

The Legal Writing Handbook: Analysis, Research, and Writing, 8th Ed.

By Laurel Currie Oates, Anne M. Enquist, & Jeremy Francis. (2021), 947 pages, ISBN: 9781543830415. \$168

Subject: General Legal Research; Legal Research Textbook

Useful for: Useful for those who teach legal research and/or legal writing.

Format: Chapters with index, with exercises and questions at the end of each chapter.

Reviewer's Comments:

In law school, I was eager to practice law and advocate for the client. Like many law students, I demonstrated my writing skills from a previous discipline rather than those skills best suited for legal writing.

The Legal Writing Handbook explains unique challenges to legal research and writing students may face based upon their differing educational backgrounds. As an English major, I was taught to write complex sentences and use academic language. I was criticized if I wrote too clearly. Therefore, legal writing initially proved to be challenging to me as it is for many students with an educational background in the humanities. The Legal Writing Handbook explains the audience and purpose of legal writing, so first-year students can adjust their writing style to fit a specific purpose. Through informing new students of the unique challenges they may face based on differing backgrounds and experiences, the authors prepare students to overcome immediate challenges to successful legal writing.

The Legal Writing Handbook breaks down the process of research and writing starting with the most fundamental concepts. The authors teach students how to read cases and statutes before they learn how to find the law and communicate their research to a specific audience. Additionally, students receive numerous opportunities for practice with short exercises and questions at the end of each chapter. In these exercises, students see a concept demonstrated for them before they are asked to replicate the process with a similar problem.

The Legal Writing Handbook connects legal research and writing to practice by providing numerous "practice pointers" and demonstrating legal writing with samples written by attorneys. For this reason, students may find this textbook more interesting

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as they are often curious about how legal research and writing is done in practice. The authors teach legal research and writing as a cohesive process by explaining to students that they are searching with a purpose, and their research process should be conducted with that purpose in mind.

Legal research and legal writing instructors would benefit from reading this book, but there are clear sections that allow instructors of a specific subject to choose sections of the handbook most relevant to that subject. Through reading this book, students may gain a better understanding of how legal research and writing function together and are applied in practice.

Reviewed by: Chelsey McKimmy, Lincoln Memorial University, in 2022.