

SCHEDULING FOR YOUR RESEARCH, WRITING AND PRACTICE

Create a schedule for yourself. Be aware of deadlines and make the research and brief writing process work for you and match your study and work style. If you know you need information from a source that takes a greater effort to access-plan accordingly-set aside more time to access this source. If you know that you like to have input on your writing, throughout the drafting process, let individuals know ahead of time that you would like their assistance.

ADDRESSING THE JUSTICES

Remember, this is not a trial court. This is the Wisconsin Supreme Court and you will be addressing Justices and not a jury. Both your written and/or oral argument(s) should reflect this. Remember that as a Justice and when addressing the Justices, respect should always be a part of any interaction.

WRITING A BRIEF

Separate Written and Oral Arguments:

If your written argument is going to be a summary of your oral argument, remember that it would be beneficial to write your written argument first. The structure of your written argument and the structure of your oral argument should be approximately the same. Think of your written argument as a sort of outline; its purpose is to efficiently and clearly convey to the justices your reasoning and the legal precedent that justifies it. Your argument will grow stronger throughout your drafting, editing, and your getting feedback on it from your advisors, friends, parents and guardians. Remember, the first draft of your written and oral arguments should never be your final draft.

FACTS IN ARGUMENT

The Statement of Facts should never be argumentative in tone. The Statement of Facts is for telling the court what the case is about. Therefore, everyone must keep the Statement of Facts he or she were given. Also, when you are writing your written argument and/or your oral argument-the Statement of Facts cannot be changed and details cannot be added to slant an argument in one direction or another. The Statement of Facts is written in order to impartially present a situation that both sides of the case work off of. Sometimes there are pieces of information that are unknown. Consider, why this may be (is a piece of information relevant, has it been lost, is it unreliable, is it hearsay, etc.) but do not dwell on what is not there. Do not include what you think may have happened to replace missing information.

SOURCES

Although you may heavily use U.S. and Wisconsin statutes, case legislation and case precedence, you will also have access to a lot of other sources. Remember to evaluate your sources and their credibility (world-wide web, magazines, academic journals, newspapers, librarians, books) and to determine the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing each. Also, do not forget that a great source is your local university or public librarians. They will have access to a lot of high quality, accurate, reliable, current and relevant information on such things as legislation, case laws, and even be able to help you to compile your information efficiently.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Google Scholar: Sometimes we think that search engines, by their very nature, lack integrity for scholarly research. Google scholar is a great option to explore. Remember it is still important to evaluate your source accordingly.

<http://scholar.google.com/>

Ask a Librarian: This is a neat option in research because it does not require you to physically go to university or public libraries. Also, no matter what time zone you are in and what time of day or night, there will always be someone who is able to help you. (The left hand side is for help anytime from librarians nationwide, while the right hand side is for help from librarians at the UW Milwaukee Library during staffed hours.)

<http://www4.uwm.edu/libraries/ask/chat.cfm>

Oyez: A great site run by the Illinois Institute of Technology and Kent College of Law which indexes US Supreme Court cases. When you see a US Supreme Court mentioned that may be relevant, you can use this site to quickly and easily find the opinion issued by the court and even listen to oral arguments. The opinions that it links you to may be long, but there is almost always a Syllabus at the top which summarizes the opinion.

<http://www.oyez.org/cases>

Research Databases on Public Libraries' websites: One of my favorite things is using my library for multiple reasons. You can check out books, but you can also use the research databases that your public library purchased for its patrons. Just go onto your county's library research page and utilize the databases by entering your library card information.

Examples:

Eau Claire's L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library:

<http://www.ecpubliclibrary.info/research/general/government/1891-legal-resources.html>

La Crosse Public Library: <http://www.lacrosselibrary.org/information/index.asp>

Madison Public Library: <http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/research>

Milwaukee Public Library: http://www.mpl.org/file/database_index.htm

Other Common Sites: I wanted to just send out a few reminders about some of the most common sites I have found to do legal research. Awesome if you have incorporated some of these sites in your sources; but if you have not yet done so, you still have time. Take the time to check your arguments and see if you can still use additional evidence to support your claims. Remember, the premises to your arguments are backed by logical and supportable findings.

Examples:

Nolo.com

Findlaw.com

The Public Library of Law: <http://www.plol.org/>

The Internet Legal Research Group

Lexis Nexis

Wisconsin State Law Library

LawCrawler: <http://www.lawcrawler.com>.

CyberLaw Encyclopedia

Thomas: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Government Printing Office Access: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs.

Center for Information Law and Policy: <http://www.cilp.org/tblhome.html>.

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