

CANDIDATE MEMOS FOR CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES



You will need to write two campaign memos for this assignment. Each memo should be no more than one-page long. In the memo, you will be writing a strategic plan for a hypothetical candidate running in the primary for a U.S. Senate seat in your home state. Assume that the candidate is running for an open seat (i.e., there is no incumbent in the race) and that they are a member of the party that won your state in the most recent presidential election. Each memo should include the following sections:

- **To/From/Date/Subject** header
- **Race overview** – key facts about the politics of the state
- **Target voters** – which voters the campaign should focus on
- **Messaging** – key issues that the candidate should discuss during the primary
- **Tactics** – the key strategies to reach and persuade voters

The first memo should be written for a candidate running in a traditional primary where the candidate is only competing against copartisans. The second memo should be written for a candidate running in a system like they have in Alaska (i.e. a top-4 primary that will be followed by a general election that uses ranked choice voting).

POTENTIAL GRADING RUBRICS

POINT-BASED RUBRIC

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
Memo Format & Professionalism	Includes proper sections and has a clear and concise memo style; stays within 1-page limit	4
Race Context	Accurate and relevant summary of state political context, recent trends, and any electoral dynamics	4
Target Voters	Clearly identifies key voter segments and explains why they matter in this electoral system	4
Messaging	Develops a coherent message tailored to the political context and voter base; message is credible and strategically sound	4
Tactics	Proposes feasible, creative, and system-appropriate tactics to reach and persuade voters	4

LEVELS-BASED RUBRIC

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (A)	PROFICIENT (B)	DEVELOPING (C)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (D/F)
Format & Style	Memo is professionally formatted, clear, and concise	Minor formatting or clarity issues	Somewhat unclear or verbose	Unprofessional or off-format
Race Context	Provides a strong, relevant overview of state politics	Covers basic political dynamics	Lacks detail or nuance	Vague or incorrect summary
Voter Targeting	Targets logical and strategic voter segments with justification	Reasonable targeting, but less specific	Targeting unclear or underdeveloped	Lacks any real targeting logic
Messaging Strategy	Strong issue positioning tailored to voters & system	Issue focus is somewhat broad or underexplored	Issue priorities are generic or mismatched	No clear messaging strategy
Tactics & Strategy	Creative and context-appropriate strategies	Standard but feasible strategies	Vague or overly general strategies	Unrealistic or missing tactics

HOLISTIC RUBRIC

- **A (Excellent):** Both memos are clearly and professionally written, with insightful analysis of the political context and a strategic plan tailored to the electoral system. All memo components are included and developed.
- **B (Good):** The memos are well-written and show a solid grasp of campaign strategy, though one or two areas (e.g., voter targeting or tactics) may lack depth.
- **C (Adequate):** The memos show basic understanding but are incomplete or underdeveloped in some sections.
- **D/F (Needs Improvement):** Memos are unclear, missing key components, or fail to engage with the assignment's core strategic goals.