The content of most engineering letters and memoranda can be organized into four main parts: summary, background, discussion, and conclusions. Depending on the intent and length of the letter or memo, each part can be as short as a single phrase or as long as several paragraphs\(^1\). Most letters and memos are less than two pages. The following elements should be included. Headings are only appropriate for long letters.

**Summary** - Objective and overview. Within the first two sentences, the purpose of the letter or memo is clearly stated. The important recommendations or conclusions are summarized.

**Background** - Provides context for the discussion and educates the reader so they can understand the discussion.

**Discussion** - May include a brief description of methodology, relevant findings, interpretation of data, and other significant items.

**Conclusions and Recommendations** – Should recapitulate results and conclusions, brief explanation of significant “errors”, and recommend future work or action.

**Courteous Closing** (Includes your contact information)

**References** - Should be of sufficient quantity and quality, and cited properly with in the text. Bibliographic information is included as a footnote.

Additional information to the written text is often required. Typical attachments include:

**Attachment 1* - Results** (If only one or two small figures or tables are required, they may be embedded in the letter/memo, if they are large, they should be an attachment). Tables and figures:
- All figures and tables discussed in text, but self explanatory
- Numbered and properly titled, contain units, axis labels
- Referenced (if information not created by author)
- Appropriate to communicate effectively

**Attachment 2* – Test Set-up:** clear and self explanatory, photos, sketches…

**Attachment 3* - Data:** self-explanatory data sheet; proper symbols and units

**Attachment 4* – Calculations:** clear and self-explanatory, sources cited

**Additional attachments as required**

**Writing Quality**
- Single spaced, no more than 2 pages
- Properly addressed and contact information (to whom, date, etc)
- Writing: clear, complete, and concise with proper mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar, and paragraph and sentence structures)
- Proper tense, third person, semi-formal writing

\(^1\)Refer to the UP School of Engineering’s *Writing for Engineers* handbook for assistance.

*Rev. A, December 7, 2005*