

Soft Skills
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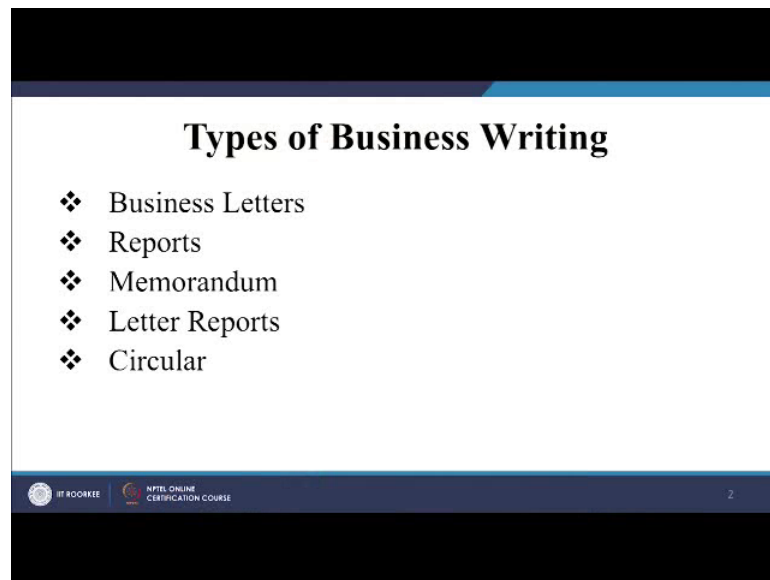
Lecture – 25
Types of Business Writing Part I

Good morning, I welcome you all to NPTEL online certification course on the course title Soft Skills. You have been listening to series of lectures and presently we are dealing with writing skills since all of you are going to compete and to survive in the professional world writing has its own importance. As a professional who has to play his part in different ways one has to arm oneself with the nuances of writing skills.

In the previous lecture we talked about the importance of writing skills and how one can use language in order to make things explicit and not implicit in a business world since your roles in a business world will be different you will come across different writing tasks you might at times be thinking does writing have an importance in today's digital world yes of course, within you are doing things on a computer. But whatever misses you are communicating in a written form it has to be written today we are going to talk about the various ways you have to show your writing skills while writing different documents, while doing with all these documents you have to take into consideration the standards of a written document keeping into consideration the practices allowed in your organization.

Now, what are the types of this business writing and what should you do to make yourself efficient at writing this documents the first.

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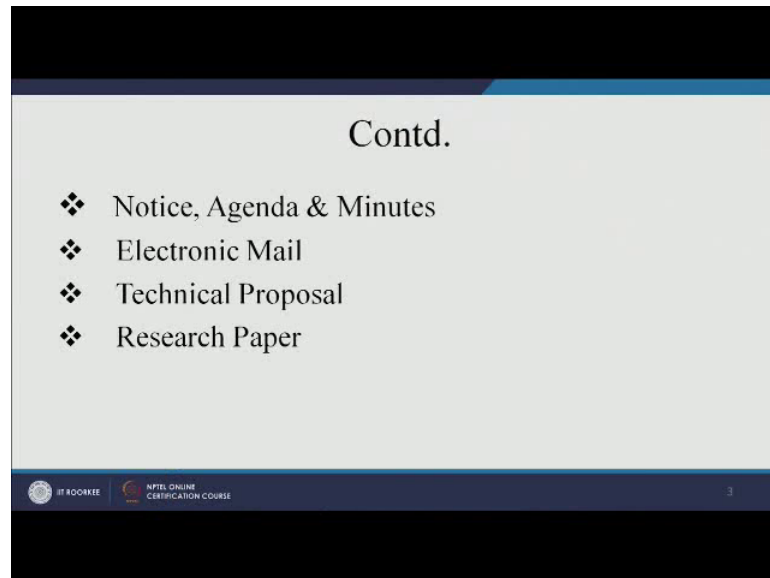
In this category comes is business letters you ought to sell things, you ought to buy things, you ought to order for things you ought to also remind people of their payments if due. So, all these will come under business letters now whenever we talk about letter on most of the occasions the youngsters especially they feel threatened as how to write a business letter. A business letter is actually a specific sort of letter writing totally different from other forms of writing since it has got a professional tone it has got a different format and since you have to write for different occasions we will have a separate discussion on business letters.

Next comes reports report nowadays has become very important from the organizations point of view as well as from the employees point of view. Now you will also have to come across different sorts of reports that depending upon the need of the organization you may have to write sometimes you might be thinking will you be asked to write a report you never know because as you travel in the world the business as you work in a business world depending upon your responsibilities and changing times you may at times have to write different things for different people and since the audience is a different naturally you will have to take due care of the tone that will be there in this business documents we shall have a delivery discussion on reports.

Next comes memos which are very common in everyday organization we shall also have a talk on memo today will be talking about this short reports or this short business

communications that you come across everyday in your organization. Then comes letter report, then there is circular, then we have electronic mails.

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Now, it is many people at times wonder in an age of mail or electronic mail do we really required to write - yes of course, mails cannot serve all purposes. Varying upon situations and varying upon people also because when you deal with people in a professional world people are different as they are different in their personal world also and you never know what sort of writing they actually prefer. Not all of them will be preferring the electronic mail hence and of course, mails cannot serve every purpose we shall also throw light on how mail should be written. Then comes technical proposal that you also have to write and then a research paper in today's talks we shall be focusing as I said earlier on smaller business communication and the first in the foremost is a memo.

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Memo Reports

Memorandum is a piece of official as well as business writing which is circulated within the organization. Since it is an internal communication it is also called inter- office memorandum.

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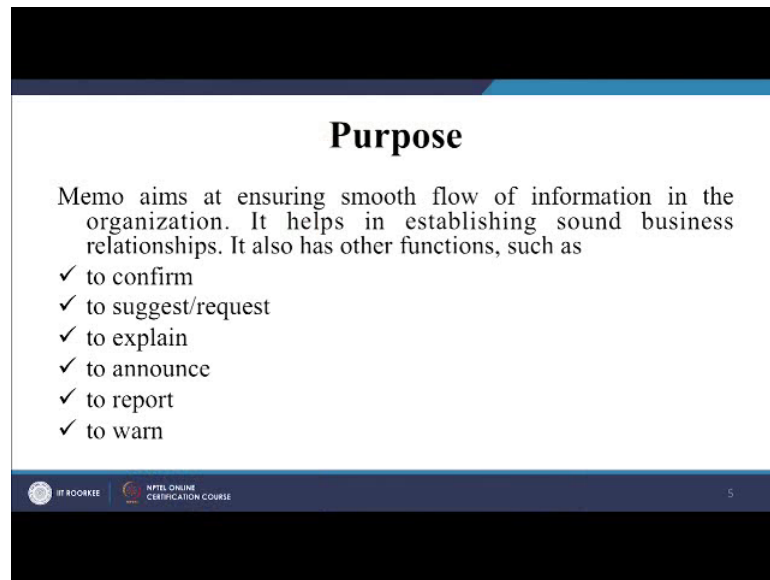
Now, you might have heard the term memo from many people, but then you must know what actually is a memo the world memo itself becomes threatening at times though this is not the case memo is actually a short piece of writing and this memo goes only in an organization. That means, it is circulated among the members of the organization that is why we call it inter office memorandum it is it can actually be understood as a piece of official as well as business writing which is circulated within the organization with the members of the organization and since it is within the organization it is not as formal as other forms of writing. The tone of a memo is informal it is informal in nature it is sort in nature and that is why we also call it inter office memorandum.

Now, here a point of caution that we have to note is that is short memo and a memo report there are some differences when a memo is written in the form of a report it becomes a memo report. Now the question is what actually has a memo to do what are the functions of a memo since memo as all other forms of communication which actually make our day to day business easier we have to understand that it plays a vital role in the smooth flow of communication since the aim of a memo also is to communicate, it also assists it also helps in creating a sound business relationship.

Now, who should write a memo and to whom? Now though as we said earlier the just the name of the memo makes people threatened we have heard people saying he has got a memo. Now when they say like this they actually mean that perhaps there is some sort of

anger there is some sort of negativity involved with a memo though this is not the case. At times of course, it may actually be served just to warn employees, but not in all the situations memo is a warning or a threatening letter memo has different purposes memos can confirm.

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Purpose

Memo aims at ensuring smooth flow of information in the organization. It helps in establishing sound business relationships. It also has other functions, such as

- ✓ to confirm
- ✓ to suggest/request
- ✓ to explain
- ✓ to announce
- ✓ to report
- ✓ to warn

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Now, what do memos confirm? Suppose you are in an organization and you want to know about the update or the progress of a previous meeting or a previous discussion or a previous say business dealing that can be confirmed through a memo. So, the first task of a memo is to confirm it actually confirms about the happenings of a meeting or the developments of a meeting. A memo can also suggest you know when you work in an organization you will find that at times there are certain conditions certain circumstances where things come to a deadlock and we actually want to know what should be done at this juncture it is a memo that can suggest that can actually provide some action which can be taken. Because memo does not confine only to the purpose of threatening it also has the purpose of informing.

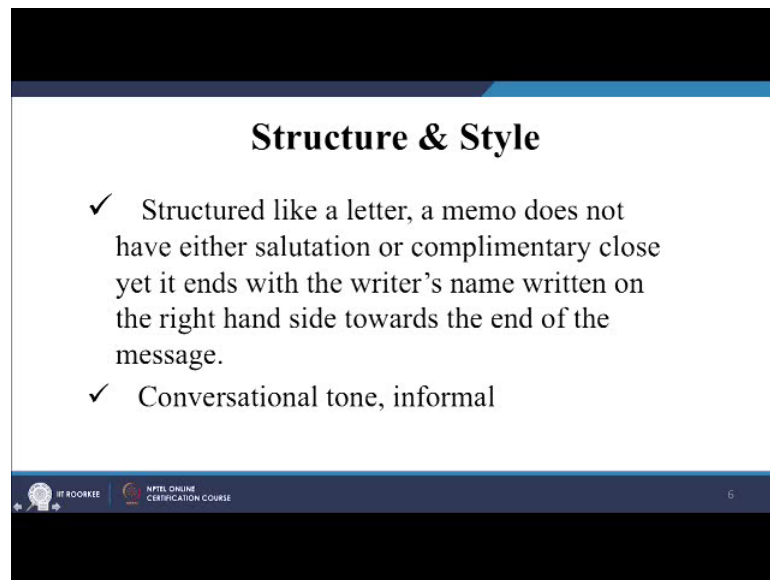
Sometimes suppose things go wrong when we are in an organization things may go wrong. So, that time also a memo has the purpose to explain why it went wrong and sometimes when this explanation is a longer one it can be written in the form of a report which we call a memo report. Memos also announce some new policies some new a product that you are going to launch, some new activities that you want to start some

new say product which you also want to develop in your own organization. Now all these things can be announce through a memo, suppose there has been a new hike suppose there has been any enhancement in the suppose there has been a change in the policy these things can be explained in announced through a memo. Memos report also as I said when you are not clear about a particular piece of information and you want to know or others want to know that also can be provided with the help of a memo.

But then memo also has a purpose of warning you know all of us are human beings at times you find it is very difficult when a critical situation comes. Say for example, many people are come late to their offices many people actually misuse the official gadgets many people at times misuse are the official facilities provided to them say for example, photocopier they at times they are also tempted to have so many papers photo copied from their official photocopier.

Now during these situations as the head as the manager or as in a position where you feel that these things can be stopped or restricted you decide to serve a memo. Because every now and then you cannot talk to the people and there is certain things also which cannot be talked face to face that is why with the help of a memo we may warn or people maybe warned, but since it is informal the tone will not be that offending. But remember one thing while you were writing a memo please draft a memo in such a fashion that the receivers do not have to take the pain to give your phone call just to know about the memo or about the language. Meaning thereby what I am focusing is the language is very important what should be the language of a memo and how a memo should be structured. A memo is just like a letter. But then there are certain differences what are these differences? A memo does not have any salutation it is it is not written the way a letter is written.

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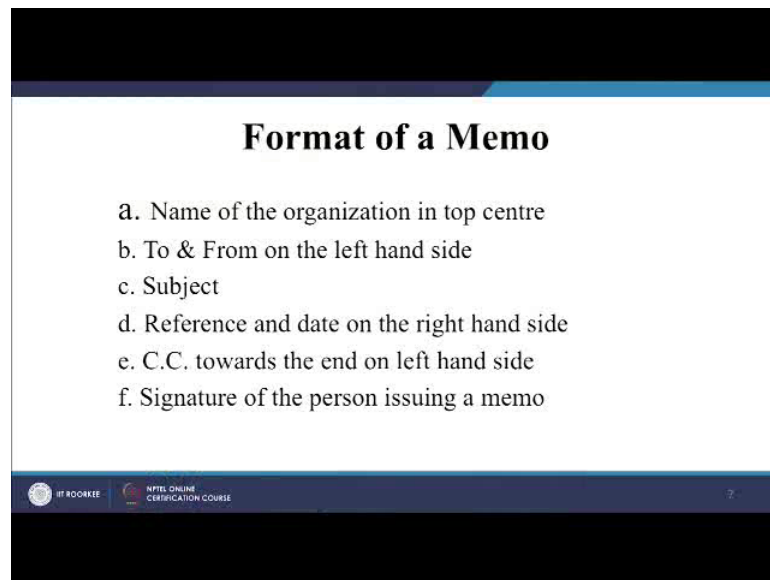
Structure & Style

- ✓ Structured like a letter, a memo does not have either salutation or complimentary close yet it ends with the writer's name written on the right hand side towards the end of the message.
- ✓ Conversational tone, informal

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We shall see when we will talk about the format of a letter you will find how important it is to write the salutation the complimentary close, but then in memo you do not need to give a salutation or a complimentary close it is actually direct it is direct though yet it is informal. And hence what needs to be done is you actually as the writer of the memo you have to write only your name at the end of the memo. Of course, memo has to be short, but it has to be very specific it has to be to the point and the writers name is written on the right hand side at the end of the message and since in many situations we have seen because every organization has its own style of writing a memo you will find that many organizations have got a memo format as well and on that memo format the letter head is already placed in the middle I mean at the top middle and then they will have the to and from facility which is also be written all you need to do is you are simply to fill out. So, memo has a format and we will see the format, but remember that tone has to be very conversational and it has to be very informal.

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Now, talking about the format of a memo what should be there in the format of a memo a memo if it is a printed memo you will find that it will have a letterhead by letter head I mean the name of the organization which will be there in the top center and below that it will have to and from on the left hand side. So, when you right to actually you have the audience we have talked in the previous lecture that you need to understand the background of the audience here when you are serving a memo or when you are writing a memo you know for whom you are writing. So, we have the facility of to here in the memo format, so to sometimes it is to all employees sometimes it is to employees of the labour section, sometimes it is employees of the academic section, sometimes it is employees of the finance section. So, depending upon because you know it varies from need to need. So, in to we will write the people whom we are addressing then from is from you only because you if you are writing a naturally a from.

But then here you will write your designation you will not write your name you will write your designation. Suppose your finance manager suppose you are dean finance suppose your dean administration suppose you are director supposed your direct of a particular section. So, you only have to write your designation. Next comes the right hand side what should be written on the right hand side. Reference and date you write the day reference and the date on the right hand side because you know whenever we write a memo either we are writing it for the first time or we are writing in response to up earlier to an earlier memo which has been received. Now the reference number is to be given

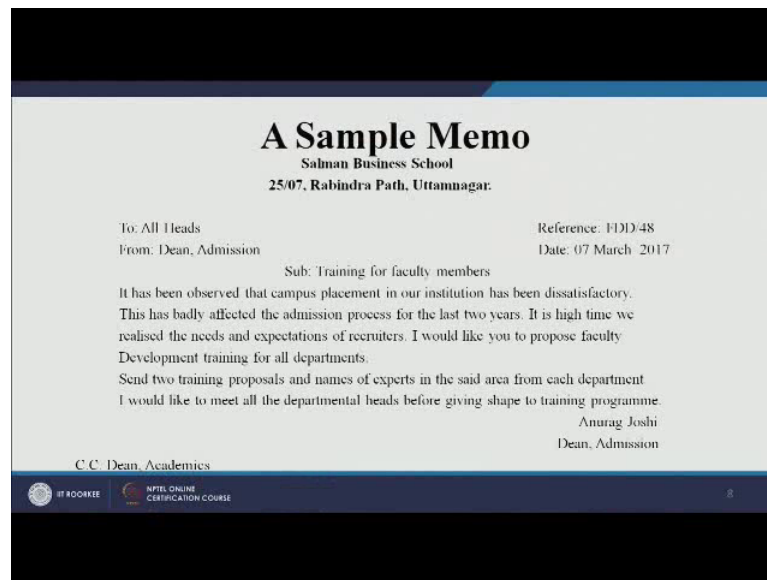
because you know it is a continuous process of sending and receiving information that is why you need to write the reference number and the date. Next to that will be the subject line it is it is very important that you write the subject line and the subject line is to be written in the middle.

So, nowadays people are very busy indeed you will find yourself you do not have much time at your disposal. So, now, when a memo comes of course, though at times it appears it is threatening, but you would like to know what is it all about you know peoples are losing patience like anything that cannot read the entire content to sometimes or the other because if they might have attended a previous meeting or they might have discussed previously with your bosses or what so ever. So, by the reference by the subject they would come to know what this memo is all about that is why you need to make the subject line very explicit and next to the subject line you start, but while you start you will start without any salutation.

You will straight way come to the point and then you will start what you what is there I mean when you start in the very first line you will perhaps tell about the problem you will actually express the problem and then in the lines to come you will be talking about what I mean you will be explaining the problem, but not explaining in a very longer way it will be in a very shorter way and then what you want why you are giving this memo that also has to be given very succinctly very clearly. And towards the end once you have completed the memo you will put your name because you are the person who has actually circulated this memo and after that if you want that you want to circulate it I mean you want to give a copy to it copy of it to your boss naturally you will write cc at the end on the left hand side.

Now, this is the format of course. Having this format in mind you might be very curious to know how can we write because I have been talking a lot about the language part the tone part the tone has to be friendly the tone has to be informal. Yet there is some amount of formality that is why let us see a sample memo. Now if you have a look at it you will find that on the top center as I said are the name of the organization is written here, here comes the name of the organization.

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And you will find when we come down as I said it will start not with an inside address, but it will have a to and from facility to all heads I mean this is this is actually address to all heads. And then who is the writer? The writer here is the dean admission of course, when it is from the dean admission naturally he will be talking about the admission procedure or something which subject to the admission. On the right hand side as you see this is the reference this actually means from I mean this is the reference letter reference number and then the date is there.

Next to that as I said in the middle it is actually the subject nowadays even though we are living in a digital world yet we have to draft a memo even though it may be circulated through an electronic may no problem, but then this memo should tell what it is all about. Now let us have a look at the language we said that the language will be very informal. So, it begins with it has been observed I mean when the writer of this memo says it has been observed he uses a language which is actually have a sort of neutrality, but at the same time as we proceed he says campus placement in our institution has been dissatisfactory. I mean he is talking about the problem he is talking about the problem of admission this has badly affected the admission process for the last 2 years. I mean he is taking all the heads into confidence and then the tone it is high time we realized.

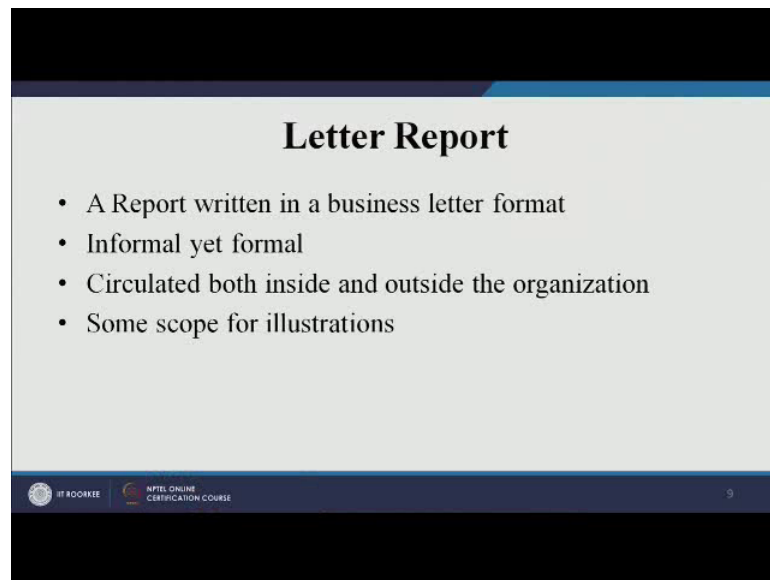
Now, look at the language. It is high time we realize I mean the sender of this memo is actually making a rappo with all these people because with their corporation only this

thing can be overcome. In the next line he says I would like to propose faculty development training follow for all departments and then he informs, he instructs and says send to training proposals and names of the experts from each area. I would like to meet, now see the tone I would like to meet all the department heads before giving safe to the training program. Now this is actually a sample memo, but this is a sample memo alone you can also draft several memos and you will find depending upon the need as I said, depending upon the exigency of the situation you will be able to draft several other memos with several other functions and here towards the end you will find it is this a memo has been circulated by the dean admission and his name is there this is Anurag Joshi or what so ever may be the name.

But then since you want that this information should be in the record that is why he also marks a copy to the dean academics he may also mark copy to the dean placements as well now this is a sample memo and I hope this sample memo will tell you how to draft other memos with other functions. Now at times as I have said since needs are different purposes are different naturally the writing also will be different and writing we have a different sort of format also. Sometimes we have a memo report and a letter report these are actually to sort versions of a report. We shall discuss in detail about the formal reports here we are simply talking about the informal report and what is the degree of informality you might have observed in the memo that I have shown you.

Now, let us also talk about sometimes because we say sometimes we need some more information suppose we want some officer to reporters about a particular event or about a particular happening, but then in a very short manner. So, he is expected to write a letter report now what is a letter report it is a report of course, but a letter as the term itself says letter report a letter report for that matter will be in the form of letter my dear friends. Now what will be content of this letter report? A letter of report though it will be written in a business letter format naturally it will have a sort of informality, but yet formality and it can be circulated both inside and outside the organization.

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Letter Report

- A Report written in a business letter format
- Informal yet formal
- Circulated both inside and outside the organization
- Some scope for illustrations

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Here you have some scope and the scope is that you will have some room here some place where you can give the details that is why since it is in the form of a report, it will it may have an introductory paragraph, it also may have some sort of discussion and if they need be you may provide also little bit of illustrations. But then remember that it should not have all the formalities that are there in a formal report say of a bigger nature say of a interpretive nature that is why when you are going to write a letter report you are going to report to your next or to your immediate boss say about conference that you participated in about the training program say for example, previously we have talked about providing a faculty development training and you ought to report you ought to provide the report how this faculty development programme went off well. So, you can take this here as a letter report and you can narrate everything you can discuss everything in the form of a letter report.

Now while doing so please remember that it also has a format like that of a memo, but now where is the difference it will also have a letterhead, and this letterhead will be just in the middle on the top it will have a date and the inside address.

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Format of a Letter Report
Dariwal & Sons, Naubatpur, C.G.

- Date
- Inside address
- Sub:
- Salutation
- Main Body
 - Introduction
 - Findings
- Complimentary close
- Signature
- Enclosure

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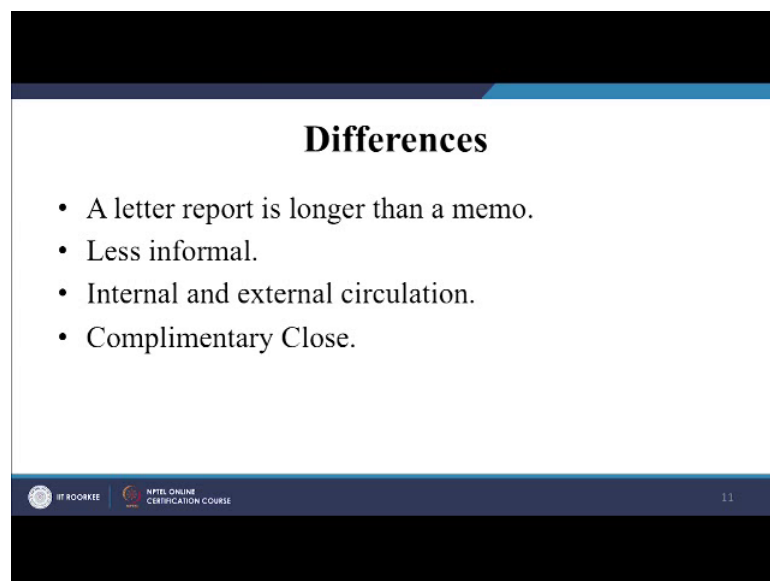
Now the question is since it is in the form of a letter it will have an inside address you have to remember this it will have an inside address and while doing. So, again you know many organizations have their different ways of a letter writing we shall discuss in detail how, but remember you have to confirm yourself to the practice that is allowed in a particular organization. Some organizations may go for a general style of letter writing, some may insist on the full block format which we shall discuss in our next lectures when we talk about the business letters.

Next to the inside address here again the subject is very important you need to write the subject and then the salutation, I mean a salutation also has to be very formal you know there is no informality here, here it will be like as you write in other letters dear sir. So, the salutation will be salutation and then comes the main body. Actually the main body of a letter report what it will do is it will have all the requisites of a letter, but in short maybe it may have 2 paragraphs 3 paragraphs. So, it will have an introductory paragraph and after that you may straight way come to the main body. In the main body just after the salutation in the main body of this letter report you will find that you will give a little bit of introduction and then finding suppose faculty development programme was organized now what were the results, so these results will show in the finding and next to that this should end as a letter and it will have a complimentary close.

I mean before you close a letter there has to be a complimentary close where you say thanking you yours faithfully yours sincerely yours truly will see, but that also varies depending upon your nature with are the person to whom you are addressing and towards the end your signature line is there. So, put your signature and in case you want to enclose or some other documents please mention enclosures and when you mention enclosures also mention the number of pages that you have because sometimes you may find to your at a surprise are that you had enclosed, but it is not there.

Sometimes you did not enclose yet it is there actually the recipient of your letter report would like to know that the findings which he has made do they have some evidence to it and that is why we enclose some enclosures. Now you also might be eager to know what are the differences between a letter report and a memo report because through memos as I have said there also you can explain there also, you can inform there also you can talk about a particular situation.

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Differences

- A letter report is longer than a memo.
- Less informal.
- Internal and external circulation.
- Complimentary Close.

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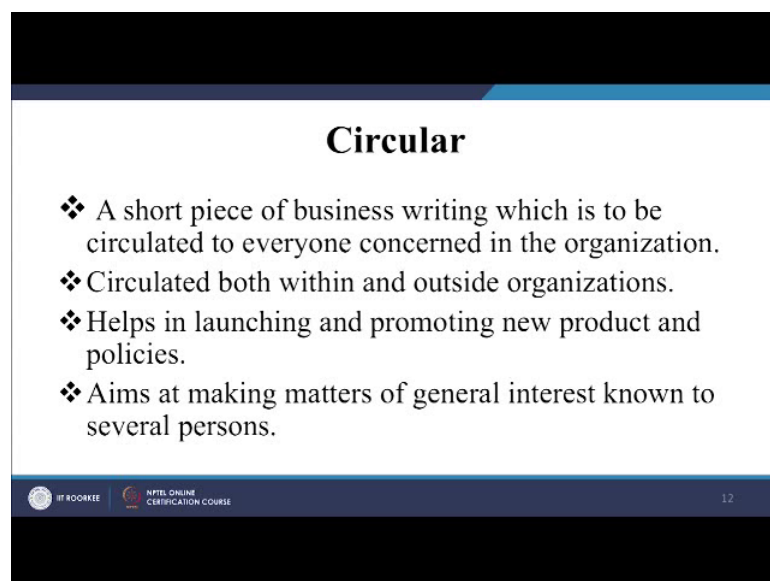
Now a letter report you will find it is longer than a memo a memo is very short because it is informal a letter report is a bit longer now the length that is that is one very important thing if suppose if a memo is one page a letter can be of two page I mean letter report it can be of two page. Sometimes depending upon and wearing according to the needs of the situation it may go up to three pages also, but remember it is so not with that long because it has a tag like report because when we talk about the report as will discuss in

the lecture on report we will see that in reports there is ample scope for interpretation and you also will find that you have evidences there to support your findings.

Now, a letter report is less informal it is not as formal as a report, but if we compare it with a memo it is actually it will be less informal. And then in it can be circulated both inside the organization and also outside the organization it is not confined only to only within the organization that is why we do not call it inter office memorandum we call it a letter report. Sometimes it may also be circulated outside the organization and then the other difference that is there a between a memo and a letter report is a complimentary closed. Since it is drafted according to the nature of a letter it will have a complimentary close.

Next to that we also come across from time to time are the word circular I mean you have heard many people saying that the circular has already come and you need to look at the circular.

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Circular

- ❖ A short piece of business writing which is to be circulated to everyone concerned in the organization.
- ❖ Circulated both within and outside organizations.
- ❖ Helps in launching and promoting new product and policies.
- ❖ Aims at making matters of general interest known to several persons.

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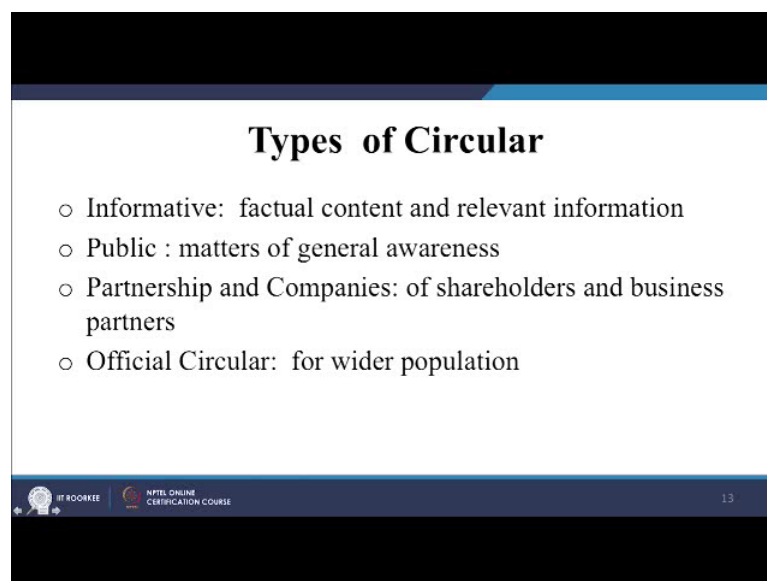
Now, what is this circular about, how is this different from memo and a letter report? A circular also is a business writing, but then it is circulated once again in the organization it is within the organization. Since it is within the organization naturally it will talk about some policy decisions it will talk about some new products sometimes a circular may also be aimed at creating a sort of awareness that is why it may be written in a language that is not so harsh, a language that is informal yet formal and hence a circular because

you are depending upon again circular will have also different kinds will see. So, circulars actually serve the purpose the basic purpose of every circular is to inform, is to create an awareness, is to create an awareness among people.

Now it also aims at making matters of general interest because I have said that it may go outside also circular may go outside also. So, when it goes outside say for example, you are in an organization of course, but it is an organization which may be of interest to general public also. Now in this case people would like to know about the new policies about the new programs that is why when you are going to write a circular you are to think whether a circular is needed or a memo is needed.

Now, a memo is circulated when the number of people is only within the organization. Sometimes a memo may also be between two people no depending upon a the need, but when you are actually going to address or you are going to inform larger audience and that also outside naturally you will go for a circular.

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Types of Circular

- Informative: factual content and relevant information
- Public : matters of general awareness
- Partnership and Companies: of shareholders and business partners
- Official Circular: for wider population

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Now, what are the types of circular? Circular maybe informative as I said and if it is an informative circular it will be very factual it will have an introduction, it will have maybe it can have three paragraphs in one it will talk about the introduction then we will talk about the detail I mean about the matter that you are going to raise and then the information has to be relevant that is why when circulars come people become a very conscious what is the circular about, I mean naturally it is going to say something you.

Then comes public circular naturally this public circular is matters of general awareness say general body say the body of teachers now there maybe teachers forums that also wants to that wants to inform all the teachers say spread out in different areas suppose it is about are the child labour policy, suppose it is also about the exploitation and all naturally it will come from the top and it may be going to several you know state bodies and all that is why when you are going to provide or write or draft a public circular you ought to see that the audience here maybe larger and they are spread out in different categories.

Naturally circulars may not be that longer unless and until the need be. Then sometimes you know if you are working in an organization and there is a collaboration between two organizations there is actually there are so many shareholders are there so many other stakeholders. So, any information about the general interest of all these people or of the company partners and all that will come under a partnership and company circular. And of course, you at this stage may not require to draft a circular for partnership and companies what is of utmost importance is official circular. Most of you working in the organizations will feel the need of having official circular and this official circular of course, it will be a bit longer it maybe longer because it covers a wide audience and then you also have to say it goes to wider population since it goes to wider population every word that you are going to choose there and you are going to select should be very careful.

You know after very careful consideration this official circular has to be drafter and when you draft the circular what is of importance is before you send it see to it I mean the revision part is very important. Of course, for all other business writings revision is very important because you know since it goes to so many people it may also have a sort of reputation involved into it and you are writing from an organization or you are writing from an institution. So, the reputation of the institution is also at stake if you have had certain you know incorrect sentences spelling lapses. Because we are today living in an age where we are guided and where we are also affected by the spellings we come across through different ways that we adopt for communicating and hence you need to be very careful while you are drafting a circular see to it that it is grammatically correct, see that the notions of appropriateness, also see the notion of dividing your sentences and what is importance is to see whether what you have wanted to say has been said or not. Having

done all these practices now you are circular is ready and give I know when you are writing a circular once again here in the top centre you lie the name of the organization and below that you will lie the circular and then you will write what is a the content of the circular and below that you will put your signature.

Now, when you have tried all these you are now ready to draft a circular and to send it. But before sending it please revise and see that if there are unnecessary words delete them if there are some in correct spellings please try to make it correct and see that sentences are not that cumbersome sentences are not that foggy rather sentences are very smooth and it can help in this smooth flow of the passage of information and communication as well. With all these things in your mind I think you are ready to draft a various types of business writings in the next lecture we shall be talking about some other writings which are in our day to day very important and we need to draft them very carefully.

Thank you very much.