

- **A header that includes fields for the recipient (“To”), the sender (“From”), the date the memo was circulated, and the subject.** The subject field may be listed as “Re:,” which stands for “in reference to” or “regarding.”
- **The body of the memo,** which typically should include an introductory paragraph or sentence, a middle portion, and a conclusion.
- **A distribution notation,** including any people who were not listed in the “To” field but are copied on the memo. This notation is indicated by “cc” (courtesy copy) followed by the names of those individuals. Note that with email, there is also a “bcc” (blind copy) field that can be used to send copies but not allow other recipients to see who received a “bcc.” See Chapter 14 for more about the proper and ethical use of bcc with email memos.
- **An enclosure notation,** used to indicate any other documents that accompany the memo.

Format of the memo body

The body copy (main text portion) of a memo should focus on one topic. Content should be complete yet compact, providing all the information readers need but not going into unnecessary detail. Organize the body of your memo by starting with a short introduction and then writing a paragraph or two to address the main issue. Conclude by suggesting a course of action or asking your readers to follow up.

Format for a print or PDF memo

In a print or PDF memo, typically you should double space between the header and the opening paragraph as well as between the paragraphs. Top and bottom margins are best set to 1 inch; left and right margins should be set to anywhere from 1 inch to 1.25 inches.

Format for an email memo

For memos sent as email messages, the “To,” “From,” “Subject,” and “Date” fields in the email header take the place of these lines on the PDF or print memo. But, if you want to emphasize that your email is in fact a memo, you can repeat the word “Memo” or “Memorandum” as well as these fields within the body of the email. Format the body of your message using the same introduction, middle portion, and conclusion structure you would use in a print or PDF memo.

Using memo templates

Word processing programs provide a wide range of memo formats, called templates. These templates are pre-formatted for the required parts of a memo, including the header fields. For most apps, you simply select the memo template when starting a new file. In terms of design, templates can range from simple to complex. As tempting as it may be to simply choose a template, make sure the one you use is appropriate for your audience and purpose. Unless the situation specifically calls for a decorative format, strive for a tasteful, conservative look. When in doubt, ignore the templates and work from a blank document, based on the guidelines in this chapter and the sample memos illustrated here. Or, modify the template to fit your audience, purpose, and these guidelines.

See Figure 15.1 for more detail on the parts and format of memos and Figure 15.2 for an email with all of the required parts, correct formatting, and well-written body text.

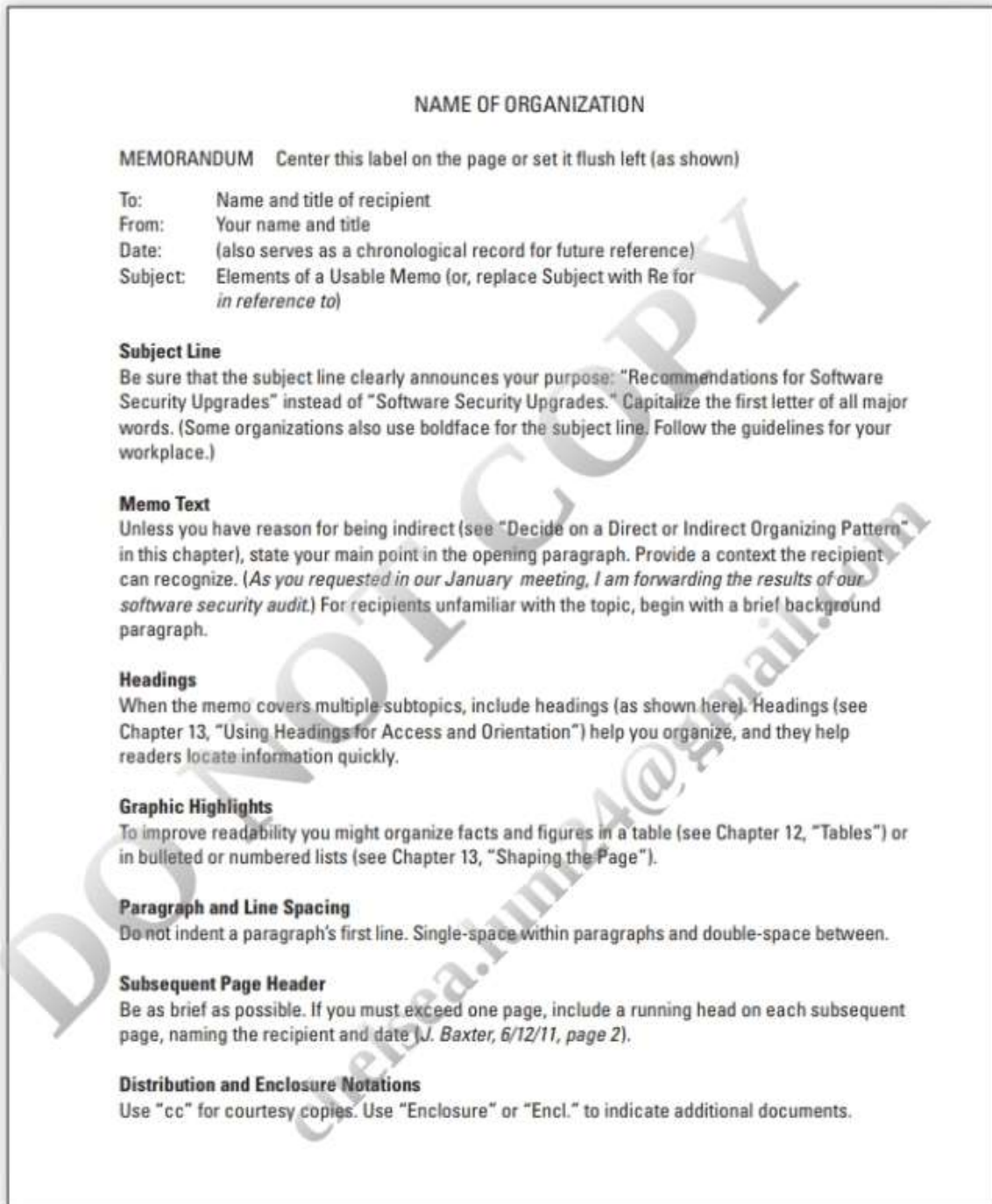


Figure 15.1 Standard Parts of a Memo These elements can differ across organizations and professions, but most memos, especially longer ones, contain most of these parts. Because memos are read rapidly by busy people, formatting and layout are key.