

I.G. Brown Training and Education Center



Management Writing Guide

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Foreword

Welcome to the ANGTEC Management Writing Guide! Originally known as the Bullet Writing Guide, this document has been expanded to include Citations, Memos and Email. The Air Force has recently changed the way of writing, from bullets to narrative format. The new way of writing has changed, and updated, the way of writing performance reports and 1206's. This guide will assist you in writing the most effective and efficient reports possible.

The Air Force is implementing a new performance evaluation system. This guide explains the *why* behind the change, *what* the new evaluation system entails and suggestions for *how* to write narrative-style Performance Statements.

It starts with a straightforward PHILOSOPHY: The success of the Air Force resides in its people. To safeguard the Air Force's future, our performance evaluations **must** develop Airmen by providing assessment of performance and potential to inform promotion decisions. Therefore, we must set clear expectations about what we value, measure how **Airmen's outcomes and behaviors** embody those values and, incentivize Airmen to continue their development through meaningful feedback.

It encompasses what we VALUE: Our new system uses narrative-style Performance Statements combined with a new competency-based framework. Performance feedback and evaluations are measured upon 10 desired **Airman Leadership Qualities (ALQs)**. These ALQs represent the performance characteristics we want to define, develop, incentivize, and measure in our airmen with increasing the clarity and effectiveness of feedback. The ALQs fall under the four Major Performance Areas (MPA) listed in **AFI 1-2, Air Force Culture: Commander's Responsibilities**. Taken together, this system develops the mission-focused *Airmen we need*, while reinforcing the development of useful traits and behaviors our Air Force *values* by emphasizing Airmen's character and competence, along with successful outcomes and behaviors; it is universally designed for all ranks and AFSCs.

It requires a shift in CULTURE: Our previous evaluation system drifted away from offering meaningful feedback. The "Air Force bullet" became difficult to understand, plagued by confusing acronyms and abbreviations; it focused too narrowly on Airmen's achieved outcomes while ignoring the ways and means in which they accomplished them. Evaluating both Airmen's behaviors or actions and outcomes or results provides **a more accurate, holistic performance assessment** system. Nonetheless, the new system's success will fall to each Airman honestly and diligently enacting it to create the Air Force we want and need.

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Chapter 1

Getting Started

Imagine spending countless hours drafting the ideal EPR. You received input from your subordinate, had peer reviews, and feel proud of what you were able to come up with. Then you submit the EPR to your commander...only to have them hand it back to you, requesting countless revisions. Lack of knowledge will no longer be an excuse for not writing an effective EPR. As leaders in our Air Force, we must strive to get it right the first time, whatever “it” may be.

All subordinates deserve a supervisor who can effectively communicate how that individual adds value to the organization and contributes to mission accomplishment. Enlisted Performance Reports are not the only example of how to accomplish this. Effective leaders also know of the importance of well thought out and articulated awards packages. It is one thing to have knowledge of all the written communications Air Force leadership expects from us, but the ability to accomplish these things is just as vital to our effectiveness.

You will come to understand the professional writing tasks common in our Air Force. We will begin by going over how to prepare to get started writing. Then, because none of us are perfect, we will discuss some of the writing pitfalls a writer can fall into.

Now that we have a clear view of where we’re going, let’s set our sights toward setting you up for success. The first step involves preparing to write.

Getting started

Get Organized: You should create a file folder-paper, electronic, or both-for all employees that you supervise. Keep records of all accomplishments, awards, and recommendations for all those you supervise. This will cause you to keep track and be involved in your subordinates’ professional development. An excellent way for the subordinate to keep track of their accomplishments is using MyVector.

MyVector is a web-based, mentoring and development tool custom built for the Air Force and accessible through the Air Force portal. MyVector is for all personnel, to include civilians, so they may benefit from the mentoring, knowledge sharing, and career planning capabilities. One of those capabilities is a bullet tracker. This allows the subordinate to place accomplishment bullets in the tracker to be used later by the supervisor. When the supervisor is ready to write the evaluation or recognition package, the subordinate can submit the bullets as a PDF directly to the supervisor. Initial registration will require a Common Access Card (CAC) and a Social Security Number. Once registered, the Airman can log in using their CAC.

Know the Format: Performance Statements are now used for most evaluation forms. With today’s computer programs, most forms are already set up for a particular font and point size. Check the governing instruction to ensure your program is set properly.

Editing: Read and re-read the document to ensure there are no misspellings, grammar, punctuation, or typographical errors and other mistakes that would reflect poorly on you and your subordinate.

Write Effectively: You only have a very few words to grab the reader's attention, so make the most of it. Positive words and phrases leave a lasting impression on the reader. Using negative or neutral words and phrases could present a bad connotation to the reader.

Now you know how to start in the early writing stages, we are ready to continue this endeavor to make sure that our subordinates have the best bullet possible. Before we start this process, we should be aware of the errors to avoid as a writer and supervisor.

Chapter 2

Common Errors

Errors to Avoid

- Not accurate (untruthful or embellished) – This happens when the information is exaggerated. An example would be to say that your subordinate repaired twenty broken units when, in reality, he only repaired eleven.
- Too long and not to the point – When this happens writers are staying to the point. Remember, the performance statement must cover exactly what the subordinate did and the impact of their actions.
- Vague, not specific to the action or accomplishment – Later we'll learn about Specificity. When this happens, the statement seems weak and lacking information.
- Improperly Categorized – This happens when the writer places statements in the incorrect section. If the performance statement refers to leadership, it should be in that section and not in the whole airman concept.

Rater Evaluation Errors

- Harshness – Evaluating people at the low end of the scale/overly critical of performance. Supervisors who make this mistake are very strong on their subordinates and their subordinates tend to receive low grading on their evaluation.
- Leniency – Supervisors give inflated ratings rather than true assessments. Subordinates of this type of supervisor receive higher ratings than what they really deserve.
- Recency – He/she evaluates people based on the most recent performance, instead of the whole period. This happens when a subordinate gets a good or bad rating because they just did a good or bad event. A rating should be for the entire year and not a single recent event.
- Past Performance Error – This is when a supervisor rating is based on past performance rather than present performance. This past performance is not related to actual rating cycle so it should not be taken into consideration.
- Central Tendency – A rater acting on central tendency evaluates all people as average. There is no high or low rating among their subordinates, everyone is right in the middle scale.
- Contrast Error – This error happens when a supervisor compares his/her subordinates to another person, rather than on how well they performed in relation to his/her duties. Supervisors should rate according to the expectations set for that single individual and not based on how someone else performed.

- Halo Effect – When a supervisor evaluates based on one outstanding (positive) trait, the subordinate is receiving a good rating just because they had that one good performance. This makes for an inaccurate evaluation.

- First Impression Error – Supervisors could tend to evaluate based on first impression (favorable or unfavorable). Subordinates weren't given a fair chance to show their potential because they were judged based on that first impression.

- Similar-to-Me Effect – This is giving higher evaluations to people who are like the rater. “I like the Lakers and so do you, so you'll get a good rating.”

We have the very basics of the writing process and errors to avoid. Every writing process starts with some kind of draft. Since writing performance statements is not any different, we'll start drafting the performance statement.

Chapter 3

Airman Leadership Qualities (ALQ's)

ALQ's are defined as any tool that is used to measure the observable behaviors that successful performers demonstrate while working on any given job. These behaviors are the result of various abilities, knowledge, motivations, traits, and skills that an airman may possess.

ALQ's are desired because it allows us to more deliberately develop our airmen by offering feedback on both their achievements and behaviors. Results are important to document, but discussing only Airmen's accomplishments ignores their behavioral skills and growth. Future success is just as dependent upon the skills and behaviors Airmen have and are working toward as their past outcomes achieved. This works by deliberately using the ALQ's to provide feedback.

Raters should:

Familiarize themselves with the ALQs and how they relate to their ratees ahead of time.

Co-create a personalized development plan with subordinates prior to evaluation.

Document Airmen's skills, behaviors, and actions throughout the rating period.

This is done with the rater measuring Airmen's performance using a whole person concept relative to the ratee's specific rank, AFSC, level of responsibility, and assigned duties throughout the entire rating period. Remember, **Competencies** are what you know and can do; **Performance** is what you do and how well you do it; **Evaluations** demonstrate performance in alignment with Air Force values.

Airman Leadership Qualities

There are four Major Performance Areas which basically states what airmen do and how well they do it. These four areas are broken down into 10 Airman Leadership Qualities (ALQ's).

Major Performance Areas:

Executing the Mission: Effectively uses knowledge initiative, and adaptability to produce timely, high quality, quantity results to positively impact the mission.

Leading People: Fosters cohesive teams, effectively communicates, and uses emotional intelligence to take care of people and accomplish the mission.

Managing Resources: Manages assigned resources effectively and takes responsibility for actions, and behaviors to maximize organizational performance.

Improving the Unit: Demonstrates critical thinking and fosters innovation to find creative solutions and improve mission execution.

Airman Leadership Qualities

Mission Execution:

JOB PROFICIENCY: Demonstrates knowledge and professional skill in assigned duties, achieving positive results and impact in support of the mission.

ADAPTABILITY: Adjusts to changing conditions, to include plans, information, processes, requirements and obstacles in accomplishing the mission.

INITIATIVE: Assesses and takes independent or directed action to complete a task or mission that influences the mission or organization.

Leading People:

INCLUSION & TEAMWORK: Collaborates effectively with others to achieve an inclusive climate in pursuit of a common goal or to complete a task or mission.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: Exercises self-awareness, manages their own emotions effectively; demonstrates an understanding of others' emotions, and appropriately manages relationships.

COMMUNICATION: Articulates information in a clear and timely manner, both verbally and non-verbally, through active listening and messaging tailored to the appropriate audience.

Managing Resources:

STEWARDSHIP: Demonstrates responsible management of assigned resources, which may include time, equipment, people, funds and/or facilities.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Takes responsibility for the actions and behaviors of self and/or team and demonstrates reliability and transparency.

Improving the Unit:

DECISION MAKING: Makes well-informed, effective and timely decisions under one's control that weigh constraints, risks, and benefits.

INNOVATION: Thinks creatively about different ways to solve problems, implements improvements and demonstrates calculated risk-taking.

Proficiency Levels

The following is the proficiency levels for each ALQ:



Needs Improvement: Member needs further growth to enhance understanding and/or performance.

Developing: Member understands the quality and how that quality is illustrated in behavior but requires prompting to consistently demonstrate.

Proficient: Member understands the quality and demonstrates it consistently, illustrated through the Airman's behavior, forming a part of their character.

Highly Proficient: Member understands the quality and consistently illustrates it in their behavior while influencing other members in the organization to further develop the same quality.

Exceptionally Skilled: Member consistently illustrates this quality in their behavior and proactively influences others' growth in this quality at an organizational scale.

COMMUNICATING COMPETENCIES USING NARRATIVE-STYLE PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS

The SHIFT to Performance Statements:

To best communicate Airmen's performance, the Air Force has replaced bullets with Performance Statements. Performance Statements use narrative-style writing and plain language to describe Airmen's performance in each of the four Major Performance Areas without the need of extensive technical or contextual knowledge. Performance Statements should function as standalone sentences and include two elements: 1) the behavior or action taken by an Airman; and 2) the impact, results, or outcome of that behavior/action. If using acronyms and abbreviations, only utilize the approved Air Force Acronym and Abbreviation List, unless noted by an approved category.

Adopting a QUALITY over QUANTITY Mentality:

Raters are encouraged to refer to the 10 ALQs when writing Performance Statements but should not attempt to include them all. Instead, raters should select noteworthy anecdotes that are representative of the Airman's behaviors and achievements in the context of their position and

rank. This new writing style helps shift our performance evaluation culture from the impractical attempt to synthesize an airman's entire performance on one page to using representative examples that best capture the essence of an airman's behaviors and results, whether successful or not. A coherent performance statement should identify a specific competency and describe how well it was performed in line with a given MPA/ALQ.

Chapter 4

Writing Performance Statements

Extract the Facts

Every supervisor, at one point or another, has stared at a blank form and wondered where to begin. The hardest part of bullet writing is getting started, but the prepared writer knows exactly where to go to start. Remember earlier where we discussed collecting information on your subordinates? Now it's time to gather that information up and use it.

Performance Statements are the AF narrative-style of writing to communicate performance. They are efficient, increase clarity, and improve the ability to understand performance correctly and equitably. Guidance for writing Performance Statements is deliberately not overly prescriptive to enable flexibility and freedom when capturing performance.

Gather the Information: Collect all the information, no matter how seemingly unimportant. What looks unimportant today may be a key piece of information later. As you gather information and make annotations, consider the following:

Zero in on the action – Isolate and record the specific action the person performed.

Annotate the record – Determine the action with a power verb that best describes the action. (Repaired, Installed, Designed, etc.)

Measure the action – record numerical information (items fixed, dollars saved, man-hours saved, webpages built, etc.)

Link it all together – How did the accomplishment impact the mission? Think big picture here; unit, group, wing, installation, command or Air Force. The bigger the impact, the better.

Check the data – Inquire about the subordinates' work from co-workers and other supervisors. Consult any and all sources to capture all the information you need.

Categorize the Information: Now that you have gathered the information, it's time to determine what is useful and what is not. To do this, you need to ask "Is this chunk of information totally connected to this accomplishment?" If so, then deem it useful and if not, then put it off to the side. Never discard information! Despite the fact it's not useful now, it may be in the future statement. Keep repeating this process for each accomplishment. Once you have categorized the information, you will have a bundle of data that relates to the accomplishment.

So you've gathered the information and categorized it into groups that pertain to a particular accomplishment, but this is just the beginning. Now you must start constructing the performance statement.

Step 2: Construct the Performance Statement

We are all familiar with following rules. It is the same for writing performance statements, so here are some basic ground rules.

Performance Statement Writing Basic Ground Rules

Performance Statements are written into the Major Performance Area (MPA) blocks with a 350-character limit. While not an exact science, you may consider writing two Performance Statements in a single MPA, generally aiming for each Performance Statement to be around 150-175 characters in length.

After you have extracted the facts, the next step is to group the categorized items as either an accomplishment (what), the impact (who, when, how, why) and the result. When writing statements for EPR or 1206's you want to make sure that you incorporate the action, impact/result, also known as "AIR."

Two Basic Principles:

STANDALONE: Each Performance Statement will be a standalone sentence and include 1. action and 2. at least one of the following: impact or results/outcome.

READABILITY: Performance Statements are plain language and avoid using uncommon acronyms and abbreviations.

CONSIDER: Narratives generally contain a scene (context), a person, an action, and a tool/instrument (the means) used to achieve that action. Any combination of these elements can craft a noteworthy narrative.

CONSIDER: Thinking about:

1. the scope, or range of impact, a particular behavior/skill has; and
2. the quality, or depth/meaningfulness, of its impact.

CONSIDER: Compelling narratives resonate with their intended audience. They should be believable and relate to the community's prior experiences, expectations, and cultural norms.

CONSIDER: Whether an outside reader can make sense of the who, what, when, where, and why of the statement.

CONSIDER: Describing Airmen's successes and developmental needs or shortcomings. An airman may exhibit proficiency in taking initiative and fostering innovation worthy of acknowledgement, even if their actions fall short of producing tangible results. Others may need additional support suggesting where they almost reached proficiency in an area of importance to their position and how to go about doing so.

AVOID: Overly clichéd superlatives, over-the-top praise, or overly common descriptors, which reduces credibility and distracts from the specific story being conveyed.

AVOID: Overly general or vague statements. Instead, link your feedback to the 10 ALQs and identify opportunities for future development.

For high performers: focus on how they can be a future leader by discussing their desired development and the unique behaviors they possess, promising sustained, future success.

For good performers: focus on contributions, areas of improvement, and potential for future growth; identify expected challenges and focus on steps they should take in the short term to achieve success.

For average or below-level performers: discuss your performance concerns and articulate why they need to improve; provide actionable steps for them to deliver better performance in the future.

NOTE: Comments derogatory in nature or imply behavior incompatible with or not meeting DAF standards will be considered referral per DAFI36-2406.

SAMPLE PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS AT ALL LEVELS

MPA BEING EVALUATED: EXECUTING THE MISSION

ALQ BEING HIGHLIGHTED: ADAPTABILITY

NEEDS
IMPROVEMENT

Needs further growth to enhance understanding and/or performance

Performance Statement: MSgt Bailey learned a Primary Care Team member tested COVID positive, and, after being prompted, notified her Flight Commander at morning huddle, while waiting for direction on future actions to take.

DEVELOPING

Generally accepts new information and changing conditions

Performance Statement: When MSgt Bailey learned a Primary Care Team member tested COVID positive, she notified her Flight Commander, and, with direction from her leadership, her team was able to determine a plan to resolve the issue.

Proficient

Adjusts to change or ambiguity with composure to meet mission objectives

Performance Statement: Learning a Primary Care Team member tested COVID positive, MSgt Bailey responded professionally with appropriate action adjusting the daily schedule and created a new plan ensuring team coverage.

Highly Proficient

Independently adjusts to change of ambiguity with composure; empowers others to implement changes to meet mission objectives

Performance Statement: MSgt Bailey learned a Primary Care Team member tested COVID positive and, without prompting, empowered a SSgt as Team leader deciding on adjustments, ensuring team coverage and mission accomplishment.

Exceptionally
Skilled

Leverages changes as an opportunity to better mission objectives;
inspires others to be more adaptable and equips them to handle
changes independently

Performance Statement: When a Primary Care Team member tested COVID positive, MSgt Bailey independently acted to empower a SSgt as Team lead ensuring coverage, mentoring them to create/brief new plans to Medical Group for process improvement.

REMEMBER: Leaders and subordinates jointly discuss and develop a shared understanding of what each ALQ and proficiency level looks like for them in their specific position and context; this will help the member generate their own examples of how their performance reflect a particular level, creating an opportunity to discuss examples specific to the duty center, the individual, and their level of responsibility.

Your effort to understand and enact the Air Force's new performance management system, based on the ALQs along with narrative-style Performance Statements has the potential to more deliberately develop our airmen and as such the future of our Total Force.

Chapter 5

Federal Citations

Considerations - The DAF military awards program is designed to recognize sustained and superior performance demonstrated by individuals and units. Commanders use personal military decorations; campaign, expeditionary, and service awards; unit awards; and special trophies and awards to recognize meritorious or outstanding service, as well as excellence above and beyond the actions of others.

Personal military decorations and unit awards are processed using a 3-step process: proper recommendation and submittal into official channels, approval of the recommendation, and presentation of the approved award. Campaign, expeditionary, and service awards typically do not enter the 3-step process, as they are entitlement awards that are authorized based on confirmation the eligibility criteria were met through service record verification.

Recommendations are formally entered into official military channels within 3 years and awarded within 5 years of the termination date of the act, achievement, or service performed.

Personal military decorations and awards may be awarded posthumously. Refer to AFMAN 36-2806 for guidance on specific awards.

Only one personal military decoration or award of the same type is authorized for the same act, achievement, or period of service. This includes DoD and the other Military Departments' awards. Refer to AFMAN 36-2806 for duplicate recognition procedures.

Recommendations should be based on specific projects, plans, programs, or actions that are beneficial to DAF. Recommendations for awards should not become a routine expectation at career milestones (e.g., promotion, transfer, retirement) unless merited by the individual's performance.

Citation

Use the full name and rank at the beginning of the text and only the shortened rank and surname throughout the rest of the citation: - Example: First Lieutenant Jane R. Vallejo....Lieutenant Vallejo

Ensure the duty information (current duty title, inclusive dates, etc.) matches the DECOR 6 exactly.

Limit duty titles to the most current duty title (required) and no more than two others held during the award period. Identify titles chronologically; the most recent is mentioned last. - Example: "...as Chief, Records Section, and Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Files Maintenance,...." (The current duty title is NCOIC, Files Maintenance).

Do not hyphenate at the end of the first line of the text. If you must hyphenate, try changing the margin to adjust the width of the narrative.

The only abbreviations allowed are those found in the proper name of the member. i.e., Sr., Jr., I, II, etc.

Do not use dollar signs, percentage signs, or acronyms. Instead write them out.

- Example: 300 million dollars, 2.5-million-dollar contract claim, 15 percent, Airlift Wing, Air Mobility Command, etc.

Restrict recommendations to recognizing meritorious service, outstanding achievement, or acts of heroism that clearly place individuals above his or her peers.

Evaluate all related facts regarding the service of any person before recommending or awarding a decoration.

Award only one decoration for the same act, achievement, or period of service.

Recommend members for extended tour not a PCS or PCA, for clearly outstanding and unmistakably exceptional service for an extended period of at least 3 years for award of the MSM, AFCM, and AFAM. Recommend not ordering a RDP for an extended tour decoration until decoration has been written and gone through at least the squadron level review process.

Process recommendations for retirement in ample time for the decoration to be approved before the presentation ceremony, taking into account possible terminal leave.

Decorations for retirement normally terminate on the last day of the month for Regular Air Force personnel and any day of the month for reservist, regardless of terminal leave being taken.

Outstanding achievement awards only cover a short period of time with definite beginning and ending dates.

Can recommend an award for meritorious service even if the member received an award for outstanding achievement during the time included in the recommendation; however, do not include previously recognized acts or achievements in the narrative of the citation/certificate for the award.

For any recommendations based on meritorious service do submit all/any outstanding achievement awards that were awarded within the time frame of the new award.

Award or present a decoration only to members whose entire service for the period covered by the decoration has been honorable.

Only use outstanding achievement to justify decorations when the conditions for a completed period of service have been met.

Administrative Do's and Don'ts

All decoration recommendations must be accomplished using MS Word for Windows.

Enclose administrative corrections from wing/group reviewing officials with decoration package when returning re-accomplished package to the wing/group.

Prepare certificates in Times New Roman font--**BOLD** everything but the narrative and signature block:

- AFAM citation is printed directly on AF Form 2274
- AFCM citation is printed directly on AF Form 2224
- MSM citations are printed directly on AF Form 2228
- LOM citations are printed directly on AF Form 2240

Keep side margins at 1". Narrative should be single spaced, vertically centered between "ACCOMPLISHMENTS" and "GIVEN UNDER MY HAND".

The narrative text should be justified; this allows for a maximum of 14 lines (MSM and AFCM) or 11 lines (AFAM).

Do not use inclusive dates in the text portion.

- Normally, inclusive dates are date arrived station through projected departure date, retirement date, etc.; however, if previous decoration closed out after date arrived on station for current award, then current award starts 1 day after last award close out.

Do not use vague language or clichés; provide concrete information that states what the individual accomplished, how well he/she accomplished it, and the positive impact.

Divide a word between syllables only.

Do not divide a word of five or less letters, even if it has more than one syllable:

- Example: un-do, re-mit

Avoid separating a single letter or the first two letters from the rest of a word:

- Example: a-part, in-cur

Avoid carrying a two-letter syllable over to the following line:

- Example: tru-ly, real-ly

Divide compound words only at the hyphen:

- Example: self-confident; top-notch

Keep the rank and surname on the same line:

- Example: Airman Fairfield

When typing a date, do not separate the day and month. If necessary, you may carry the year over to the next line:

- Example: 18 March 1995

Use a comma before “Jr.” and “Sr.”:

- Example: Samuel Vacaville, Jr.

Do not use a comma before I, II, III, etc.:

- Example: Jerry Dixon III

Type operation names in all capital letters.

- Example: Operation HUMIT

Chapter 6

Memorandums

Memorandums are used to communicate throughout the DoD and with other Federal agencies as well as to conduct official business outside the Government with vendors or contractors when a personal letter is inappropriate. Official memorandums may be addressed to specific officials, single offices, multiple offices, multiple offices IN TURN or to DISTRIBUTION lists.

Follow the guidance of this chapter when preparing any official memorandum, beginning with these basic format requirements:

- Use printed letterhead, computer-generated letterhead, or plain bond paper.
- Type or print using black ink.
- Follow AFI 31-401, *Information Security Program Management*, applicable executive orders and DoD guidance for the necessary markings on classified correspondence.
- Use 1-inch margins on the left, right and bottom for most memorandums. For shorter communications, you may adjust the margins.
 - 20 lines or more - 1-inch margins
 - 10-19 lines - 1 to 1 1/2-inch margins
 - 1-9 lines - 1 1/2-to-2-inch margins
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font for text. Smaller sizes, no smaller than 10 point, may be used when required to control page breaks. For example, shrink the font of all text in the memorandum to prevent a page break between the body and closing elements (Signature block). The signature block is never on a page by itself.

For most documents, the guidance for the specific elements on the following pages needs no adjustments: however, for short communications, you may adjust the top margin in order to balance the content toward the vertical center of the document by moving all elements from the date to the last line of the closing to achieve visual balance and avoid a top-heavy appearance.

The Heading Section

The heading section is composed of these elements: date, MEMORANDUM FOR, ATTENTION, FROM, SUBJECT and References. Each element is described in detail, below.

Date Placement and Format: Place the date **1 inch from the right edge, 1.75 inches from the top** of the page. Use the “Day Month Year” or “DD Mmm YY” format for documents addressed to a military organization. In the “DD Mmm YY” format, the month and year are both abbreviated for consistency. For civilian addressees, use the “Month Day, Year” format. Finally, unless the date of signature has legal significance, date the original and all copies of the correspondence at the time of dispatch.

Examples:

Military Addresses-Day Month Year	15 October 2023
Military Addresses-DD Mmm YY	15 Oct 2023
Civilian Addresses-Month Day, Year	October15, 2023

“MEMORANDUM FOR”

Placement: Place “MEMORANDUM FOR” on the second line below the date. Leave two spaces between “MEMORANDUM FOR” and the recipient’s organization abbreviation and office symbol (ORG/SYMBOL). If there are multiple recipients, two or three office symbols may be placed on each line with the second and following lines aligned under the first recipient. If there are numerous recipients, use the “DISTRIBUTION” element.

- **When addressing one office**, enter the organization/office symbol in uppercase letters. To indicate the memorandum is for a specific person, enter the organization/office symbol followed by the person’s rank and name in parentheses—all in uppercase. Another option is to use the “ATTENTION” element—see guidance below.
- **When addressing several offices**, align subsequent addresses under the first address. If the office symbols are fairly short and you have several for the memorandum, you may include two or three on a single line by aligning each additional line of recipients under the recipients in the first line in like fashion. Be consistent with your format: write out all organization names or use all organization/office symbols.
- **When addressing several offices IN TURN**, use the “IN TURN” format to distribute the official memorandum to several individuals or offices in sequence. The only difference is the format of the “MEMORANDUM FOR” element, as shown below.
- **“IN TURN” Originators:** Prepare an “IN TURN” memorandum when the final addressee or OPR must see the coordination or action of all addressees. Use the official memorandum format. Type “IN TURN” in uppercase, one line below the last address of the “MEMORANDUM FOR” element aligned with the addresses.
 - o **“IN TURN” Recipients:** When you receive an “IN TURN” memorandum, strike through your organization abbreviation and office symbol, then type, sign or initial, and date. Type “Concur,” “Nonconcur,” “Comments attached” or “Comments sent by separate correspondence to” next to the date. Prepare a separate memorandum for a lengthy comment. Attach comments to the “IN TURN” memorandum if the

remaining addressees need them; otherwise, forward comments directly to the final addressee. Forward the “IN TURN” memorandum to the next address and “cc” the OPR for tracking purposes.

- **Using a distribution element or list.** When the address list is too long to include in the “MEMORANDUM FOR” element, use the distribution element or list. Simply leave two spaces after “MEMORANDUM FOR” and add “DISTRIBUTION” in uppercase letters. Include the addressees in the “DISTRIBUTION” element or on a separate page attached to the memorandum.

Headquarters or HQ: The term “Headquarters” and “HQ” are a part of the official title of units at the group level and above. Use HQ as part of the organization abbreviation and office symbol when corresponding with staff elements at MAJCOM and HQ USAF organizations. *Do not use the term “Headquarters” or “HQ” when corresponding with the office of MAJCOM commanders and vice commanders.*

Examples:

MEMORANDUM FOR 79 FS/DO (LT COL JORGE TORRES)
MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF STAFF DIRECTOR, INSTALLATIONS AND LOGISTICS GENERAL COUNSEL
MEMORANDUM FOR 42 ABW/JA 42 ABW/SE 42 ABW/XP [SECOND LINE] [SECOND LINE] [SECOND LINE] [THIRD LINE] [THIRD LINE] [THIRD LINE]
MEMORANDUM FOR HQ USAF/A4 HQ USAF/A3 HQ USAF/A1 IN TURN [This format applies to all field units when sending memorandums to HQ USAF. Air Staff and Secretary of the Air Force staff offices follow Headquarters Operating Instruction 33-3.]
MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

“ATTENTION:”

Placement: The attention element is **aligned under the address or office symbol** in the “MEMORANDUM FOR” line. The attention element is used when a memorandum is intended

for both an office and the attention of a specific person in that office. The format of the attention element is to place “ATTENTION:” or “ATTN:” or “THROUGH:” with the abbreviated rank and last name **in uppercase** on the line immediately below the “MEMORANDUM FOR” line.

Example:

MEMORANDUM FOR 36 FS/DO ATTENTION: MAJ JONES

“FROM:”

Placement: Place “FROM:” in uppercase, flush with the left margin, on the **second line below** the last line of the MEMORANDUM FOR element (or the ATTENTION element, if used). After the “FROM:” element, leave two spaces followed by the organization abbreviation and office symbol (ORG/SYMBOL) of the originator.

Contents: If the complete mailing address is printed on the letterhead or if all recipients are located on the same installation as the originator, then only a single line FROM element consisting of the organization abbreviation and office symbol is used.

If the complete mailing address is not printed on the letterhead or if the recipients are on another installation, then the FROM element contains the full mailing address of the originator. This enables recipients to easily prepare and address return correspondence.

- The *first* line of the FROM element includes the organization abbreviation and office symbol separated by a virgule and typed in uppercase.
- The *second* line of the FROM element is the delivery address of the originator in upper and lower case.
- The *third* line of the FROM element includes the city, state and ZIP+4 code (without a comma between the city and state). For some installations, the city or installation name may be used interchangeably, as shown in the examples, below. Consult your local United States Post Office for details. The standard format for spacing between the state abbreviation and the ZIP code is two spaces.

Examples:

FROM: 20 FW/CC	[Sender and receiver on same installation]
FROM: HQ SOC/CC	[Sender and receiver on different installations]
125 Chennault Circle	
Montgomery AL 36112-6430	[City State option]

FROM: HQ SOC/CC [Sender and receiver on different installations] 125 Chennault Circle Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6430 [Installation State option]
--

“SUBJECT:”

Placement: In all uppercase letters place “SUBJECT:”, flush with the left margin, on the **second line below** the last line of the FROM element. After “SUBJECT:”, type two spaces followed by the title; capitalize the first letter of each word except articles, prepositions and conjunctions. *Be brief and clear to focus readers*; if you need a second line, align it under the first word of the subject.

- When writing about an individual/employee who is not the addressee, include rank/grade and full name in the subject line. If you refer to the person again in the text of the memorandum, use only the rank/grade and surname.
- Do not include names in the subject line when writing about two or more individuals.
- When writing about several people, state their full names with rank/grade in the text of the memorandum the first time the names appear.
- SUSPENSE items: Include the suspense date in the subject line by typing “SUSPENSE:” or “SUSP:” with the date in parentheses after the title. If additional information for the suspense is necessary, include it in a separate paragraph—not in the SUBJECT line.

Examples:

SUBJECT: Official Memorandum Format Standards
SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation (SSgt Angela Harkins)
SUBJECT: Self-Inspection Checklist Completion (SUSPENSE: 23 September 2014)
SUBJECT: The Format for a Subject Line That is Too Long for a Single Line Must Wrap and be Aligned Under the First Word of the Subject in the Subject Line

“References”

Placement: There are two options for placement of the references element—within the subject line or below the subject line. Cite a single reference to a communication or a directive in parentheses immediately after the subject title. For two or more references, type “References:” on the second line below the last line of the SUBJECT element. Capitalize the first letter of every word except articles, prepositions and conjunctions.

Citation Format: In general, identify references within the DoD by organization, type of communication, date and title. The organization and type of document within the DoD are

included in the document's identification (e.g., an AFMAN is an Air Force Manual; a DoDD is a DoD Directive) and need not be written out in the "References" section. For referencing commercial publications, use the notes entry format from AU-1 *Style and Author Guide* or use *The Chicago Manual of Style* (AU-1 is based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*). AU-1 is available online from the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC). In general, the notes entries include the author's name, publication title, publisher, date, and the paragraph or page number.

Examples:

SUBJECT: PACAF Work Center Standard (PACAF Memo, Same Subject, 6 June 2012)

SUBJECT: Preparation of Memorandums

References: (a) AFMAN 33-326, 25 November 2011, *Preparing Official Communications*.

(b) SAF/CIO A6 Memo, 12 October 2011, Air Force Guidance Memorandum to AFI 33-360, *Publications and Forms Management*.

(c) DoDM 5110.04-M-V2, October 26, 2010, *DoD Manual for Written Material*.

(d) William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (NY: MacMillan Publishing Co, 1989), 70.

Additional Information for References: When completing the reference list, consider the questions the recipients might have based on the memorandum you sent to them. For example, if it can be assumed that the recipient is unfamiliar with the publication or form cited, write out the title the first time you reference it. Also, you may want to attach a copy of the reference, or instructions on how to obtain it, if the reader does not have it. Finally, if the reference was not sent to all addressees previously, type not to all "(NOTAL)" after the citation for the referenced item. The table below summarizes these tips and several other specifics for citing referenced materials.

The Text of the Official Memorandum

Begin the text of the memorandum on the second line below the subject or references (if used).

1. Spacing paragraphs and subparagraphs. Single-space the text but double-space between paragraphs and subparagraphs (one blank line between all paragraphs and subparagraphs). You may double-space the text of a one-paragraph memorandum less than eight lines.
2. Numbering paragraphs. Number and letter each paragraph and subparagraph. A single paragraph is not numbered. If your organization is a part of Headquarters Air Force (the Air Staff and the Secretariat), follow the guidance in HQ Operating Instruction 33-3, Correspondence Preparation, Control, and Tracking.
3. Formatting short subparagraphs. Use a run-in method of listing subparagraphs when the subparagraphs consist of short sentences or phrases. The run-in method has several advantages: (a) it's compact, (b) it highlights ideas, and (c) it saves space. it highlights ideas, and (c) it saves space.
4. First Line of Text. The first paragraph is never indented; it is numbered and flush left, two-line spaces below the last line of the SUBJECT element (or the References element, if used). Indent the first line of sub-paragraphs to align the number or letter with the first character of its parent level paragraph. Each sub-level is likewise indented to align its paragraph number or letter with the first character of its parent level paragraph.
5. Subsequent lines of text. All second and subsequent lines of text for all paragraphs at all levels begin flush with the left margin; do not indent.
6. Punctuation. Use conventional rules of English grammar for punctuation in the body.
7. Word Division. When dividing a word, separate between syllables.
8. Quotations. When quoting numbered paragraphs from another document, cite the source and paragraph numbers in your text.
9. Suspense Dates. If you include a Suspense date in the text of the memorandum and not in the Subject Element, emphasize it by placing it in a separate paragraph.
10. Contact information. Place contact names, e-mail addresses, fax numbers, and telephone numbers in the last paragraph of the memorandum text.
11. Continuation Pages. Use plain bond paper. Begin typing the text of the continuation page four lines below the page number. Type at least two lines of the text on each page. Avoid dividing a paragraph of less than four lines between two pages.
12. Page numbering. The first page of a memorandum is never numbered. You may omit page numbers on a one- or two-page memorandum; however, memorandums longer than two pages

must have page numbers. Number the succeeding pages starting with page 2. Place page numbers 0.5-inch from the top of the page, flush with the right margin. Number the continuation pages of each attachment as a separate sequence.

The Closing Section

The closing section of the document includes these elements: authority line, signature block, signature, attachments, courtesy copy and distribution.

Authority Line

Placement and Use: The authority line informs readers that the person who signed the document acted for the commander, the command section, or the headquarters. If an authority line is used, add “FOR THE COMMANDER” (or appropriate title) in uppercase on the second line below the last line of the text and 4.5 inches from the left edge of the page or three spaces to the right of the page center.

Signature Block

Placement: Start the signature block on the fifth line below the last line of text and 4.5 inches from the left edge of the page or three spaces to the right of page center. If the authority line is used, type the signature element five lines below the authority line. If dual signatures are required, type the junior ranking official’s signature block at the left margin; type the senior ranking official’s signature block 4.5 inches from the left edge of the page or three spaces to the right of page center. Do not place the signature element on a continuation page by itself. Consider correspondence received via e-mail, copied, or stamped //SIGNED// as authoritative if the signed copy is kept on file at the originating office.

1. **First Line.** Type the name in uppercase the way the person signs it (normally as it appears in the member’s official records). Include grade and service for military members or grade and “DAF” (Department of the Air Force) for civilians. In general, avoid using legal, educational, or ecclesiastical degrees or titles. As a rule, the rank for colonels and general officers should not be abbreviated.
2. **Second Line.** Type the duty title as identified in the “FROM” element. “Acting” may be added before the duty title of a staff position if the incumbent is absent or the position is vacant. In addition, do not sign “for” or “in the absence of.” Do not use “Acting” for any command capacity or where prohibited by law or statute (see AFI 33-321, Authentication of Air Force Records; and AFI 51-604, Appointment to and Assumption of Command).
3. **Third Line.** Type the name of the office or organization level if it is not included on the letterhead or the heading. Limit the signature element to three lines if possible; however, if a line

of the signature element is too long, indent the next line to begin under the third character of the line above.

Signature

Placement: Sign correspondence with permanent black ink. Use black typewriter ribbons, black printer toner, or black ink for rubber stamps or signature facsimile equipment. See AFI 33- 321, Authentication of Air Force Records, for authentication of Air Force documents and how to use seals instead of signatures.

Attachment or Attachments

Placement: Place “Attachment:” (for a single attachment) or “# Attachments:” (for two or more attachments) at the left margin, on the third line below the signature element. When there are two or more attachments, list each by number and in the order mentioned in the memorandum. Beneath “Attachment” briefly describe each attachment, but do not use general terms or abbreviations such as “as stated,” “as described above,” or “a/s.” Cite the office of origin, type of communication, date, and number of copies (in parentheses) if more than one. Include the subject of the attachment if the receiver will not get copies of attachments or if the subject is not already referenced in text. For classified attachments, show the assigned classification symbol in parentheses. Send a copy of the memorandum when you send the attachment (first example, below). If sending an attachment separately, type “(sep cover)” after the attachment label (see example, below). Do not divide attachment listings between two pages. If the listing is too long, type “Attachments: (listed on next page),” and list the attachments on a separate page.

Courtesy Copy Element (“cc:”)

Placement: When sending courtesy copies to activities other than to addressee, place “cc:” flush with the left margin, on the second line below the attachment element. If the attachment element is not used, place “cc:” on the third line below the signature element. List the organization abbreviation and office symbol of the offices to receive copies. When the copy is intended for a specific person in the office, include the person’s Rank and Name in parentheses after the office symbol. If a courtesy copy is sent without including the attachments, type “wo/Atch” after the office. For paper copies, circle, underline, or highlight the office to indicate the recipient. If courtesy copies of a memorandum are not signed, write or stamp “signed” with black or dark blue ink above the signature block. Also, do not show internal distribution of courtesy copies on the original (or courtesy copy) for correspondence addressed outside your activity. However, you may show the distribution if one addressee needs to know who received a courtesy copy, or if correspondence is multiple-addressed and reproduced.

Distribution Element

Placement: If “MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION” is used, place “DISTRIBUTION:” flush with the left margin, on the second line below the attachment element or the courtesy copy element, if used. If neither the attachment element nor the courtesy copy elements are used, place “DISTRIBUTION” on the third line below the signature element. Do not divide distribution lists

between two pages. If the list is too long, type “DISTRIBUTION (listed on next page),” and list the organizations on a separate page.

To view examples of the different types of memorandums, please refer to *The Tongue and Quill*, AFH 33-337, pages 177-189.

Chapter 7

Electronic Mail

The Air Force has learned a great deal about e-mail since it was adopted into the fabric of our Service and these lessons remain valid today. We have learned that there are both advantages and disadvantages; that we must differentiate between personal or official communications; that all communications are more effective when they are well organized; and that there are special considerations and protocols for e-mail.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Though some communication guidelines are universal (FOCUS principles, the Seven Steps to Effective Communication, etc.), e-mail is a unique medium—it's advantages can easily become disadvantages, especially when you consider the ability to reach numerous people at once and the longevity of electronic communications.

- Three common e-mail advantages
 - It's fast.
 - It can get to more people.
 - It's paperless.
- Three common e-mail disadvantages
 - It's fast ... but a quickly written e-mail can fan as many fires as it extinguishes.
 - It can get to more people ... but too many copies can clog the network and can be forwarded into the wrong hands.
 - It's paperless ... but leaves a permanent electronic trail; can disappear permanently with power fluctuations; and too many times we print our e-mail (on recycled paper).

E-mail: Personal and Official

E-mail may have started as an informal communication technique, but today it covers the spectrum from personal to professional. Professional or official e-mail is different from personal e-mail—it's more like a business memo. It does affect the Air Force and the rules you follow should conform to military courtesy. The same care and attention to detail should be taken with

professional e-mail as with “paper copy” correspondence. The following pages provide guidelines to help keep you on track with your e-mail correspondence.

Chapter 3 of AFMAN 33-152, User Responsibilities and Guidance for Information Systems, provides guidance on what constitutes “effective use of Internet-based capabilities,” especially as applied to personal and official use of e-mail. “Government-provided hardware and software are for official use and limited authorized personal use only. Limited personal use must be of reasonable duration and frequency that have been approved by the supervisors and do not adversely affect performance of official duties, overburden systems or reflect adversely on the Air Force or the DOD.”

The responsible use of Internet-based capabilities from AFMAN 33-152, chapter 3, specifically addresses or prohibits certain actions on government communication systems. The following actions are prohibited on government communication systems:

- Unauthorized personal use.
- Uses that adversely reflects on the DoD or the Air Force.
- Unauthorized storing, processing, displaying or transmitting prohibited content.
- Storing or processing classified information on any system not approved for classified processing.
- Using copyrighted material in violation of the rights of the owner of the copyrights.
- Unauthorized use of the account or identity of another person or organization.
- Unauthorized viewing, changing, damaging, deleting or blocking of another user’s files.
- Attempting to circumvent, modify or defeat security systems.
- Obtaining, installing, copying, storing or using software in violation of the appropriate vendor’s license agreement.
- Permitting an unauthorized individual access to a government-owned or government operated system.
- Unauthorized modification of the network operating system or configuration.
- Copying and posting of FOUO, controlled unclassified information (CUI), Critical Information (CI) and/or personally identifiable information (PII) on

DoD-owned, -operated, or -controlled publically accessible sites or on commercial Internet-based capabilities.

- Unauthorized downloading and installing freeware, shareware or any other software.

The network, like the phone, is subject to monitoring. Your e-mail is saved on back-up files and servers. Once written and sent, an e-mail is a permanent part of the electronic record.

Personal E-Mail

Personal e-mail sometimes contains shorthand and slang that would be unacceptable in a professional communication. Emoticons (facial expressions) or abbreviations are sometimes used with humor or satire to make sure the audience doesn't "take things the wrong way." They are a resource but use them sparingly. Some of them are more clever than clear, and much of your audience may only know the smiling face.

Official E-Mail

Official e-mail consumes a large part of the day for many Airmen. We can accomplish a great deal by e-mail, especially with those who are at a distance. E-mail can be particularly useful for electronically staffing official documents, ideas and initiatives. If properly managed, e-mail coordination and staffing can increase efficiency. If not managed well, e-mail staffing is just as problematic as paper folders and distribution envelopes lost in the system. To maximize the efficiency of e-mail coordination and staffing, use organizational accounts when sending correspondence to offices for coordination or action. Each MAJCOM typically issues their own guidance on the details of how electronic staffing should be implemented, and local commanders may provide additional guidelines that consider the local conditions and unit operating procedures. Check your local guidance for electronic staffing implementation details.

Official E-Mail: An Example

A professional e-mail has three distinct qualities: FOCUS, FOCUS, and FOCUS (focused, organized, clear, understandable and supported). Experience amongst the authors of *The Tongue and Quill* tells us that shorter e-mails tend to communicate better than longer e-mails. This suggests that while you must address the issue, the whole issue, and nothing but the issue you cannot write War and Peace levels of detail into every e-mail and expect any action quickly. Balance what you present in an e-mail with the audience and action you need. Focus their attention on the issue and what needs to be done—nothing more, and nothing less.

From: [system-generated user information]
To: [appropriate organizational account, individuals, or distribution list for ACTION]
Cc: [as required for INFORMATION]
Subject: INFO: Air Force Doctrine Update
Date: [system-generated date-time group]

[Greeting],

BLUF: Effective 29 Oct 13, all Air Force Doctrine Documents (AFDDs) have been rescinded and replaced by core doctrine volumes and doctrine annexes.

- Core doctrine is categorized into five volumes: Volume I, Basic Doctrine; Volume II, Leadership; Volume III, Command; Volume IV, Operations; and Volume V, Support
- Each core doctrine volume is supported by one or more annexes.
- For further information, go to <https://doctrine.af.mil/>.

//SIGNED//
WILLIAM B. MITCHELL, Colonel, USAF
Director, Doctrine Development
LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education
Voice: DSN 493-0000 / Comm (334) 953-0000
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william.mitchell.1947@us.af.mil

This example e-mail focuses readers on a major change in the way Air Force doctrine is organized. You will notice that this e-mail maintains FOCUS by addressing only the issue (F); being organized (O); using clear language (C); understands its audience of all Airmen (U); and is logical with support information used sparingly (S).

Content Organization

A typical official or professional e-mail is brief and provides information or direction clearly. Some e-mails may be lengthy but should be clearly organized so that the reader has a rapid means to find out the facts and any action that may be required. As discussed in chapter 2, the BLIND and BLUF organization techniques work well to convey a message clearly in a limited space. Recent experience suggests that the headings for the electronic staff summary sheet

(eSSS) also work very well for all types of messages—not just those requiring coordination. These three methods are outlined, below:

The “BLIND” Organization Method

When your space is limited by a form or process, the BLIND method of organization places emphasis on the bottom line followed by additional key elements. The BLIND method of organization is especially useful in e-mail communications where the content is brief and needs to be seen by “the boss” for action.

- BL = Bottom Line
- I = Impact on the organization
- N = Next steps to be taken
- D = Details to support the bottom line and any significant discussion points

While there are no set limits on how long a BLIND message can be, the point of the format is brevity. It is not unlike the content for the eSSS that includes Purpose, Background, Discussion, Views of Others and Recommendation; however, the BLIND organization technique is more readily used for quick messages in the field or office to a commander, leader or decision maker that provides enough substance to act without providing everything you know.

The “BLUF” Organization Method

The BLUF organization technique is even less structured than the BLIND organization technique. BLUF simply translates to “bottom line up front” with no set format for what follows. The official e-mail example, above, uses the BLUF organization method. With the BLUF method, the elements of the eSSS may be used to follow the BLUF to provide essential information. Use the technique preferred by the level of command for the intended audience of your e-mail. The point of the BLUF organization method is to maintain a focus on the action needed by leaders and decision makers while also providing key background information.

The eSSS Organization Method

By clearly stating your purpose, followed by pertinent background information, you can then present the discussion and views of others followed by a recommendation or bottom line. If used to organize an e-mail the e-SSS headings can be set to the left in all caps followed by the brief, but appropriate, content for each heading. The common eSSS headings, in order, are PURPOSE; BACKGROUND; DISCUSSION; VIEWS OF OTHERS and RECOMMENDATION. They are typically all capitals and numbered as the primary paragraphs (level 1) in an eSSS.

Special Considerations and E-mail Protocol

There are both special considerations and e-mail protocol, or network etiquette (“netiquette”), for proper behavior while communicating electronically on-line and on smart phones, tablets or other mobile devices. In short, there are many ways to make embarrassing social blunders and offend people when communicating electronically. To make matters worse, there is something about cyberspace that causes a “brain burp” and erases the reality that we deal with real, live humans and not just the text on a screen. Respect the netiquette and remember that the network is multicultural: personal and cultural nuances get lost in transmission. Note, some aspects of the e-mail system itself (e.g., software, gateways, and hardware) dictate some practices.

Special Considerations

The discussion so far has been general with concepts and procedures that are applicable to any e-mail, but there are special considerations to employ when using e-mail in your official capacity. These considerations will help you decide if e-mail is the correct method to staff your package, get a response from the appropriate office, and avoid misunderstandings at the other end of the electronic trail.

- Consider whether e-mail is the best choice. Face-to-face conversations, phone calls, personal letters, or posted documents to a collaborative site may be more appropriate.
- Use appropriate greetings. Address people with their rank/title when appropriate.
- Use appropriate closings. Official e-mail should close with “//SIGNED//” above the signature block to signify official Air Force information. Restrict the signature block to name, rank, service affiliation, duty title, organization name, phone numbers (DSN and/or commercial as appropriate) and social media contact information. Do not add slogans, quotes or other personalization to an official e-mail/social media signature block.
- Follow the chain of command. Comply with standard procedures to correspond with superiors. Be professional and watch what you say since e-mail is easily forwarded.
- Think of the e-mail address as the recipient’s personal phone number. If the topic is important enough that you’d call the general without talking with the colonel, then send the message to the general. (Don’t quibble—sending the colonel an info copy of the message doesn’t count as following the chain of command.)
- Get approval before sending to large groups or the public. Check local policies for the proper permission you must obtain before using large e-mail distribution lists. Excessive

e-mail sent to large distribution lists can waste a great deal of time. E-mail sent to the general public must still be cleared through proper Air Force channels.

- Classified material. Classified material should never be stored or transmitted on an unclassified computer network or system.

Rules for the Electronic Communications Network: Netiquette

The special considerations, above, incorporated into a general set of rules for electronic communications on the network, sometimes called network etiquette or “netiquette.”

Rule #1: Be Clear and Concise

- Filter information to provide what is necessary, not necessarily everything you know. Whether the sender is initiating, replying to, or forwarding an e-mail, it is the sender's responsibility to delete extraneous information and summarize necessary information near the beginning of the e-mail prior to submission.
- The “Subject” line must communicate your purpose succinctly and be specific. A specific, clear, and succinct subject line will help others locate your message later.
- Lead with your most important info. If your goal is to answer a question, then paste the question on top for clearer understanding.
- Use topic sentences if the e-mail has multiple paragraphs. Consider using the e-SSS organization method. Shorter e-mails are likely to benefit from the BLUF or BLIND organization methods.
- Be brief and stick to the point. Follow all the basic rules for drafting clear and concise messages. Clear messages are even more important in e-mail because we get so many every day. Address the issue, the whole issue, and nothing but the issue. Try to get your message into 24 lines or less—the typically viewing area on many computers.
- Use bold, italics or color to emphasize key sentences. If your e-mail doesn't allow these, a common method uses asterisks to provide emphasis of the *key points.*
- Choose readable fonts. Times New Roman and Arial fonts in 12 points or larger are easily readable. Save the script fonts for your signature.
- Spell check. Always spell check the e-mail before sending.

Rule #2: Watch Your Tone

- Be polite. Treat others as you want to be treated. Use tact; then use more tact. Then, for good measure, use more tact. Think of the message as a personal conversation. If you were face to face, would you say the same words and be as abrupt? If not—rewrite the message with a more positive tone.
- Be careful with humor, irony and sarcasm. Electronic postings can be perceived much more harshly than they are intended, mainly because you cannot see body language, tone of voice and other nonverbal signals that make up 90 percent of interpersonal communications. Positive enthusiasm can be easily mistaken for angry defiance when you use capital letters, exclamation points, and strong adjectives and adverbs.
- DON'T SHOUT. Do not write in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS—it's the e-mail version of shouting and it's considered very rude.
- Keep it clean and professional: E-mail is easily forwarded. Harassing, intimidating, abusive or offensive material is obviously unacceptable but aim for a higher standard. If you wouldn't want it posted on the office bulletin board; it doesn't belong in an e-mail.
- Don't send in haste and repent at leisure. E-mail can get you into trouble—its informality encourages impulsive responses, but your words can be printed out and forwarded. If you're really mad about an issue, go ahead and draft an e-mail, but don't send it until you calm down and read it over. Never flame! If you do, be prepared to apologize.

Rule #3: Be Selective About What Messages You Send

- Don't discuss controversial, sensitive, official use only, classified, personal, privacy act or unclassified information requiring special handling of documents over e-mail. You just may one day see yourself on CNN or America's Most Wanted.
- Remember Operational Security (OPSEC). OPSEC is a continuous analytical process which involves identifying sensitive information, recognizing that information could be valuable to an adversary, and making changes in the way we do things to reduce our risk that the information will be compromised. Even unclassified information, when brought together with other information, can create problems in the wrong hands. The rash of hacking events in the news emphasizes the need for good OPSEC and COMPUSEC.
- Don't create or forward junk mail or chain letters.
- Don't use e-mail for personal ads.
- Don't fire or promote by e-mail. Some messages should be delivered face to face.
- Pick up the phone and call to acknowledge receipt of important or time-sensitive e-mail

instead of replying to the sender via e-mail. Face-to-face communication is sometimes still the best means to communicate.

Rule #4: Be Selective About Who Gets the Message

- Target e-mail messages to only those individuals or organizations that need the information. Consciously choose recipients of original messages, forwards or replies.
- Use “reply all” sparingly.
- Get appropriate permission before using large e-mail distribution lists.
- Double-check the address(es) before mailing, especially when selecting from a global list where many people have similar names.
- Send official e-mail to an organizational e-mail account (instead of an individual) when an organization’s answer or coordination is required.

Rule #5: Check Your Attachments and Support Material

- Ensure all information is provided the first time—attachments, support, key information.
- Check your attachments to ensure they are correct and you are able to open them.
- Cite all quotes, references, and sources. Respect copyright and license agreements ... it’s the law! The failure to cite sources is, perhaps, the most common omission. Knowing “who says so” is an important factor in weighing the evidence where a decision is needed. Cite your sources.
- If the attachment is a large file, must go to a number of e-mail accounts, or will require frequent viewing, consider posting to a collaborative site such as the Air Force Portal or SharePoint®. This makes the attachments easily available for future search and retrieval and keeps e-mail inboxes from bogging down.

Rule #6: Keep Your E-Mail Under Control

- Lock your computer when you leave your workstation to prevent anyone from reading your e-mail or sending unauthorized messages from your account.
- Create mailing lists to save time.
- Read and trash personal e-mails daily. Create a .pst file on your local hard drive to keep e-mails stored on the e-mail server at a minimum.
- Consider using Microsoft Outlook’s “Out-of-Office Assistant” if you will be unable to

- respond to e-mails for an extended period. However, OPSEC considerations should take precedence when setting up out-of-office rules.

Rule #7: Use Proper Format for Official E-mail

- Subject lines should follow the format: [Classification/FOUO Marking][KEYWORD] [suspense DD MMM YY][Subject].
 - Classification/FOUO marking are only included if required.
 - Air Force classification marking instructions are found in the following instructions:
 - AFI 33-332, Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program
 - AFI 31-401, Information Security Program Management
 - DoD 5200.1-R, Information Security Program
- Keywords, such as those below, help the recipient prioritize the e-mail.
 - ACTION-Necessary to act (other than SIGN or COORD)
 - SIGN-Signature required
 - COORD-Coordination required
 - INFO-For information purposes only
 - URGENT-Time-critical information included
- The word "Suspense" or "Tasker" and suspense date are optional; use only when a suspense is required.
- "Subject" should be a short description of the e-mail (5-7 words is optimal) and should be updated with each send, forward or reply to accurately describe the e-mail's contents.
- Remove the "FW:" and "RE:" on forwards and replies when it does not add value.
- Sample subject lines with Keywords, Suspense Dates and Subjects.
 - ACTION: Suspense: 14 Dec 10; Deliver E-mail Policy to DS for Signature
 - INFO: Plans and Programs Meeting Minutes
 - SIGN: Suspense 14 Dec 10; Congratulatory Letter for Capt LaJonah

- Consider using the Bottom-Line Up Front (BLUF) format as the first paragraph.
- E-mail body should:
 - Succinctly capture critical information and describe the issue.
 - Describe the status and actions taken.
 - Clearly state expected and requested actions when appropriate.
 - For forwards and replies: if the string of previous e-mail forwards or replies does not add value, remove them from the message.

Rule #8: Use Organizational E-Mail Accounts

- Organizational Mailboxes (OMs) are shared e-mail accounts specific to an organization. Personnel associated with organizational units should be provided access to the respective OMs. OMs should exist at each level of the organization (e.g., directorate, division, branch, flight, or element).
- Distribution Lists (DLs) are specific groups of e-mail addresses and/or other distribution lists aggregated into one named list. When sending e-mail to a DL, every individual in the list, or sub-list, receives a copy of the e-mail. Send e-mail to DLs sparingly.
- When communicating information to an organization, OMs are preferred to DLs. Each organization is then responsible for determining how to manage the e-mails in its mailbox and notifying its personnel accordingly.
- E-mail sent on behalf of an office or organization is official correspondence and should be filed and maintained in an approved file structure. Consult AFMAN 33-363, Management of Records, or your organization's Functional Area Records Manager for records management procedures.

Conclusion

In this guide, we traversed through the process of writing effectively in the Air Force. We began with how to get started, including how to get organized, knowing the format, editing, and writing effectively. To help you avoid making some common mistakes, we went over some common errors found in performance statement writing and supervisors. Then we moved into the Airman Leadership Qualities and how to write Performance Statements. From there, guidance for writing Federal Citations was covered. Next, the basics of writing memorandums and emails were covered.

Every day, there are Airman accomplishing great things for their unit, wing, command, and Air Force. When it comes time to recognize them for their efforts, it is up to the supervisor to accurately portray their dedication and commitment. Don't be the one who falters in this endeavor. Do your homework and ensure your airmen get everything they deserve.

Everyone deserves a supervisor who can clearly show how their actions have impacted the organization and contributed to mission accomplishment. At the beginning of this guide, I wanted you to put yourself in the shoes of the person who got their EPR back bleeding in red marks because it was that bad after they thought it was good to go. You might have been confused and frustrated, but that is not going to happen anymore. Now you have the tools to be an effective writer and to properly reward your people.

ATTACHMENT 1: RECOMMENDED ACTION WORDS

Achieved	Evaluated	Projected
Acquired	Executed	Proved
Activated	Exhibited	Promoted
Administered	Expanded	Provided
Advised	Expedited	Published
Alerted	Extracted	Purchased
Allocated	Facilitated	Qualified
Analyzed	Forecasted	Quantified
Anticipated	Formed	Realigned
Appointed	Formulated	Recognized
Appraised	Framed	Recommended
Approved	Generated	Reconciled
Arranged	Guided	Recruited
Assessed	Hired	Redesigned
Assisted	Identified	Reduced
Attained	Implemented	Rejected
Audited	Improved	Regulated
Augmented	Increased	Related
Averted	Initiated	Renegotiated
Avoided	Inspected	Renewed
Bought	Instigated	Reorganized
Budgeted	Instilled	Reported
Built	Instructed	Researched
Captured	Interpreted	Resolved
Centralized	Interviewed	Reviewed
Chaired	Introduced	Revised
Channeled	Invented	Revitalized
Clarified	Investigated	Saved
Commanded	Launched	Scheduled
Communicated	Led	Selected
Conceived	Liquidated	Sensitized
Contributed	Localized	Settled
Controlled	Located	Simplified
Convened	Maintained	Sold
Converted	Managed	Solidified
Coordinated	Marketed	Solved
Corrected	Mastered	Specified
Counseled	Maximized	Standardized
Created	Mediated	Stimulated
Cultivated	Minimized	Strengthened
Decentralized	Modernized	Structured
Decreased	Modified	Studied
Defined	Monitored	Supervised
Demonstrated	Negotiated	Supported
Designed	Operated	Surveyed
Determined	Orchestrated	Targeted
Developed	Organized	Taught
Devised	Originated	Terminated
Directed	Performed	Tested
Documented	Persuaded	Tightened
Doubled	Pioneered	Tracked
Edited	Planned	Traded
Employed	Prepared	Trained
Enforced	Presented	Transferred
Engineered	Prevented	Transformed
Enlisted	Processed	Translated
Ensured	Procured	Underscored
Established	Produced	Upgraded
Estimated	Programmed	Verified

ATTACHMENT 2: HARD-HITTING ADVERBS

Actively	Aggressively	Anxiously	Ardently	Articulate
Assertively	Avidly	Boldly	Competitively	Compulsively
Creatively	Decisively	Eagerly	Energetically	Enterprisingly
Enthusiastically	Expediently	Exuberantly	Feverishly	Fiercely
Forcefully	Frantically	Impulsively	Incisively	Innovatively
Intensely	Powerfully	Promptly	Prosperously	Provocatively
Quickly	Relentlessly	Restlessly	Spiritedly	Spontaneously
Swiftly	Tenaciously	Vigorously	Vigilant	

ATTACHMENT 3: APPROVED ACRONYMS

CATEGORIES OF APPROVED ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Common ranks/tiers across all services (SrA, Maj, Brig Gen, SNCO, etc...)

Common office symbols (CC, CMSAF, A4, JA, etc...)

Common organizations at squadron and above (CPTS, AFGSC, DoD, FBI, STARCOM, CCMD, FW, CJTF, etc...)

Common weapons and platforms (F-16, AIM-9, HH-60, MILSTAR, etc...)

Common symbols and measurements (lbs, MPH, \$25B, 5%, hrs, FY23, etc...)

Below are the proper abbreviated forms for Air Force rank. Use the abbreviated rank in all signature blocks.

Airman Basic	AB	Second Lieutenant	2d Lt
Airman	Amn	First Lieutenant	1st Lt
Airman First Class	A1C	Captain	Capt
Senior Airman	SrA	Major	Maj
Sergeant	Sgt	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt Col
Staff Sergeant	SSgt	Colonel	Col
Technical Sergeant	TSgt	Brigadier General	Brig Gen
Master Sergeant	MSgt	Major General	Maj Gen
Senior Master Sergeant	SMSgt	Lieutenant General	Lt Gen
Chief Master Sergeant	CMSgt	General	Gen
Command Chief Master Sergeant	CCM		

INDIVIDUALLY APPROVED ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM DEFINITION

ABM AIR BATTLE MANAGER

ACE AGILE COMBAT EMPLOYMENT

AD ACTIVE DUTY

ADCON ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL

AFE AIRCREW FLIGHT EQUIPMENT

AFFORGEN AIR FORCE GENERATION

AFI AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION

AFMAN AIR FORCE MANUAL

AFSC AIR FORCE SPECIALTY CODE

AFSO21 AIR FORCE SMART OPERATIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

AGE AEROSPACE GROUND EQUIPMENT

AI ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ALQ AIRMAN LEADERSHIP QUALITY

ALS AIRMAN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

AOR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
APF APPROPRIATED FUNDS
ART AIR RESERVE TECHNICIAN
AT ANNUAL TOUR
ATO AIR TASKING ORDER
BMT BASIC MILITARY TRAINING
BNR BY NAME REQUEST
C2 COMMAND AND CONTROL
C4ISR COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS, COMPUTERS, INTELLIGENCE,
SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE
CAOC COMBINED AIR OPERATIONS CENTER
CAS CLOSE AIR SUPPORT
CAT CRISIS ACTION TEAM
CATM COMBAT ARMS TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE
CBRN CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR
CBT COMPUTER BASED TRAINING
CCIP COMMANDER'S INSPECTION PROGRAM
CDI COMMANDER DIRECTED INVESTIGATION
CLA CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
CLC CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT LEADERSHIP COURSE
COA COURSE OF ACTION
CODEL CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
COIN COUNTER INSURGENCY
CONOPS CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS
CONUS CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES
COOP CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS
CSAR COMBAT SEARCH AND RESCUE
DEOCS DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CLIMATE SURVEY
DFAC DINING FACILITY
DG DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE
DV DISTINGUISHED VISITOR
EKIA ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION
EOC EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
EOD EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL
EOY END OF YEAR
EPR ENLISTED PERFORMANCE REPORT
EW ELECTRONIC WARFARE
FAM FUNCTIONAL AREA MANAGER
FHP FLYING HOUR PROGRAM
FMC FULLY MISSION CAPABLE
FOB FORWARD OPERATING BASE
FOC FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY
FOL FORWARD OPERATING LOCATION
FPCON FORCE PROTECTION CONDITIONS
FTAC FIRST TERM AIRMEN CENTER
FTU FORMAL TRAINING UNIT

GPC GOVERNMENT PURCHASE CARD
 GSU GEOGRAPHICALLY SEPARATED UNIT
 GTC GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD
 IADT INACTIVE DUTY FOR TRAINING
 IDE INTERMEDIATE DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION
 IED IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE
 IMA INDIVIDUAL MOBILIZATION AUGMENTEE
 IOC INITIAL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY
 IP INSTRUCTOR PILOT
 ISR INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE
 IT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
 JADC2 JOINT ALL DOMAIN COMMAND AND CONTROL
 JROTC JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS
 KIA KILLED IN ACTION
 LOE LINE OF EFFORT
 MILCON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION
 MOA MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
 MOU MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
 MCA MULTI-CAPABLE AIRMEN
 NAF NONAPPROPRIATED FUNDS
 NCOA NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY
 NCR NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
 NDAA NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT
 NDS NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY
 NEO NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATION
 NIPR NON-SECURE INTERNET PROTOCOL ROUTER
 NMC NON-MISSION CAPABLE
 O&M OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE
 OCO OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
 OCONUS OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES
 OJT ON THE JOB TRAINING
 OPLAN OPERATIONS PLAN
 PDE PRIMARY DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION
 PME PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION
 POC POINT OF CONTACT
 PT PHYSICAL TRAINING
 QA QUALITY ASSURANCE
 QoL QUALITY OF LIFE
 ROE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
 ROTC RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS
 SAPR SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE
 SDE SENIOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION
 SME SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT
 SNCOA SENIOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY
 SOP STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
 SOS SQUADRON OFFICER SCHOOL

STEM SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS
TDY TEMPORARY DUTY
TFI TOTAL FORCE INTEGRATION
TR TRADITIONAL RESERVIST
TS TOP SECRET
UCI UNIT COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
UCMJ UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE
UEI UNIT EFFECTIVENESS INSPECTION
XAB EXPEDITIONARY AIRBASE

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