

My meeting minutes are too wordy: Any suggestions?

Question: "I have been told my minutes are too "wordy." Does anyone have a format to follow for the correct wording on report minutes?" — *Rachel M. Ouimet*

See Comments Below

Dee S June 14, 2010 at 12:13 pm

I look forward to receiving a copy of your sample minutes. Wordiness seems to be a problem when taking meeting minutes; I'm no exception. Thank You.

Admin 123 August 31, 2009 at 10:13 am

I normally record the call or meeting and at the same time take written notes. I type up the written notes and skim through the recording to make sure I didn't leave any of the key items out. I think meeting minutes is probably a pain for most of us and something that has to capture the important items as this become a permanent part of a file.

Hannah June 7, 2009 at 6:45 pm

I would really like to see a sample of your minutes.
Thanks/Hannah

Cherish Yount May 8, 2009 at 2:28 pm

I would like a copy of your minutes. Thanks.
I'm always looking for ways to improve.

Dawn April 17, 2009 at 11:12 am

I recently learned about STAR, which stands for describe the SITUATION or identify the TASK, explain the ACTION taken, discuss the RESULTS. Minutes should be a summary of what took place at the meeting, not verbatim of what was said.

Tish April 10, 2009 at 7:52 pm

Hi everyone,

One aspect of taking minutes is listening and reading closely. Terri has asked numerous times for those that wants his minutes format and the workshop link to e-mail him at his work and gave his e-mail address, yet people continue to ask for it here instead of e-mailing him. Take the time to do as requested instead of taking the easy way out for you. Terri, you are being very generous and patient. Those are very good traits for a worker.

Jody Scicluna March 31, 2009 at 8:57 am

Hi Terri,
I am also interested in a copy of your minutes and the workshop you attended. Thank you.

Ann Mollsen March 30, 2009 at 4:31 pm

I would also like a copy of the template you use.
Thanks

Diana March 20, 2009 at 3:58 pm

Please send me a copy of your format for meeting minutes.
Thank you,
Diana

Debra March 19, 2009 at 6:32 pm

Hello Terri, can you send me a copy of your minutes? I also find it difficult to take everything down, and sometimes miss writing down key points.

Thanks!

Lorena Rivas March 19, 2009 at 4:22 pm

Would love to see a copy of your minutes

Pam March 18, 2009 at 1:40 pm

Everyone who is having problems with emailing Terri. Try removing the space from pa.us If you look closely you will see one of her email address was typed in wrong and if you did as I did you copied and pasted.

Louise March 18, 2009 at 12:23 pm

Terri, I've tried to email you and it comes back, System Administrator Undeliverable. Is there another email address I can use?
Thanks in advance.

Ann March 18, 2009 at 11:58 am

Yes, please! Could you send me a copy of your minutes format?

Thank you,

Barbara March 17, 2009 at 10:20 am

Terri, I just got a chance to read the latest AdminPro Forum. Can you please send me the sample format you use as well as the link for the workshop and any other information that you feel I may find helpful. I take minutes only once a year and it covers so many topics that I too get very wordy for fear I may miss an important issue. Obviously I am not very proficient at this skill since I do it infrequently but would definitely like to improve on it even if it is once a year. I am sending a separate email with this request.

Thank you so much for your input

Marianne March 17, 2009 at 8:49 am

Hello Terri,

I would love to see a copy of your minutes too.

Kimberly Hunter March 16, 2009 at 2:49 pm

Terri:

Could you send me a copy also kimberly.hunter@baesystems.com Thanks!

Irma March 16, 2009 at 12:34 pm

Terri, I would like to have a copy of the minutes! Would you please email them to me?

Cheryl March 16, 2009 at 11:51 am

Hello Terri

i have attempted to email you but the address is undeliverable, could you please confirm your email so that i may get a copy of your minute format.

Joanna Branham March 16, 2009 at 10:49 am

please send me a copy of your minutes

Robin March 16, 2009 at 10:36 am

I too would like a copy of your minutes. Thanks!

Angelia March 16, 2009 at 9:41 am

Dear Terri,

Please send me the link to the seminar that you speak about. My e-mail address is areynolds@me.vccs.edu.

Thank You,
Angelia

Brenda March 16, 2009 at 9:28 am

Hello Terry, Could you please send me a copy of your minutes. I could really use some help. Thank you so much!!!

Doreen March 16, 2009 at 9:25 am

Hi Terri,

Would you please send me a copy of your minutes and the name of the conference you attended?

Thanks!

dalbert@nemours.org

Diane March 16, 2009 at 9:12 am

Terry, Please send me a copy of your minutes. Thank you.

Christa DiUbaldo March 16, 2009 at 8:09 am

Hi Terri: I would like a copy of your minutes also. Thanks so much.

Joan Henry March 16, 2009 at 8:00 am

Hi Terri,
I would like a copy of your minutes also. I take dictation notes from my boss and this format may be very helpful in this process.
Thanks Joan

Ruth Moore March 16, 2009 at 7:43 am

Yolanda,
The book I usually refer to is "Taking Minutes of Meetings" by Joanna Gutmann. There are several books on the topic - go to Amazon.com and search. This book has several examples and you can choose which style works best for you and your organization. I found this book so helpful and I still refer to it from time to time when I need to add something new to my minutes. It's a small paperback so it's handy to have right at your desk. I hope you find this helpful.

Ruth Moore March 16, 2009 at 7:37 am

Taking Minutes of Meetings by Joanna Gutmann - good book, gives lots of sample minutes and ideas so you can pick what works best for you and your organization.

Ruth Moore March 16, 2009 at 7:36 am

Bonnie,
"Taking Minutes of Meetings" by Joanna Gutmann Second Edition. It's been a valuable tool. Gives samples of several ways to type up minutes. Good luck.

Sandra March 14, 2009 at 8:52 am

Please email template and link. Thanks Sandra

Sheryl March 13, 2009 at 7:39 pm

Rhonda,
Please email your template to me.
Thank you.

Pam March 13, 2009 at 7:09 pm

Thanks Terri. I just read your email which included the name of the class. Many thanks.

Pam March 13, 2009 at 7:07 pm

Please email me a copy of your minutes. I would love to see how I can make my minutes less wordy. Also what was the name of the conference that you attended?

Heather March 13, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Sounds like a lot of us have the same issues. I would like a copy of your format as well as the information on the workshop you went to. Thanks.

Rose March 13, 2009 at 6:19 pm

I would appreciate receiving a copy of your minutes also. Thanks
Rose Please send to rtapia@luna.edu

Jennie March 13, 2009 at 5:21 pm

Terri,

Can you send me a copy of your minutes? I take minutes for trustees also on my laptop and they always seem wordy. Thanks.

Yolanda March 13, 2009 at 5:02 pm

I too would like the names of the books you refer to.
Thank you.

Sandra March 13, 2009 at 4:58 pm

I would love to see a copy of your minutes. I do minutes for 2 Boards plus employee staff meetings (4-5 sets of minutes a month plus special meetings). Meetings are lengthy. I would really appreciate learning a better way.

Venessa Petit March 13, 2009 at 4:56 pm

I may need to learn to take minutes sometime very soon, so there is no time like the present to start. Could I have also have a copy of your minutes and seminar info? Also, the template that was mentioned would be helpful as well.

Maria March 13, 2009 at 4:56 pm

If anyone can send me a copy of their minutes.. at mserrano@buckner.org

Dena March 13, 2009 at 4:55 pm

Terri, I would like to get a copy of your minutes also. I have tried to pare down on my minutes, but my previous background called for detailed minutes, and I still find it a bit challenging. Thank you for sharing your skills with us.

Maria March 13, 2009 at 4:48 pm

I would love to receive a copy of your minutes...since mine also seemed to be too wordy...

Mary Miller March 13, 2009 at 4:46 pm

I would love to see a sample too if you don't mind - thank you.

Sheri March 13, 2009 at 4:44 pm

Haven't read other replies so this may be a repeat, but have you looked at Robert's Rules of Order? Minutes should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members. They should never reflect the secretary's opinion. The bylaws of your organization may also influence your minute-taking.

Linda Fuller March 13, 2009 at 4:42 pm

Terri

I would love to see a copy of your minutes. Also, what do you do for follow up and action items?

Thanks

Linda

Liz Loizzo March 13, 2009 at 11:51 am

Terri, Could I please have a copy as well. I have been looking for a minutes workshop but none have been in my area (Pittsburgh)

Thanks,
Liz
eloizzo@franciscan.edu

Jackie March 10, 2009 at 2:50 pm

I took the Rhonda Scharf course and unlike other workshops, which I feel have been a waste of time, this one was highly enjoyable, information and worth the time and money.

Judy March 10, 2009 at 12:05 pm

I have a format set up for minutes that I type that simplifies taking minutes. I take my laptop with me to meetings to fill in the blanks. After the meeting all I need to do is to clean up my minutes and I am finished.

Naomi March 10, 2009 at 8:59 am

I am new to taking minutes. Could you please email me a copy of your format also.

Donna Wadley March 9, 2009 at 5:36 pm

Would you please be so kind as to email me a copy of your minutes also? Thank you so much!

Graham Collier March 9, 2009 at 4:41 pm

Terri , I would also like a copy of your minutes. Please send to the noted email. Thanks, Gra

Jacquelyn March 9, 2009 at 9:31 am

Terri, I'd truly appreciate a copy of your minutes. Many thanks.

Diane March 8, 2009 at 8:02 pm

I looked for it on Google and found several with the same name. Did you take the Rhonda Scharf course or was it a different seminar?

Diane March 8, 2009 at 7:46 pm

Ruth, I would also love to know the names of the books that you mention. Thank you for the great info.

Idalia Nunez March 6, 2009 at 7:10 pm

Please send me the seminar information and a copy of your meeting minutes. My email address is idalianunez@hotmail.com.

Anon March 6, 2009 at 6:03 pm

Our staff meetings tend to be informal. I bold names and create short, concise paragraphs to serve as a record of what transpired at the meeting. Action items are bolded also. I use bullets where appropriate. My goal is to have people read the minutes from start to finish without stopping wonder: what did she mean by that? and nobody has ever told me that I'm too "wordy". I would also like to receive the minutes formats described above & I request them electronically.

Juanita S. March 6, 2009 at 4:10 pm

Please send me a copy of your minutes.

Anita March 6, 2009 at 3:53 pm

Terri,

I will be taking minutes in a meeting next month and would love to see a copy of your minutes.

Thanks!

Diane Johnson-Hung March 6, 2009 at 3:00 pm

I was told I was capturing too much detail in my minutes. Instead, I focused on action items and the reason for the action. Everyone liked that format better.

Terri March 6, 2009 at 2:56 pm

Susan,

It was called "Minute Taking Made Easy" – if you would like to receive a copy of my minute format please email me at michaelt@co.lancaster.pa.us

Thanks

Terri March 6, 2009 at 2:54 pm

Kathy,

If you have not already can you contact me at the email listed below and I will be more than happy to send that to you:

michaelt@co.lancaster.pa.us

Terri March 6, 2009 at 2:49 pm

Debbie,

Please email me at my work email address and I can provide you with the information:

michaelt@co.lancaster.pa.us

Thanks

Terri March 6, 2009 at 2:48 pm

Anne,

Please email me at my work email and I can provide you with a sample – michaelt@co.lancaster.pa.us

Terri March 6, 2009 at 2:47 pm

Issa, Please email me at the noted email address in my reply to Rachel if you have not already. Thanks

Terri March 6, 2009 at 2:35 pm

For all those that have requested a sample of the minute format I now use after the class please contact me at my work email and I will be more than happy to send you a sample. I can also send you the link of the workshop I took and the contents of the workshop, if interested. My work email is michaelt@co.lancaster.pa.us
Thanks Terri

Susan March 6, 2009 at 2:27 pm

Hi, Terri, I would also like a copy of your minutes. What was the name of the course that you took?

Thanks

Kathy March 6, 2009 at 2:26 pm

Please also send me a copy of the minutes.

Thank you

Kathy Allen

Connie March 6, 2009 at 2:23 pm

Terri, I would also like to get a copy of your minutes. Please send to connie.weddell@cnent.com. And thanks for the tips. This was very helpful to me! :)

Bonnie March 6, 2009 at 2:07 pm

Could you send me the names of the books that you refer to?

Bonnie March 6, 2009 at 2:05 pm

What was the workshop that you attended? Was it something local, or a group that puts on workshops throughout the country? I would love a copy of your minutes.

Debbie March 6, 2009 at 1:31 pm

Terri,

I too would like a copy of your format. Thanks.

Anne March 6, 2009 at 1:29 pm

I too would like to see a copy of your minutes since I do sit in a few committees and take a fair amount of minutes. Have grappled with what is the best way to go about this for awhile now. Thanks much.

Min March 6, 2009 at 1:09 pm

I learned in a seminar I went to two things that I use every week in meeting minutes. First, bold the names of people throughout the minutes. And, as others have stated, make action items stand out (I use the shading feature for that. Both of these makes it easier to refer back to something from the minutes and helps someone see what they need to see if they are just skimming them.

Linda Blackford March 6, 2009 at 1:08 pm

I am wondering if you could send me your template. Sounds like an efficient way to organize the minutes and to-do items.

Thanks

Issa March 6, 2009 at 1:06 pm

Hello Terri, can you send me a copy of your minutes? I also find it difficult to take everything down, and sometimes miss writing down key points.

Thanks!

Rhonda March 6, 2009 at 12:56 pm

Rachel, I use a table insert with 3 columns I use the same template for all the committees that are associated with our business. It is clean and easy to follow. One thing I have to keep in mind is: They just want the bullet points for history. Hope this helps. I would be happy to email you the template. My email address is rgolden@fwphil.org.

Ruth Moore March 6, 2009 at 12:56 pm

Minutes are used only to capture the main ideas and Action Items. There are several books out that explain the proper way to take minutes and several formats. The minutes should "get to the point" and not be too lengthy so the reader can get the idea at a glance. Action Items should be called out in the minutes. AI: Name of person responsible for the action item, date due or target date, brief description of the item. Example:

AI: Due 03-13-09 SMITH Condensed budget report

AI: Due 03-30-09 JONES Summer picnic venue, date, time finalized

The AIs can appear on the side or under each topic following the same order as your main agenda.

This comes with practice. The bullet points are a great way to condense thoughts or ideas. Good Luck!!

Janet March 6, 2009 at 12:51 pm

I make it a habit to use the bullet point format; even when sharing instructional information via email, note, letters, etc. As you can see, bullet points:

- * are easy on the eye
- * lessen wordiness
- * aid in being concise
- * help get you to the point quicker

Salmon March 6, 2009 at 12:50 pm

I change any notes that are action items to green. This highlights the most important pieces of the minutes and is a common practice with project managers. If you can get the meeting facilitator to work with you on this issue you will get the best results. The issue is most likely that the meeting attenders are not controlled by a facilitator and are allowed to ramble on endlessly and change the topic without informing the notetaker. I guarantee if the meeting stayed on topic, your minutes would not be too wordy. If you do not get support with this, just know that you are not alone, and don't be afraid to cut out details when you edit the document. I agree with Theresa that bullets work great, and don't be afraid to organize the material in a different order than it was presented.

Terri March 6, 2009 at 12:49 pm

Rachel, I actually found a minutes workshop and took it. Mine were too wordy and too long. It was the best course ever! I have learned to use keywords while taking minutes and then summarize. I use a lot of bullets, and my sentences do not include "Mr. Smith said" I can send you a copy of my minutes if you want so you can see what format I use and just adjust for your meetings if needed. I also have one suggestion to you or anyone else reading this - I use a laptop during the meeting, again using keywords and adjusting things from the agenda if the members don't follow the A, B C set up. It is the BEST and saves me so much time! My board and staff have commented on how friendly, easy to read and fast it is to skim the minutes since I adjusted the set up and less wordy. Let me know if you want me to send you a copy of my minutes (michaelt@co.lancaster.pa.us) I will gladly do so.

Theresa March 6, 2009 at 12:43 pm

Try using the "bullet" format. Cuts down on the amount of words you are using, yet still gets the point across.