- Be in a position to support, defend or clarify information in the writing
- A writing should not be used for any other purpose than what it is meant for
- **LEARN TO READ.**

# Confucius said

*“What I hear, I forget,  
what I see, I  
remember, but what I  
do, I understand.”*



# Thank you

