A 10-Part Recipe for Appetizing Legal Writing

INGREDIENTS

1 chef’s – CAP
2 types – Charts
3 cups – Rough Drafts
4 tbsp – Lists
5 layers – Editing
6 tbsp – Active Verbs
7 cups – Short paragraphs
8 tsp – Descriptive headings
9 tbsp – SVO
10 sprigs – Fresh Proofreading

DIRECTIONS

1. Put your chef’s CAP on and decide what your client is craving.
   To plan your time in the kitchen, ask:
   • “How much does my client want to pay for this piece of writing?”; and
   • “When does my client want to be served this piece of writing?”
   To determine tone and format, ask:
   • “How can I make this piece of writing most appetizing for this client?”; and
   • “How does my client want to be served this piece of writing?”

2. Over a large desk, take your primary research and sift it into case charts and factors charts.

3. Beat together your brain, your charts, and your secondary research to create an outline of your analysis.

4. Your analysis might not be completely smooth. To get the kinks out, let your thoughts flow in a very rough first draft. Do not add proofreading or editing to this step.

5. All clients are allergic to murky writing and dense formatting. Replace these ingredients with lists, descriptive headings, short paragraphs, and active verbs.
   • Chop your word count in half by removing bulky and empty phrases.

6. On your writing sheet, place your verbs, subjects, and objects close together in each sentence.
   • For added flavour, add dashes of varied sentence structure and a pinch of passive voice. Only add the passive voice to reduce the taste of an action that hurts your purpose.

7. Tier your editing layers in the following order: CAP, structure, continuity, and clarity. Finish with your decorative surface touches. Dust off typos, grammar mistakes, and punctuation problems.

8. Once you have a final draft, allow time for your writing to cool before you actively proofread your work.

Serving directions:
- Serve your work in bite-sized sentences. The ratio of sentence to idea should be 1:1.
- If you have bad news for your client, make them a sandwich: put the bad news between two pieces of good news to reduce the bitter flavour of a setback!
- Do not serve your client writing that waffles; make a clear conclusion.
Menu
Choosing my 10 lessons

$1 CAP
I chose CAP because it acts like a palate cleanser: when I need to make a writing choice, CAP reminds me of my overall goal.

$2 Charts
Learning to organize my research into charts was a great start to the writing course. They are effective and I had never used them.

$3 Drafts
I often get stuck on an idea late in the writing process because I slowly work through one first draft. Letting my thoughts flow in rough drafts is a lesson that will help me avoid last-minute stress.

$4 Lists
I did not realize how often I could use lists in legal writing. Lists have made my writing more palatable.

$5 Active Verbs
Using active verbs has made my writing much clearer.

$6 Short Paragraphs
I had not thought about how much easier it is to read writing that has white-space; short paragraphs create white-space.

$7 Descriptive Headings
Using headings has helped me organize my own thoughts and makes my writing more digestible for the reader.

$8 SVO
Focusing on SVO has helped me write more clearly and concisely.

$9 Layered Editing
I always freestyled my editing and often missed important steps. Layered editing will help me use my time strategically.

$10 Fresh Proofreading
I often leave proofreading to the last minute. It was helpful to be reminded of how much time needs to be allotted for proofreading.