

**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
THE BASIC SCHOOL
MARINE CORPS TRAINING COMMAND
CAMP BARRETT, VIRGINIA 22134-5019**

**MILITARY BRIEFING
W3S0005
STUDENT HANDOUT**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES.**1. TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE.**

a. Given subordinate units and an order, while considering the situation and time available, issue a five paragraph order to communicate a complete, realistic, and tactically sound plan that accomplishes the mission. (TBS-C2-1002)

b. Given a unit and references, conduct a military brief to ensure the audience receives the message. (MCCSLDR-2204)

2. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES.

a. Given a scenario, commanders intent, and available references, determine format for the information brief in order to facilitate the transfer of information. (MCCS-LDR-2204a)

b. Given a scenario, commanders intent, and available references, build content into formatted information brief in order to facilitate the transfer of information. (MCCS-LDR-2204b)

c. Given a scenario, commanders intent, and available references, present an information brief in order to facilitate the transfer of information. (MCCS-LDR-2204c)

d. Given an audience, with the aid of references, communicate orally to present ideas with confidence, accuracy, and completeness. (TBS-CORE-2102b)

1. **TYPES OF MILITARY BRIEFS.** Military briefs are designed to present selected information to commanders, staffs and other audiences in a clear, concise and expedient manner. The types of military briefs are dictated by purpose. There are four (4) basic types: the information brief, the decision brief, the staff brief, and the mission brief. Although there are elements, which are common to all four, each type of brief is distinct in that it is designed to accomplish a specific purpose.

a. **Information Brief.** The information brief is designed to merely provide information to an audience. An information brief deals only with facts. The desired end state of this type of brief is listener comprehension. No conclusion or decision needs to be drawn from the brief. Times when an information brief may be utilized include: Passing information of high priority which requires the immediate attention of proper authority, when passing complex information requiring detailed explanation or an After Action report for a military operation.

(1) Format. The basic format for the presentation of an information brief is as follows:

(a) Introduction.

1 Greeting. Recognize senior member(s) of audience. Follow up with "gentlemen" or "ladies and gentlemen" in recognition of others present. Finally, identify yourself.

2 Purpose. Explain purpose and scope.

3 Procedure. Explain conduct of brief, lecture, demonstration, display, tour, combination, etc.

4 There is no need, nor time, for an attention gainer.

(b) Body.

1 Organization. The body should follow an organization providing the best arrangement, presentation and support of main ideas. Sequence may be chronological, such as what happened, is happening, and is expected to happen; or it may be presented as cause-and-effect, as in an after action report.

2 Plan for effective, smoothly executed transitions.

3 Be prepared for questions at any time.

(c) Conclusion.

1 Summarize main ideas. Keep in mind that this is the last thing your audience will hear and so it will be one of the more prominent memories. It is here that you should restate any significant facts.

2 Closing statement. "This concludes my brief, are there any questions." Or, if briefing a senior, "Sir, pending your questions, this concludes my brief."

3 Introduce next speaker, if applicable.

b. **Decision Brief.** Designed to be presented to a commander in order to elicit a decision.

(1) The outcome is usually the manner in which a unit will execute a pending mission. For example, a commander may be presented a decision brief containing three (3) Courses of Action (COAs), all of which are designed to accomplish the same mission, but in different manners.

(2) After being presented and considering the strengths and weaknesses of each COA, the commander can make an educated decision. Of course, the commander retains the prerogative to modify or reject the choices and send his staff back to the drawing board.

(3) The format for a Decision Brief is built upon the Information Brief.

(a) Introduction.

1 Greeting. Recognize the senior member(s) of the audience. Follow up with "gentlemen" or "ladies and gentlemen" in recognition of others. Finally, identify yourself.

2 Purpose. State the purpose is to obtain a decision.

3 Procedure. Explain any special procedures or introduce additional briefer(s).

4 Coordination. State any previous coordination.

5 Classification. Identify security classification of brief.

(b) Body.

1 Assumptions. State all that are valid, relevant and necessary.

2 Facts Bearing. Any supportable facts bearing on the problem should be stated concisely and accurately.

3 Discussion. Analyze COAs. The initial statement should indicate the origin of the problem and point out any command guidance given. Plan for smooth transitions. THIS IS THE CRITICAL PHASE OF THE DECISION BRIEF!

(c) Conclusions.

1 State conclusions reached as a result of your analysis. Rank the COAs based upon level of supportability. Do not introduce new COAs or suggest modifications at this point. Restrict to only logical conclusions derived from discussion phase.

2 State recommended actions. Read recommendations to ensure accuracy and phrase them so the commander can mentally accept or decline. Recommendations must be specific and not solicitations of opinion.

(d) Conclude your brief.

1 Ask for questions.

2 Solicit decision or inquire if recommendation is approved or disapproved.

c. **Staff Briefing.** The staff briefing is the most widely used military briefing and is used at every level of command from the Marine Corps fire/demo team to HQMC. It is used to secure a coordinated or unified effort. The staff briefing is designed for the rapid, oral dissemination of information.

(1) In peacetime, staff briefings are normally conducted on a scheduled basis. In combat, they are held as often as the situation requires.

(2) At the battalion level, the executive officer usually presides over the staff briefing, but the commander may elect to do so if he desires. The individual presiding normally begins by identifying the purpose of the briefing and may review the mission of the next higher headquarters. He may highlight the briefing and then call on staff members to brief their areas of responsibility. These staff representatives should avoid presenting a rehash of the entire staff estimate but should tailor their presentation to specific areas that will assist the commander in the execution of the mission. For example, the S2 chief should refrain from reciting verbatim the entire weather forecast. Specifically, he should focus only on the effects of weather on mission accomplishment.

(3) Staff representatives present matters that might pertain to, be of interest to, or require coordination action by other staff sections. The commander usually concludes the briefing but may take an active part throughout the presentation.

(4) The format for presentations by each staff member during the staff briefing varies and is dependent upon the commander's guidance. The format may be elaborate, using visual aids to depict the activities of each staff representative; or it may be less formal, with the emphasis on each staff member briefing only those items or areas the commander feels are appropriate.

d. **Mission Brief.** Mission briefings are used under operational conditions to impart information or to give specific instructions for accomplishment of the mission.

(1) In an operational situation or when the mission of a specific unit is critical, it may be necessary to provide individuals or smaller units with more data than written orders provide. This may be done by means of the mission briefing.

(2) The mission briefing reinforces written orders and provides more detailed requirements and instructions. The mission briefing is normally conducted as a joint staff effort, with the commander stating the mission the unit has received and each staff member presenting information on his area.

(3) There is no prescribed format for the mission briefing, but it should be tailored to achieve the specific purpose of the briefing. In most cases, the operations order (OPORD) format can be used if it is not unnecessarily repetitious.

(4) The purpose of the mission briefing can be summarized as the final review of a forthcoming military action to ensure those taking part are certain of their mission, understand the intent of the commander, and grasp his concept of the operation. For these reasons, the commander actively participates throughout the confirmation briefing.

(5) The Confirmation Brief is a form of the Mission Brief that is performed as a part of the Marine Corps Planning Process. After the subordinate commander receives his order or plan, the subordinate commander then briefs the higher commander on his understanding of the higher's intent, their specific task and purpose and the relationship between their unit's missions and the other units in the operation. The Confirmation Brief also allows the higher commander to identify gaps in his plan, identify discrepancies between his and subordinate commander's plans and learn how subordinate commands intend to accomplish their mission. Lastly, The Confirmation Brief informs the higher commander that the subordinate unit is ready to execute and lays out the timeline for the execution of its mission.

(6) The format for a Confirmation Brief will vary from unit to unit, however the brief generally follows the OPORD format with emphasis being placed on the Mission and Execution paragraphs. In some cases, the Situation, Admin and Logistics, and Command and Signal paragraphs are omitted as a part of the Confirmation Brief since they have been addressed previously during the planning process and would be redundant. For example, the weather forecast published by the S-2 usually doesn't need to be reiterated to the commander by one of his subordinate commanders. However, selected portions of these paragraphs may be included if they have a direct effect on the accomplishment of your mission and the higher commanders mission. For example, if the rain the S-2 forecasts will cause a delay in your operation, then that is something that should be briefed.

2. **PREPARING A BRIEF.** The preparation or creation of a brief involves several steps. A briefer must have a thorough knowledge of the subject to be presented. Knowledge is gained through research. Knowledge alone, however, does not guarantee an effective brief. Effective planning is also important. You prepare for a briefing by using knowledge, research and planning. To ensure success use the following steps to guide you in your preparation of your briefs:

a. **Analysis.**

(1) First, determine the purpose of the briefing. You have to ask yourself (and others); Why am I giving this brief? What is the desired outcome? Ask for guidance in order to inform accurately - your purpose is not to sell or entertain, but to impart information.

(2) Second, consider your audience. Know the size and composition, including names and grades. Learn the interests, desires and traits of the senior member.

(3) Next, consider the time and schedule contingencies. Know in advance how much time you have and how flexible the schedule or itinerary is.

(4) Consider the requirement for equipment and facilities. Size, comfort, accessibility, acoustics of the facility, and freedom from

distractions will affect selection of visual aids, seating arrangements, and use of assistants.

(5) Finally, check the SOP. Many commanders have definite rules for the presentation of briefings. Know and follow these rules on such things as protocol, uniform, manner of greeting, use of manuscripts and other important aspects. If your brief contains classified information, it is imperative that you clear your brief through the S-2/G-2.

b. **Research Topic/Write Outline.**

(1) Tailor topic(s) to meet time restraints/constraints. Both the content and the organization depend on the purpose and scope established in the initial guidance.

(2) Collect authoritative material to support your position. Examples include statistics, surveys, and interviews.

(3) Determine main ideas to form the foundation of your brief.

(4) Sequence main ideas in logical order. This could be chronological, cause and effect or possibly in the building block format depending on the situation.

(5) Write an outline (your "rough draft"). Main ideas should be in some logical sequence with natural transitions from idea to idea.

c. **Write the Briefing.**

(1) Depending on local SOP, program as an outline or a complete manuscript, the latter being a rarer requirement.

(2) Advance approval of a briefing is usually required; obtain firm approval of content and organization prior to rehearsal to avoid changes later.

(3) For use in rehearsals and presentations, prepare an outline, prompter cards, or an annotated manuscript. Use lectern notes and visual aids for the rehearsal just as you plan to do for your actual brief.

d. **Rehearse.** Rehearsing your brief is the best way to alleviate excessive nervousness. Complexity of the briefing and time available to present it will govern the amount of time you devote to rehearsals.

(1) Rehearse alone initially to get the sequence of the briefing down and the manipulation of visual aids.

(2) Rehearse with assistants to coordinate key words.

(3) Bring in a live audience of one or two persons to give you an objective criticism of your presentation. What is logical to you may not be logical to others.

(4) Conduct a dress rehearsal with only your audience missing.

(5) The above order will not always be possible, but the briefer must at least walk through the main points of the briefing and fix in his mind the approach to the subject.

(6) Make a final check. Insure that everything is ready for the actual briefing. Give special attention to seating arrangements and other physical aspects.

(7) Sometimes, the items listed above will not be feasible. The briefer must, however, at a minimum walk and talk through the main points of the brief to set to mind the basic organization of the presentation.

e. **Prepare a Briefing Packet.** An effective packet helps to guide an audience through your brief. Creating a packet is not always necessary or even feasible depending upon the situation and environment. Determine the requirement, or lack thereof, in your initial analysis. Effective packets serve as a "tour guide" and follow the following guidelines:

(1) Synchronized with presentation to prevent constant page turning.

(2) Simple, large - bulleted format.

(3) Contains only essential information. If detailed, amplifying data is needed, include it as an enclosure at the end of the packet or provide as an additional handout.

(4) Items incorporated in a briefing packet include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Title Page. The title page should contain the name of the mission or exercise, the type of brief that is being given, the names of those presenting the brief, the date, and the classification of the brief.

(b) Orientation Tab. During the orientation show a map of the AO. When briefing the orientation, remember that you are not the first or only person to brief, so much of the orientation has already been provided by the S-2 or S-3. Brief the orientation from the Engineer perspective. Brief general to specific and do so in an organized manner. Remember to use a 1:50K map when doing the orientation.

(c) Situation. When briefing Enemy and Friendly situations, focus on how it affects your engineer mission only. For example, if you are in a Confirmation Brief for obstacle planning, talk to the enemy's breaching capabilities.

(d) Request For Information & Assumptions. In a Confirmation Brief you should have already had all your RFI's answered. Any unanswered RFI's become assumptions that you have to work off of when planning. When making assumptions, use the worst case scenario.

(e) Mission. Your mission comes directly from the task that was provided to you in your CO's order. Your mission should be stated as engineers to support the commander's intent. Make sure you answer the Who, What, Where, When, and Why (IOT).

(f) Commander's Intent. This should be your intent as the Engineer Officer based on the engineering mission. Although it will not be the exact same as the intent of the CO, it should not refute anything that he

has stated in his order. The end-state is again based derived from your engineering mission. Although it will not be the exact same as the end-state of the CO, it should not refute anything that he has stated in his order.

(g) Execution. This should be the meat and potatoes of your brief. Brief your plan in phases in such a way that it illustrates how you will accomplish your mission. Use maps and graphics as required. All coordination with supported or supporting units should have already been conducted so be sure that you are not introducing anything new to the units at the brief. At the end of this section the entire briefing audience will walk away knowing what your plan is and have a general understanding of how you intend to execute that plan. Be sure to show the commanders in the room what you will be doing.

(h) Timeline. There are several ways to depict a timeline. When you brief the Commanding Officer, you need to convey what you will have done and by when. In your briefing packet you should show the mathematics of how you arrived at that timeline. GANTT charts, CPM, Activity Estimation sheets, etc.

(i) Administration. Do not just list the T/O - however you should show the Task Organization of how you have your platoon broken down. You should also list any critical MOS's that you have. For instance, if you are doing a utilities heavy mission and only have (2) 1141's, you should mention that. Lastly, ensure the CO knows of any additional augments you have, especially from other units.

(j) Logistics. Do not list your entire T/E, just like you don't list your entire T/O. However, you need to show your critical pieces of equipment and gear, and show the big ticket items of Class IV and Class V. All requests for the materials should have already been coordinated with and approved by the S-4. You need to account for how you plan to move all your equipment, gear, Marines, and materials. Any gear you are temporarily loaning from other units or internal units to the battalion should be noted in this section.

(k) Command & Signal. Explain the location of key personnel - PltCdr, PltSgt, PltGuide. You should also explain what frequency you will be operating on and if there are any changes to the POI. If you have any brevity codes associated with the mission, i.e. breaching, make sure you explain them clearly in this section.

(l) Conclusion. Summarize your main points. Reiterate what time you will be mission complete from the engineering standpoint. Do not introduce any new ideas in this section; it should take you no more than 45-60 seconds.

(m) Questions. Ask for questions from the audience. It usually pays to have the Platoon Sergeant or Platoon Guide on hand as well to help answer questions if need be.

f. **Use of Notes**. Think of your notes as signs on a highway. You pick up information at a glance as you whiz by; you should do the same with your notes. Here are some tips on preparing your notes:

(1) Use cards (3"x5", 4"x6", 5"x8") or sheets of paper, whichever is easiest for you. Number each card or page in the upper right-hand corner.

(2) Keep your notes brief, just a word or phrase, with plenty of space between key points so that your eye easily locates the next "thought-jogger".

(3) Type or print in large block letters.

(4) Underline important words in ink or colored pencil.

(5) Do not fold your notes (they should lie flat) or staple the pages together. Turning pages distracts the audience.

(6) Notes tell your audience you are prepared, so do not conceal them.

(7) Occasionally, you may be required to read from a study as part of your briefing. Here are some guidelines:

(a) Be familiar with the materials.

(b) Listeners cannot see punctuation, so punctuate for them with your voice.

(c) Hold your reading material at a comfortable height so that you can read out and over it, not down into it. Look at your listeners occasionally. Use free hand or thumb to guide your eye down the page.

g. **Use of Media.**

(1) Media (Computer Generated Graphics) can greatly enhance the effectiveness of a brief. Power Point has become the unofficial standard throughout the Marine Corps. As leaders, you need to familiarize yourself with the program and become proficient with it.

(2) Many units or organizations will have a standard slide background format or "master" that you'll be required to utilize for briefs or other presentations. Use classification marks (Unclassified, Secret, Top Secret) in the header and footer as appropriate.

(3) In absence of a standard format, try to avoid the use of the more complicated or "busy" backgrounds contained in the design templates. Text can sometimes get "lost" in the details of the background. Not all of the design templates are suitable in certain light conditions. Details and colors displayed on the monitor may look different when projected onto a screen or whiteboard, especially when viewed under florescent lighting. Make sure you look at your brief from the perspective of your audience to avoid problems of clarity.

(4) Lengthy text paragraphs become a reading exercise for your audience vice an informative brief and should be avoided. Keep sentences simple or use sentence fragments. Proof read fragments to ensure your message is clearly understood and that the point that you're trying to make isn't misconstrued. Choose a font style, size and color that will contrast against your background and be visible to all. Keep in mind that there is nothing wrong with black on white.

(5) The use of graphic animation should be limited as it becomes distracting over time. This is especially true with the use of sound effects and should generally be avoided for a military brief. Standard military symbology and colors must be used where applicable and practicable.

(6) Since the brief will most likely be displayed behind you, keeping eye contact with your audience presents a greater challenge. The use of the notes pages printed from your brief and placed on the lectern or podium can help you to keep your focus on your audience. It's acceptable to glance at your slides from time to time, but reading from them is not acceptable.

h. **Use of Visual Aids.**

(1) Stand as close to your visuals as possible. If you are right-handed, stand stage left. If you are left-handed, stand stage right.

(2) When using the overhead projector, turn the projector off when you have finished showing a transparency, remove the transparency, and then place the next one on the projector before turning the projector on. This will prevent the audience from being subjected to flashes of bright light on the screen.

(3) Turn the projector off when you are not using a visual.

(4) If your visuals are on charts, place them face down on the floor or face against the wall when you finish with each one to avoid distractions.

(5) If you are using slides, place them in an orderly sequence so that you can readily find the one you want during the question period.

(6) If handout material is necessary for your briefing, distribute it either before or after your briefing. It is impossible for the audience to receive the material, read or glance at it, and still devote attention to what you are saying. If you must distribute material during your briefing, pause until the audience receives it before you resume speaking.

i. **Use of Pointers.**

(1) Use a solid (wood or metal) pointer.

(2) Look at the visual only to get the pointer on the right spot and to glance at words printed there. Then face the audience to speak while holding the pointer fixed on the spot.

(3) Unless you are circling an item of interest, hold the pointer steady on the spot. Do not wave it around.

(4) When pointing at a line of words, place the pointer at the end of the line nearest you and hold it there. Do not sweep it or move it from word to word as you read.

(5) Place the pointer under a word horizontally as an underline for emphasis.

(6) When pointing on a transparency, lay the pointer down on that portion of the transparency you wish to emphasize.

(7) When you do not need the pointer, lay it down or hold it motionless at your side.

(8) If using an assistant, plan for him to use the pointer to emphasize key points while you present the brief.

3. **BRIEF DELIVERY.**

a. A military brief is a highly specialized type of speech. It is characterized, more than any other type of speech, by conciseness, objectivity and accuracy. A successful brief depends, not only on organized content, but also on how the briefer presents it. A confident, precise and forceful delivery, based on in-depth subject knowledge and the following, will succeed:

- (1) Present the subject as directed and ensure it is understood.
- (2) Conclusions and recommendations must be logical.
- (3) Need for brevity precludes a lengthy introduction and/or summary.

b. **Communication Techniques.** Effective verbal communication involves the effective use of each of the following eight (8) techniques:

(1) Volume. Volume is vital in holding listeners' attention. A speaker should use the volume necessary to reach an entire audience, regardless of the speaking environment. Do not, however, overpower the closest members of an audience. Various situations call for different volume levels.

(2) Inflection. Inflection is directly related to volume. More commonly referred to as "pitch," inflection aids in maintaining listener attention. A lack of inflection results in a monotone speaker. Inflection is often used to express an emotional or persuasive point. This helps make a brief or lecture more meaningful.

(3) Rate. Rate is the speed of delivery. Speak too fast and listeners may miss important material. Speak too slowly and you may bore them to death. Vary your rate of delivery to increase interest.

(4) Force. Force is used to emphasize a particular syllable, word or point. The use of force in certain instances may alter the meaning of what you say. "It's not what you say, but how you say it."

(5) Pause. Pauses are used to accomplish the following: allow the listener to absorb information; provide punctuation; provide the listener an opportunity to prepare for the upcoming topic. Often, instead of using pauses effectively, we tend to fill them with useless "pet words" or nervous fillers such as "umm, OK, like, and alright." A purposeful pause is perfectly acceptable, and highly effective. An awkward pause, one that is too long, used at the wrong time or nervously, can be just as detrimental as the use of pet words.

(6) Grammar. Grammar is the correct use of the written language. Always use proper grammar in front of any audience. Refrain from using slang. The use of improper grammar damages a speaker's credibility and hinders effective communication.

(7) Pronunciation. Pronunciation is defined as speaking individual words properly, without deviation. Regional accents are acceptable if words are spoken clearly and distinctly. For example, the word CREEK can be pronounced either "creek" or "crick" depending upon where a person was raised in our country. Both refer to the same object, a small stream, and are commonly accepted. The mispronunciation of a word is never acceptable.

(8) Articulation. Articulation refers to the clarity of spoken words. It is closely related to pronunciation in that each vowel and consonant is spoken clearly and completely. Words, and therefore thoughts, communicated clearly and completely are readily understood.

c. Interruptions. Interruptions and/or questions can occur at any point throughout the course of a brief.

(1) Do not become distracted.

(2) Answer questions before proceeding, or...

(3) Indicate that the question will be answered at a later point in the brief, but refer back to the question when reaching that point.

(4) Prepare to provide further support for any part of the brief.

d. Bad Mannerisms. Avoid the following:

(1) Generalities and "scoop words" (et cetera, and so on, I believe, obviously, clearly). They suggest shallow thinking or a lack of confidence. Specifics command respect and present firm belief in the presented material.

(2) Sarcasm, belligerence or hostility used in the defense of a point or when responding to naïve or unfriendly questions begets a negative reaction and damages rapport. Courtesy also commands respect.

(3) Do not slouch. You'll appear either unconfident or slovenly.

(4) Lack of eye contact. Look audience members straight in the eye. This is especially effective in emphasizing a key point.

(5) Do not remain motionless for an inordinate period of time. It suggests nervousness.

(6) Pacing. While you should avoid appearing statuesque, excessive pacing also suggests nervousness.

(7) Do not use acronyms, abbreviations or special jargon before determining the audience understands and can decipher them without effort.

(8) Nervous "fiddling", such as: key jangling, pen clicking, ear pulling, nose and body scratching, rocking, weaving, wandering, playing with the pointer, and/or putting hands in and out of pockets, is an indicator of nervousness and a lack of preparation and confidence.

e. Characteristics of an Effective Briefer.

(1) Has an orderly mind.

- (2) Evaluates the purpose of the brief.
- (3) Is prepared.
- (4) Varies rate and inflection.
- (5) Recognizes and responds to audience feedback.
- (6) Is **BRIEF**.

REFERENCES :

- 1. MCDP-6 COMMAND AND CONTROL