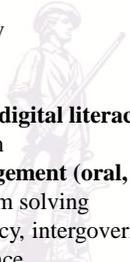




## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Soldier Competencies

- Character and accountability
- Comprehensive fitness
- Adaptability and initiative
- **Lifelong learner (includes digital literacy)**
- Teamwork and collaboration
- **Communication and engagement (oral, written, negotiation)**
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Cultural and joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational competence
- Tactical and technical competence (full spectrum capable)



Strength Maintenance Training Center

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Method of Instruction: CO

Facilitator to Student Ratio: 1:25

Time of Instruction: 30 minutes

Media: Power point

BLOCK AUTHOR: Mr. Michael R. Langston Sr.

LESSON AUTHOR: Mr. Scott M. Clouse

DATE PREPARED: 10 December 2014

LAST REVISION: 30 December 2014

**LEARNING OUTCOME:** The goal of this course is to provide the students with the foundation necessary to communicate effectively through written communication, including memos, papers, and e-mail communication. This lesson will provide information relating to Army writing that will prepare the RRNCO for additional leadership responsibilities as well as higher level training.

At the conclusion of this lesson, students should be able to recognize common grammatical errors and ambiguous statements. This training should lead students to understand how those errors impact their writing and how others view them as an effective RRNCO. Students should also be able to produce basic Army communications that are clear, concise, and contain minimal grammatical errors.

This lesson will address the following 21<sup>st</sup> Century Soldier Competencies:

- Communication and engagement: Understanding the content of this lesson will allow Soldiers and leaders to express themselves more clearly and succinctly in various written forms of communications.

- Lifelong Learner: This lesson supports lifelong learning by having Soldiers assess their own writing and determine areas of their writing and overall communication skills where they need to improve. Understanding the need for improved communication skills will improve their effectiveness as a Soldier and a leader.

ASSIGNED READING: AR 25-50, TRADOC Reg 1-11

ASSIGNED HOMEWORK: N/A

INSTRUCTOR ADDITIONAL READINGS: N/A

CLASSROOM AIDS REQUIRED:

**Facilitator Note:** Incorporate the political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and physical environment and time (PMESII & PT) into each lesson and classroom work as appropriate. Facilitator will illustrate them with appropriate examples from the Operating Environment (OE) as it pertains to the lesson.

**Safety Requirements:** In a training environment, leaders must perform a risk assessment in accordance with FM 5-19, Composite Risk Management. Leaders will complete a DA Form 7566 Composite Risk management Worksheet during the planning and completion of each task and sub-task by assessing mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available and civil considerations, (METT-TC).

**Risk Assessment:** Low : Environmental related risk assessment: No food or drink allowed near or around electrical equipment (CPU, file servers, printers, projectors, etc.) due to possible electrical shock or damage to equipment. Exercise care in personal movement in and through such areas. Avoid all electrical cords and associated wiring. In the event of an electrical storm, you may be required to power down. Use precautions with electrical equipment during thunderstorms / electrical.

**Environmental Considerations:** Facilitator should conduct a risk assessment to include environmental considerations IAW FM 3-34.5, Environmental Considerations (MCRP 4-11B), and ensure students are briefed on hazards and control measures. Environmental protection is not just the law but the right thing to do. It is a continual process and starts with deliberate planning. Always be alert to ways to protect our environment during training and missions. In doing so, you will contribute to the sustainment of our training resources while protecting people and the environment from harmful effects. Refer to FM 3-34-5 Environmental Considerations and GTA 05-08-002 ENVIRONMENTAL – RELATED RISK ASSESSMENT.

**Foreign Disclosure:** FD1, No limitations.

**Evaluation:** The knowledge gained in this lesson will be tested through the preparation of a memo with enclosures. Students must successfully prepare a memo THRU that is written and formatted IAW AR 25-50 in order to receive a “GO”.

**Concrete Experience:**

**Concrete Experience Instruction:**

Instructor should have had students respond to “REMIND ME” application invite on Day 1 (<https://www.remind.com/>).

NOTE: If this is ever an issue, the instructor can just send an email. Just ensure the students check emails one last time at 2000 each night.

The night before the LP is presented, the instructor will send a text that breaks all the communication rules discussed in this LP. **The Instructor must avoid all questions regarding the sent text until the class starts the next day.** Example of text to send to students: “Students, be sure to come peppered tomorrow as we have a long day of construction. Also, please bring your caps for an exercise in class.” Students will likely respond with questions for clarification of meaning or regarding what cap they are supposed to bring. If nothing else, they will likely be laughing at the instructor because of the auto corrections.

When class starts the next day, ask students if they received the text the night before. Ask if they came prepared. They should express that the text was unclear. Play a long for a while as though you don’t know the text was unclear or don’t accept their “excuse” that it wasn’t clear. Allow students to express confusion (maybe even frustration) over the text by further bringing to your attention how poorly it was written. After sufficient discussion, then go into the Publish phase where you reveal to students that they were “set up.”

**ASK:**

**Facilitator Note:** Facilitate discussion with the students, below are questions to guide you in this facilitation.

**Publish:**

- What were your first thoughts when you received the text?
- What did you find most confusing about the text?
- How did you respond when you couldn’t get clarification from the instructor?
- Without clarification, how did you prepare for class anyway? How did the poorly written text affect your confidence about being properly prepared?
- How did the badly written text affect your image of me as an Instructor?

**Process:**

- As an RRNCO, how often are you required to send texts, emails and written correspondence?
- Why is it important to be able to write and format information correctly?
- Have you ever experienced a similar situation with someone else's poorly written correspondence? How did that written communication affect your image of that person, especially if it was someone you had never met before?
- Have you ever pressed the "send" button without proofreading and regretted it later, including sending it to the wrong person?

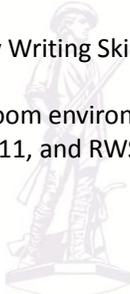
That's what this block is about, putting the best YOU out there when it comes to written communication, be it text, email or written.



## Terminal Learning Objective

**Action:** Develop Army Writing Skills

**Condition:** In a classroom environment with access to AR 25-50, TRADOC Reg 1-11, and RWS.



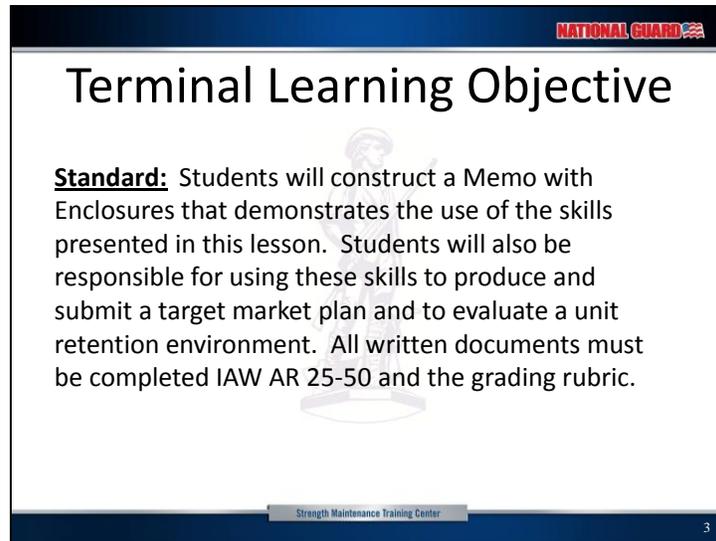
Strength Maintenance Training Center

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### TLO

**Action** – Develop Army Writing Skills

**Condition** – In a classroom environment with access to AR 25-50 and RWS.

A presentation slide with a dark blue header and footer. The header contains the text "NATIONAL GUARD" with a small American flag icon to its right. The main content area is white and features the title "Terminal Learning Objective" in a large, bold, black font. Below the title is a paragraph of text starting with "**Standard:**". In the background of this text is a faint, light-colored illustration of a person in a hard hat. At the bottom of the slide, there is a small grey box with the text "Strength Maintenance Training Center" and a small number "3" in the bottom right corner.

**NATIONAL GUARD**

## Terminal Learning Objective

**Standard:** Students will construct a Memo with Enclosures that demonstrates the use of the skills presented in this lesson. Students will also be responsible for using these skills to produce and submit a target market plan and to evaluate a unit retention environment. All written documents must be completed IAW AR 25-50 and the grading rubric.

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### TLO

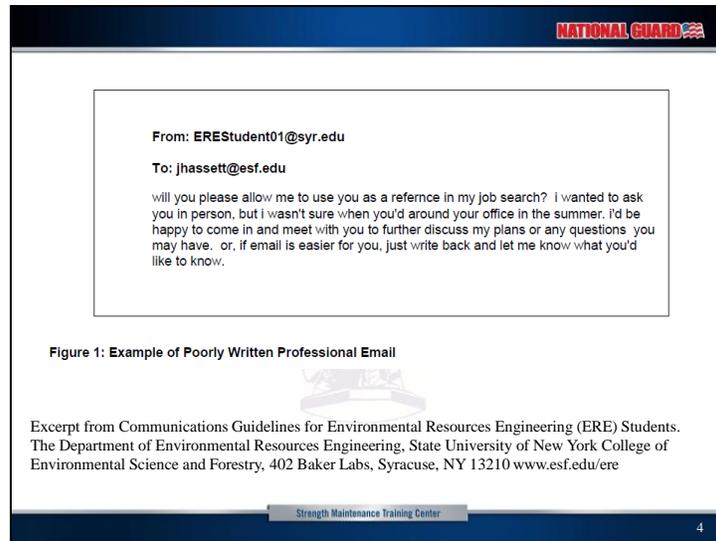
**Standard:** Students will construct a Memo with Enclosures that demonstrates the use of the skills presented in this lesson. Students will also be responsible for using these skills to produce and submit a target market plan and to evaluate each of their units' retention environment. All written documents must be completed IAW AR 25-50 and the grading rubric.

**Note:** Connect the TLO to the Concrete Experience.

**Say:** So would you say the beginning of this lesson actually happened last night? Hopefully you see the importance of always looking professional and communicating clearly, regardless of how small the information may be. It is a reflection of you AND the National Guard at work!

Since email is probably our most used methods of communication, let's look at some examples.

## Slide 4



**NATIONAL GUARD**

**From:** EREStudent01@syr.edu  
**To:** jhassett@esf.edu

will you please allow me to use you as a refernce in my job search? i wanted to ask you in person, but i wasn't sure when you'd around your office in the summer. i'd be happy to come in and meet with you to further discuss my plans or any questions you may have. or, if email is easier for you, just write back and let me know what you'd like to know.

**Figure 1: Example of Poorly Written Professional Email**

Excerpt from Communications Guidelines for Environmental Resources Engineering (ERE) Students.  
The Department of Environmental Resources Engineering, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, 402 Baker Labs, Syracuse, NY 13210 [www.esf.edu/ere](http://www.esf.edu/ere)

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**Slide 4 –** Discuss writing professional e-mails.

### **GENERALIZE NEW INFORMATION (GNI)**

#### **Learning/Step Activity One**

**Facilitator Note:** Give the students time to review Figure 1, then facilitate a discussion using the questions below as a guide.

**Q. What is your first impression after reading this e-mail? Would you provide this student a reference? Why or why not?**

**Possible responses or topics to discuss:**

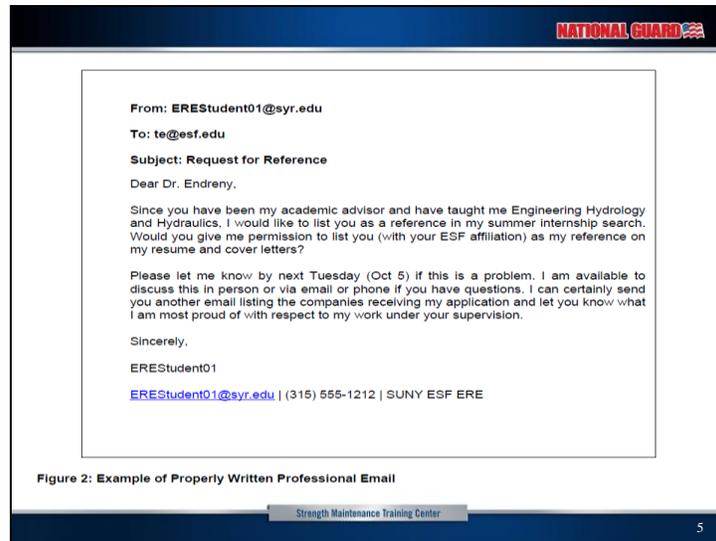
I would not be able to provide a reference to this student.

- The student did not provide a name or signature block in the email, so unless there is enough information in the e-mail address for the recipient to identify the sender, it would be difficult to determine who the sender is, and therefore, difficult to write a recommendation for the sender.
- Did you notice that there is no subject line or greeting to the email? Did you also notice the spelling errors? (i.e. refernce instead of reference) What about the use of

contractions? (you'd, i'd instead of you would or I would) What about the lack of capitalization?

- Given all these issues, would you want to put your reputation as a professional on the line by providing this person a reference?

Slide 5



SLIDE 5

Discuss the Army Writing Style

**Facilitator Note:** Give the students time to review Figure 1, then facilitate a discussion using the questions below as a guide.

- **How would you feel about providing a reference for this student? What difference do you see in this e-mail compared to the last one?**

**Possible responses or topics to discuss:**

- There is a short but informative subject line that states the purpose of the e-mail.
- The e-mail has an appropriate greeting.
- The student used proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- The student provided a signature block and/or appropriate contact information.
- **What else do you see in this e-mail?**
- The student provided a suspense. The reader knows how long he/she has to respond to the e-mail.

- The student provided specifics as to the nature of the reference and how it would be used.

**Facilitator Ask:** As an RRNCO, when do you use e-mail? Who do you correspond with?

**Facilitator Ask:** After reviewing these two e-mail examples, do you see the importance of being professional in an e-mail? Why or why not?

**Facilitator State:** Keep in mind that an e-mail can serve as a record of activity. You never know who an e-mail can be forwarded to. Just because an e-mail is only sent to one other person, it should not be assumed that the e-mail will not be shared with other parties, including supervisors, or other leaders. Don't say anything in an e-mail that you wouldn't want forwarded to others.

Now that we've discussed the importance of professional writing let's do a PE where you will write a Memorandum Thru without using any references. Let's see how you fair.

Advance to next slide



## Practical Exercise

1. Write a Memorandum Thru to the Commander requesting funds.
2. Event details:
  - **Event Name:** Faculty Lunch-In (200 Faculty Members)
  - **Requesting Amount:** \$1500.00
  - **School Name:** Lincoln High School
  - **NCOIC Information:** MSG Donald Duck, Team A NCOIC, Recruiting and Retention, 249 Any Street, Jacksonville, AR 72076.
  - **Commander's Information:** LTC John Smith, IN, Recruiting and Retention Commander, 123 Any Street, North Little Rock, AR 72115.
  - **Signature block:** Use your personal information.

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### **PE Instructions:**

This PE is actually a Concrete Event to demonstrate to students the importance of using AR 25-50 as a reference for formatting formal military correspondence.

Tell them to open up Microsoft Word on their computer and complete the practical exercise on the PowerPoint screen. Students are not to receive any assistance from the instructor, their peers, or the regulation. Have the students make up any additional information they would like to include or would deem important.

The students will have 10 minutes to complete the exercise. Instruct the students to save the document to their desktop when they are finished because it will be used throughout the lesson.

**Facilitator Note:** After the PE, facilitate a discussion with the students. Below are questions to guide you during this facilitation.

### **Publish:**

Who would like to describe his/her experience trying to complete this exercise?

### **Process:**

How did you feel about that exercise?  
How difficult did you find this exercise?  
What made the exercise difficult?

As an RRNCO, how often are you required to write memorandums or other correspondence?

Do you think being able to write and format a memo is important?

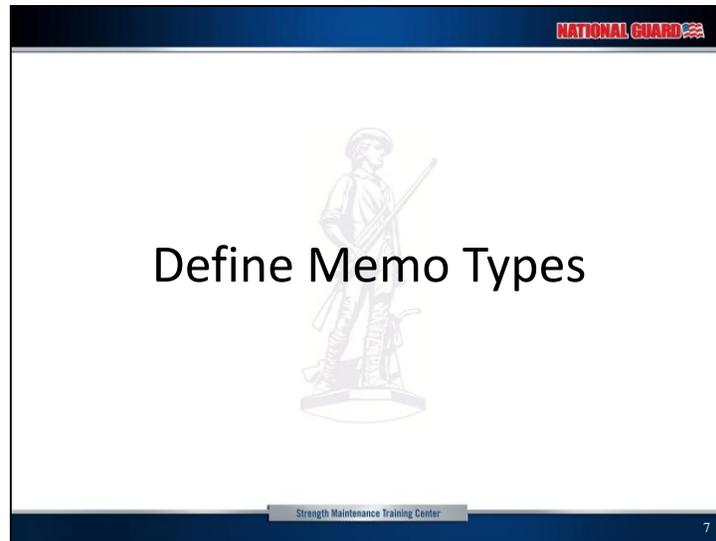
Have you ever experienced a similar situation on the job? A situation where you had to produce a memo, but didn't have much time to complete the task?

How do you handle the situation?

**Note:** Have students save and close their Memorandum. Ensure that the students are not making corrections to the Memorandum as material is being discussed.

**Say:** By the time we are finished, you will see the changes you need to make to your memorandums as we go through the correct models line by line.

First, let's look at the different types of memorandums and some regulatory guidance for formatting them.



## GENERALIZE NEW INFORMATION (GNI)

### Learning/Step Activity Two– Define Memo Types

Method of Instruction:

Facilitator to Student Ratio: 1:25

Time of Instruction: 20 minutes

Media:

**Facilitator Note:** Utilize the SMTC basketball rocket round as a mental break when necessary.

**Facilitator State:** You should have read AR 25-50 as part of your homework last night. According to AR 25-50, when would you use a memorandum?

**Facilitator Note:** Allow students time to respond to the question. After the students had a chance to respond, use the Expected Response below to supplement their answers.

**Expected Response:** (Ref: AR 25-50, Chapter 2-2) The memorandum is used for correspondence sent outside the headquarters, command, installation, activities, units, or similarly identifiable organizational elements within DOD; for routine correspondence to Federal Government agencies outside DOD; for notification of personnel actions, military or civilian; for showing appreciation or commendation to DA Civilians and

Soldiers; and for internal correspondence within the same headquarters, command, or similarly identifiable organizational elements.

**Facilitator State:** Now that we have discussed the uses for a memo, what are the different types of memos that you may need to use and what is the purpose of each type of memo?

**Memorandum “THRU”.** A Memorandum “THRU” is used to let other personnel know what is being done and gives them the opportunity to comment, especially if their comment will affect the action. Use this format when an action must be endorsed by several recipients, in turn.

**Memorandum of understanding (MOU).** Use an MOU to describe broad concepts of mutual understanding, goals, and plans shared by the parties when no transfer of funds for services is anticipated.

**Memorandum of agreement (MOA).** Use an MOA to establish and document common legal terms that establish a “conditional agreement” where transfer of funds for services is anticipated. MOAs do not obligate funds, but establish the terms for future services.

**Memorandum For Record (MFR).** Use the MFR to show the authority or basis for an action taken. You may also use the MFR to document informal meetings or telephone conversations when official business was conducted.

**Q:** What are some specific examples of a situation in which you would use each type of memo?

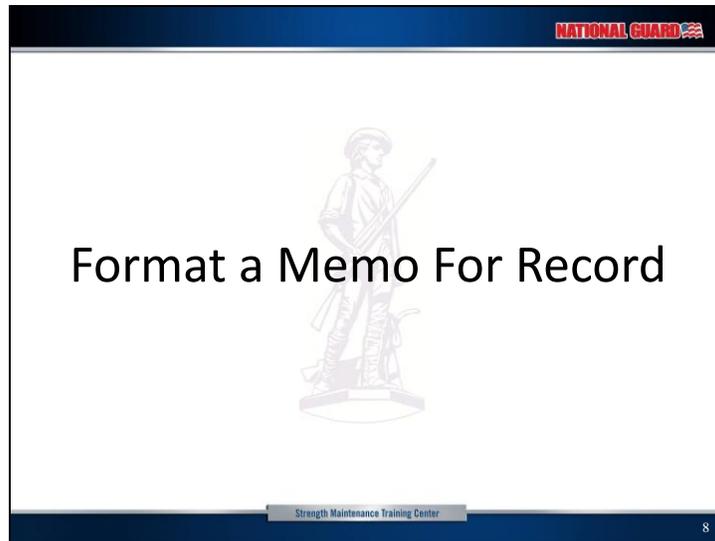
**Facilitator Note:** Allow students to respond and discuss the specific situations in which they were required to write memos and the type of memo they used for each situation.

**Possible Examples Include:**

A Memorandum THRU to request funds for an event.

A Memorandum for Record

A Memorandum for student records/transcripts



## **Learning/Step Activity Two – Format a Memo For Record**

Method of Instruction:

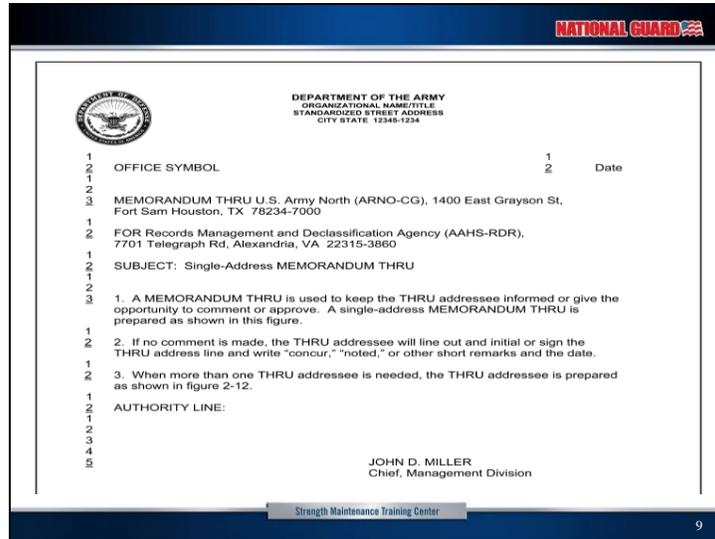
Facilitator to Student Ratio: 1:25

Time of Instruction: 25 minutes

Media:

**Facilitator State:** Now that we completed the memo exercise and discussed the importance of developing your writing skills, we will take a closer look at the proper way for format a Memo for Record.

**Facilitator Note:** Advance to the next slide to display the sample memo.



**Slide 6 - Learning/Step Activity Two – Format a Memo For Record.**

**Facilitator Note:** At this point, have the student refer back to the memo they created at the beginning of this lesson.

**Facilitator State:** We will use the memos you started at the beginning of the lesson along with the sample memo on the slide to illustrate the key points to formatting a memo.

**Facilitator Ask:** How many of you had a memo that looked like this one? If not, what was the difference between yours and the example on the screen?

**Key Points:**

- **Office Symbol:** Type the office symbol on the second line below the seal. The office symbol identifies the writer’s office (for example, DAPE-PRR).
- **Date:** The date may be typed or stamped. Place the date on the same line as the office symbol flush with the right margin. Express dates in the following formats: 1 January 2013 or 1 Jan 13. Use four digits for the year only when the month is spelled out.

- **Memorandum Thru:** Type the Memorandum Thru line on the third line below the office symbol.
- **For Line:** Type the For Line on the second line below the Memorandum Thru line.
- **Subject:** Type the subject line on the second line below the last line of the address. Use only one subject and write the subject in ten words or less, if possible. Avoid using abbreviations in the subject line. However, if the subject needs more than ten words, limit the number of words by using commonly recognized authorized acronyms; DA, DOD, FY, and HQDA, for example.
- **Body:**
  - Begin the text on the third line below the last line of the subject.
  - Begin the memorandum with a short, clear purpose sentence.
  - Put the recommendation, conclusion, or most important information (the main point) next. Some writing combines the purpose and the main point.)
  - Single space the text with double spacing between paragraphs and subparagraphs. Single space one paragraph memorandums.
  - When paragraphs are subdivided, indent them.
  - Do not number a one-paragraph memorandum. If the memorandum has more than one paragraph, number the paragraphs.
- **Signature Block:** Type the signature block on the fifth line below the closing, beginning at the center of the page. Type the signature block in uppercase and lowercase letters. Do not use abbreviations in the signature block except U.S. Army, Jr., Sr., II, and III. Use the title “Jr.” and the individual’s full title to improve clarity. ARNG Soldiers on active duty, including Active Guard/Reserve Program, Active Duty for Special/Support Work, and State Active Duty, will use the designation “USA.” Reference: AR 25-50, 6-5, c, (12).

### **Check on Learning:**

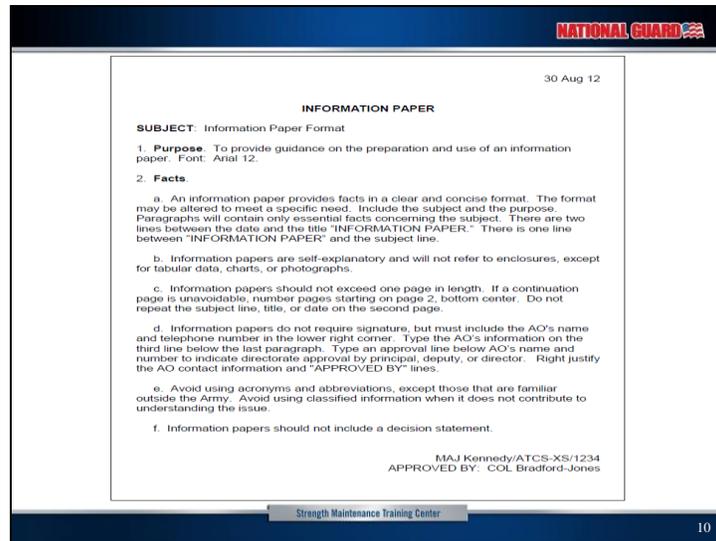
**Facilitator Note:** Conduct a check on learning using the questions below.

**Q: What are the two acceptable formats to write the date on the memorandum?**

A: Express dates in the following formats: 1 January 2013 or 1 Jan 13. Use four digits for the year only when the month is spelled out.

**Facilitator Note:** Review and summarize the key points of this LSA:

In this learning step we discussed the proper way to format a memo for record. We also discussed the value of having good writing skills. Are there any questions before we move on to the next topic?

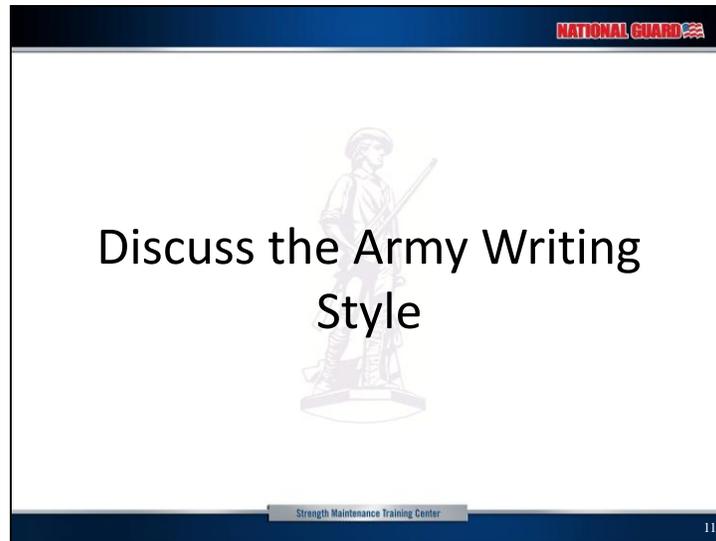


## Discuss Information Papers:

**Facilitator State:** The last form of Army writing that we will discuss is the Information Paper. The Information Paper is covered in Tradoc Reg 1-11, para 3-7. The purpose of an Information Paper is to provide the reader with pertinent facts in a clear and concise format. This slide provides the format and instructions for preparing an Information Paper. An Information Paper should have the words "INFORMATION PAPER" centered at the top, bolded and in all caps. The paper should also contain the subject and purpose as shown in the example. In general an Information Paper should be formatted like the one in the example; however, the format can be altered to fit specific needs.

**Q. As an RRNCO, have you had to prepare an Information Paper? If so, for what purpose?**

**Facilitator State:** Whether you have experience writing an information paper or not, as an NCO and a leader, your having the knowledge of how to format one will be very beneficial. As we go through this course, you will have an opportunity to develop this skill through the completion of assignments that require you to write correspondence IAW the Army's writing guidelines.



### **Learning/Step Activity Three – Discuss the Army Writing Style.**

Method of Instruction:

Facilitator to Student Ratio: 1:25

Time of Instruction: 25 minutes

Media:

**Facilitator Note:** Ask the following questions and allow the students to provide feedback.

**Q. What effect does poor writing have on your audience?**

**Q. What overall impression does it create?**

**Q. How does writing affect the credibility of the Army National Guard and you as an RRNCO?**

**Facilitator State:** People's first impression may be difficult to change about you and the organization. Your written communication not only represents you, but also the National Guard, so having effective writing skills is essential to being an effective RRNCO.

**Facilitator State:** Now we will look into the regulation and discuss the information the Army deems necessary for effective Army Writing.

**Facilitator Note:** Refer the students to AR 25-50, 1-36 and 1-37.

**Facilitator Note:** Discuss the following key points.

- Army writing will be concise, organized, and to the point. Two essential requirements include putting the main point at the beginning of the correspondence (Bottom Line Up Front) and using the active voice (for example, “You are entitled to jump pay for the time you spent in training last year”).
- The standard English sentence order, subject-verb-object, works the best. It speeds communication and helps the reader understand the main point.
- Active voice writing:
  - Emphasizes the actor of the sentence.
  - Shows who or what does the action in the sentence and puts the actor before the verb.
  - Creates shorter sentences. By eliminating passive voice, you reduce the number of words in a sentence.

**Example:**

**Passive Voice:** The test was passed by SGT Jones. (seven words)

**Active Voice:** SGT Jones passed the test. (five words)

- A verb in the passive voice uses any form of the verb “to be” (for example, am is, are, was, were, be, being, and been), plus a past participle of the verb, which usually ends in “en” or “ed” (for example, “were completed”, “is requested”). Additionally, in passive voice the subject receives the action instead of taking the action.
- Incorporate these plain language techniques to improve effectiveness:
  - Use short words.
  - Keep sentences short. The average length of a sentence should be about 15 words.
  - Write paragraphs that, with few exceptions, are no more than 10 lines.
  - Avoid jargon.
  - Use “I,” “you,” and “we” as subjects of sentences instead of this office, this headquarters, this command, all individuals, and so forth.

- Write one-page letters and memorandums for most correspondence. Use enclosures for additional information.

**Review Summary:**

In this learning step we discussed what the Army considers effective writing IAW AR 25-50, including the difference between active and passive voice. I have a few questions for you before we move on.

**Check on Learning:**

**Q: Where should the signature block be located on a memo?**

A: On the fifth line below the closing, beginning at the center of the page.

**Q. What is the benefit of writing in active voice compared to passive voice?**

- It speeds communication and helps the reader understand the main point. It shows who or what does the action in the sentence and puts the actor before the verb.

**Q: Is the following sentence an example of active or passive voice? The recruit was enlisted by SFC Smith.**

A: Passive.

**Q. How would you change that sentence to active voice?**

A. SFC Smith enlisted the recruit.



## REVIEW AND SUMMARY

Method of Instruction:  
Facilitator to Student Ration: 1:25  
Time of Instruction: 20 minutes  
Media: PowerPoint

## DEVELOP

**Facilitator Note:** Have the students open their memorandum from the Concrete Experience. Discuss as a group what were the common errors. Have them discuss briefly as a group the major errors that need corrections. Go over in class having each group describe the number one issue that they had. If another group already listed that issue, then have them list another issue.

**Facilitator Note:** Facilitate a discussion on what works best and what does not work for the students, focus on the Memorandum the Students wrote at the as the Concrete Experience when asking the following questions. Also allow Students to discuss real world scenarios related to the following topics:

Ensuring memos are properly formatted. Do you use templates?

Do you double check formatting before signing the memo?

What is the benefit of having a battle buddy read it to check for errors in grammar, spelling, or formatting?

**APPLY**

**Note:** Give the Students 5-10 minutes to make corrections to their memorandum.

**State:** Students will have assignments due later in the course that will give an opportunity to utilize these skills.

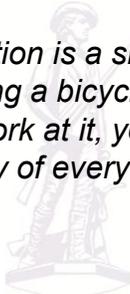


## **Review/Summary**

In this lesson, we discussed the importance of Developing Army Writing Skills. We discussed various aspects of effective writing, including writing professional e-mails, information papers, the proper formatting of memos, and writing in a clear and concise manner, as well as the difference between active and passive voice. We will be utilizing this information again during the blocks of instructions on Construct a Target Market Plan and Evaluate a Unit Retention Environment.

**NATIONAL GUARD** 

*“Communication is a skill that you can learn. It’s like riding a bicycle or typing. If you’re willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life.”*



~ Brian Tracy

Strength Maintenance Training Center

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