

CHAPTER 2

Memos and E-Mails

Business correspondence should be a fundamental part of any workplace communications course. Even if students learn nothing else, they should at least be able to create serviceable memos, e-mails, and letters by the end of the semester. With this goal in mind, I make correspondence an ongoing concern.

My own course requires a minimum of three short oral reports. To create an actual, “real life” context for writing, I require each student to submit a memo or e-mail in advance of the second one, informing me of the topic chosen. This not only provides practice for the student, but also serves a genuine purpose, enabling me to head off inappropriate or unmanageable topics and also avoid repetition of topics within a given class. (For the same reasons, each student also submits—no later than midterm—a proposal informing me of the topic chosen for the long report and accompanying oral at the end of the semester. That report is itself accompanied by a cover memo.)



MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 8, 2012

TO: All Employees

From line was
often initialed

FROM: Susan Lemley, Manager, Personnel Department *SL*

SUBJECT: James Mahan

As many of you already know, James Mahan of the maintenance department was admitted to Memorial Hospital over the weekend and is scheduled to undergo surgery on Tuesday.

Paragraph-breaks
segment content

Although Jim will not be receiving visitors or phone calls for a while, you may want to send him a "Get Well" card to boost his spirits. He's in Room 325.

We'll keep you posted about Jim's progress.

FIGURE 2.1 • Basic Memo Format

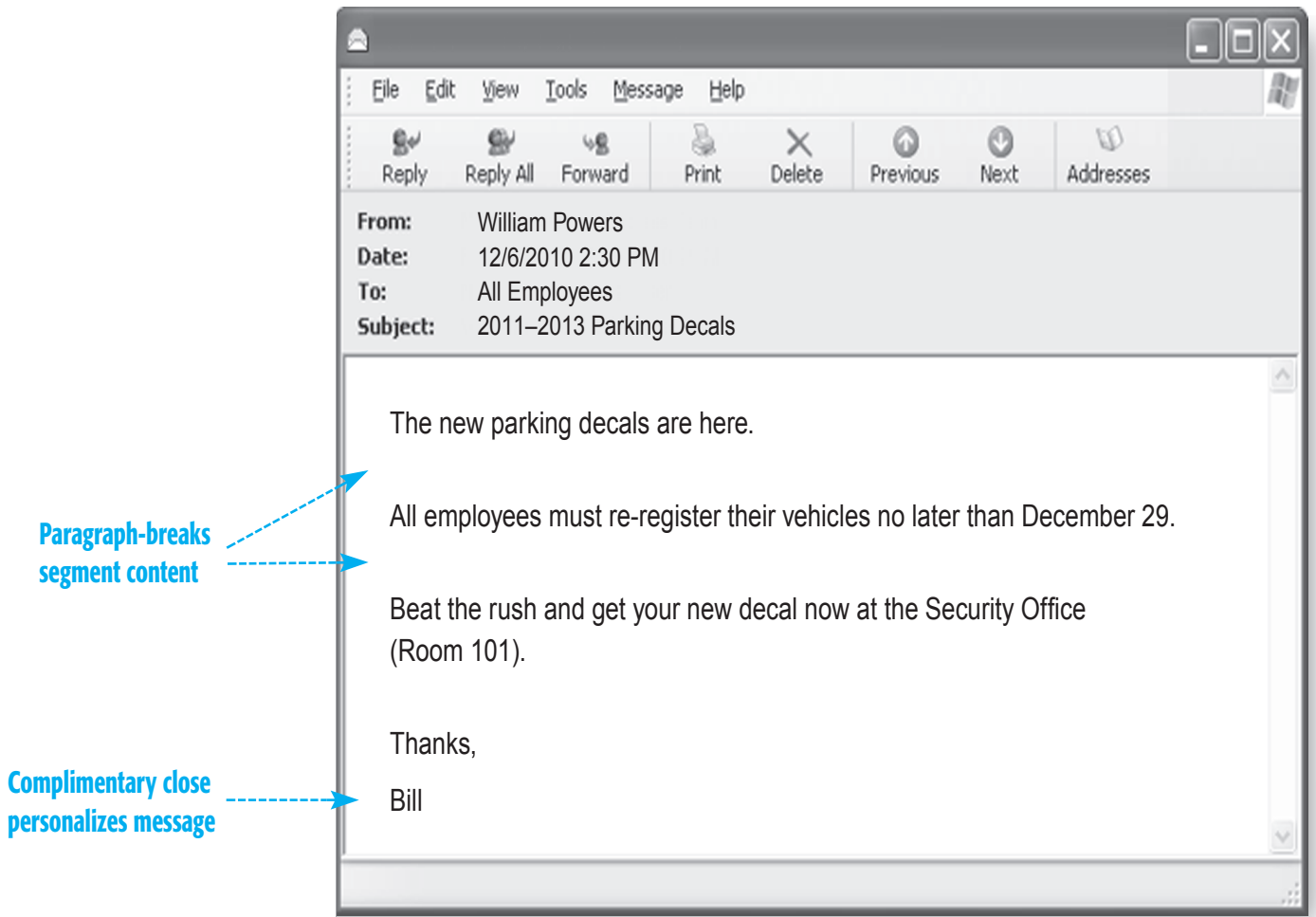


FIGURE 2.2 • E-mail

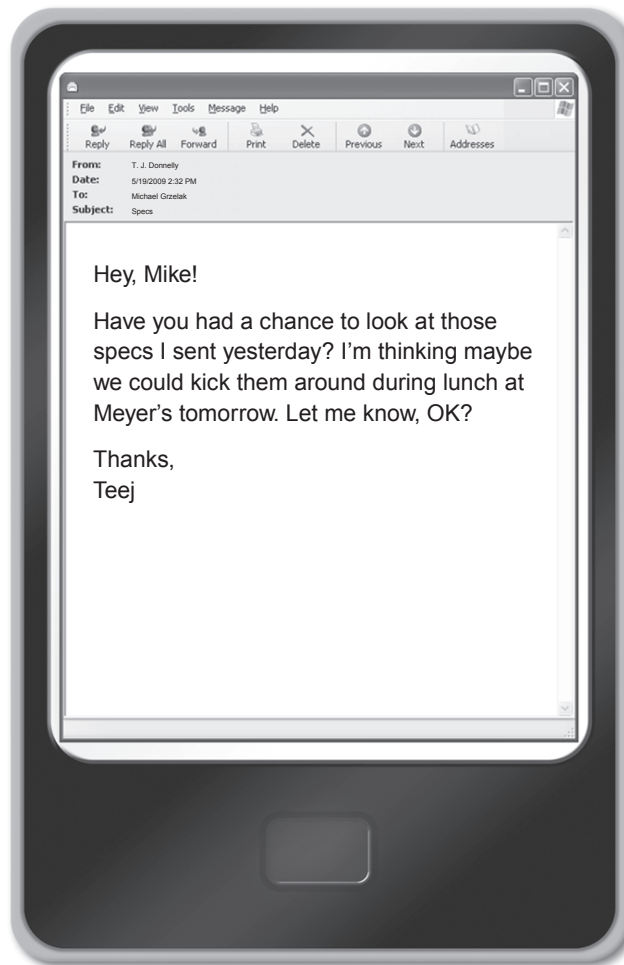


FIGURE 2.3 • Informal E-mail

Apology softens
the message,
creating more
positive tone

Signature file

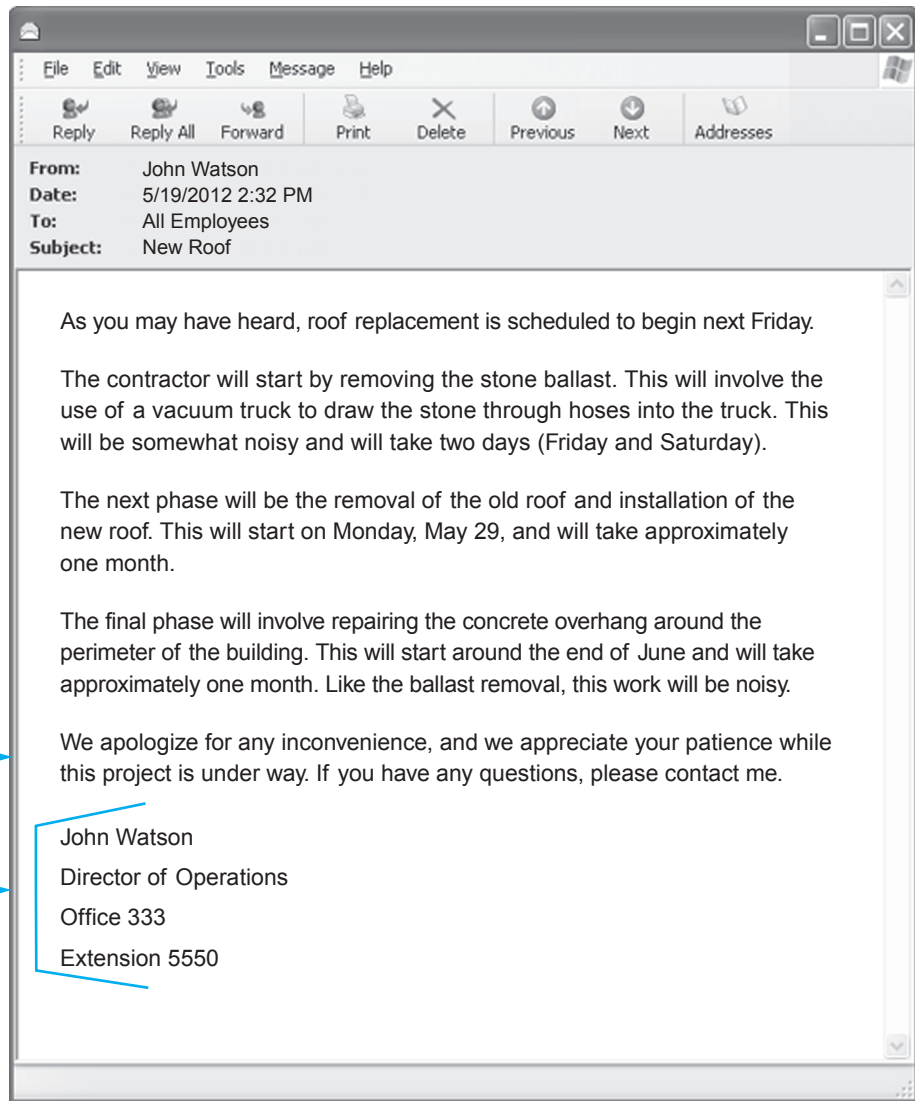


FIGURE 2.4 • Formal E-mail with Signature File



Checklist

Evaluating a Memo or E-mail

A good memo or e-mail

- ___ Follows a standard format;
- ___ Includes certain features:
 - ☐ Date line (appears automatically in e-mail)
 - ☐ To line, which includes the name and often the title and/or department of the receiver
 - ☐ From line, which includes the name (appears automatically in e-mail) and often the title and/or department of the sender; on a paper memo, the From line must be initialed by the writer before the memo is sent
 - ☐ Subject line, which is a clear, accurate, but brief statement of what the memo is about
- ___ Is organized into paragraphs (one is often enough) covering the subject fully in an orderly way;
- ___ Includes no inappropriate content;
- ___ Uses clear, simple language;
- ___ Maintains an appropriate tone—neither too formal nor too conversational;
- ___ Contains no typos or mechanical errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, or grammar.

EXERCISE 2.9



M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: September 8, 2012

TO: All Employees

FROM: Roger Sammon, Clerk
Medical Records Department

SUBJECT: Patricia Klosek

As many of you already know, Patricia Klosek from the Medical records Department is retiring next month after more than thirty years of faithful service to Memorial Hospital.

A party is being planned in her honor. It will be at seven oclock on Friday October 20 at Big Joe's Resturant. Tickets are \$40 per person which includes a buffet dinner and a donation toward a gift.

If you plan to attend please let me know by the end of next week try to get your check to me by Oct. 10.

EXERCISE 2.10

