

How to Write Policy Memos  
Advice from leading Universities  
Dan Lindley, January 12, 2018, v. 1.2a

\*Harvard Kennedy School:

[https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/HO\\_Herman\\_Policy-Memos\\_9\\_24\\_12.pdf](https://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/HO_Herman_Policy-Memos_9_24_12.pdf) [FWIW, this handout is also used at Stanford:

<https://www-cdn.law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Policy-Memo-Guidelines-2.pdf> ]

Good general advice and detailed explanations of PEST and SWOT. More on PEST and SWOT here: <http://creately.com/blog/diagrams/swot-analysis-vs-pest-analysis/>

\*Duke:

<https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/policy-memo.original.pdf> From Duke, with good writing advice, and some good mini-examples. Has a characterization of academic writing on p. 2 that I do not agree with. Me = NO, do not put most important point/s last.

\*MIT:

[https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/36824/11-479Spring-2004/NR/rdonlyres/Urban-Studies-and-Planning/11-479Spring-2004/9CE4ACA2-EC3D-4C1D-91CC-27971E27DCF5/0/pm\\_writing.pdf](https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/36824/11-479Spring-2004/NR/rdonlyres/Urban-Studies-and-Planning/11-479Spring-2004/9CE4ACA2-EC3D-4C1D-91CC-27971E27DCF5/0/pm_writing.pdf) Solid writing advice and a full length example. Note that our assignment supercedes any of these handouts re formatting and anything else specifically mentioned.

\*University of Southern California:

<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/policymemo> More good advice, and some references to more advice on policy memos - including the MIT link, above.

\*Syracuse Maxwell School:

<http://wilcoxen.maxwell.insightworks.com/pages/275.html> great examples of good and bad writing

Two others:

Canadian International Development Research Centre:

<https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/idrcpolicybrieftoolkit.pdf> ppt type presentation but 37pp = way too long!

Harvard Kennedy School:

[https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/lb\\_how\\_to\\_write\\_pol\\_memo\\_9\\_08\\_17.pdf](https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/lb_how_to_write_pol_memo_9_08_17.pdf)