

The Legal Memo: 50 Exercises for Mastery

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Practice for the New Legal Writer

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*Each year, we are honored to teach students who come from all backgrounds,
who yearn to be attorneys, and who put in the work despite every obstacle.
We dedicate this book to you.*

About the Authors

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Professor Shu's research interests include legal education, legal writing pedagogy, disability law, and food allergy law. She has co-authored short pieces on legal writing and written two full-length law review articles on food allergy bullying, which appear in the *Marquette Law Review* and the *University of Colorado Law Review*.

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Professor Vukadin specializes in using innovative teaching techniques to make legal writing compelling and accessible to all students. She has taught legal writing to foreign law students seeking an American LL.M. degree and designed a class for law students needing further writing practice. Professor Vukadin has learned that with commitment, practice, and patience, students can master the essentials of legal writing.

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Contents



Expanded Table of Contents with Specific Skills	xiii
Master Skills Tested Chart	xxiii
 Chapter 1 • How to Use This Book	 3
Chapter 2 • Heading and Introduction	7
Chapter 3 • Question Presented and Brief Answer	13
Chapter 4 • Statement of Facts	33
Chapter 5 • Discussion	49
A. Roadmap	51
B. Discussion Conclusions	57
C. Rule and Explanation	63
D. Application	91
E. Counterargument and Rebuttal	119
Chapter 6 • Memo Conclusion	129
Chapter 7 • Email Memos	135
Chapter 8 • Sample Memos (with Annotations)	143
Chapter 9 • Sample Answers (with Annotations) to Even-Numbered Exercises	 161



Expanded Table of Contents



Master Skills Tested Chart	xxiii
Chapter 1 • How to Use This Book	3
Chapter 2 • Heading and Introduction	7
Summary of Skills Tested	7
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 1	9
Content (<i>client information, date, specific issue</i>)	
Format (<i>alignment, keep it short</i>)	
Exercise 2	10
Content (<i>client information, date, specific issue</i>)	
Format (<i>alignment, keep it short</i>)	
Chapter 3 • Question Presented and Brief Answer	13
Summary of Skills Tested	13
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 3A	16
Stands Alone	
Accepted Format (<i>under/does/when, whether, multi-sentence</i>)	
Facts (<i>specific, determinative</i>)	
Exercise 3B	17
Answer (<i>short answer first, echo question language</i>)	
Conclusion-Rule-Application-Conclusion Format	


Exercise 4A	19
Stands Alone	
Accepted Format (<i>under/does/when, whether, multi-sentence</i>)	
Legal Context	
Precise Question	
Facts (<i>specific, determinative, objective</i>)	
Exercise 4B	20
Answer (<i>short answer first, echo question language</i>)	
Conclusion-Rule-Application-Conclusion Format	
Exercise 5A	22
Consistency (<i>language</i>)	
Stands Alone	
Accepted Format (<i>under/does/when, whether, multi-sentence</i>)	
Legal Context	
Precise Question	
Facts (<i>specific, determinative</i>)	
Conclusion Not Assumed	
Readability (<i>subject/verb placement, punctuation</i>)	
Exercise 5B	23
Answer (<i>short answer first, echo question language</i>)	
Conclusion-Rule-Application-Conclusion Format	
Exercise 6A	25
Accepted Format (<i>under/does/when</i>)	
Legal Context	
Precise Question	
Facts (<i>specific, determinative, objective</i>)	
Readability (<i>punctuation, conciseness</i>)	
Exercise 6B	27
Answer (<i>short answer first, echo question language</i>)	
Conclusion-Rule-Application-Conclusion Format	
 Deeper Dive	
Exercise 7A	28
Stands Alone	
Accepted Format (<i>under/does/when, whether, multi-sentence</i>)	
Legal Context	
Precise Question	
Facts (<i>specific, determinative, objective</i>)	
Readability (<i>subject/verb placement, punctuation, conciseness</i>)	




Exercise 7B	29
Answer (<i>short answer first, echo question language</i>)	
Conclusion-Rule-Application-Conclusion Format	
Exercise 8A	30
Consistency (<i>language, same format</i>)	
Stands Alone	
Accepted Format (<i>under/does/when, multi-sentence</i>)	
Legal Context	
Precise Question	
Facts (<i>specific, determinative</i>)	
Readability (<i>subject/verb placement, punctuation, conciseness</i>)	
Exercise 8B	31
Consistency (<i>language, same format, same order, number of questions and answers</i>)	
Answer (<i>short answer first, echo question language</i>)	
Conclusion-Rule-Application-Conclusion Format	
Chapter 4 • Statement of Facts	33
Summary of Skills Tested	33
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 9	36
Fact Selection (<i>relevant details</i>)	
Tone and Language (<i>objective</i>)	
Exercise 10	37
Fact Selection (<i>relevant details</i>)	
Tone and Language (<i>objective, not dramatic, no stereotypes</i>)	
Facts Only (<i>no opinions</i>)	
Exercise 11	38
Structure (<i>logical order, paragraphing, topic sentences, bridging words</i>)	
Exercise 12	40
Fact Selection (<i>dates and time indicators</i>)	
Structure (<i>logical order, good flow</i>)	
Exercise 13	41
Fact Selection (<i>relevant details, negative facts, specificity</i>)	




Exercise 14	43
Fact Selection (<i>relevant details, specificity</i>)	
Tone and Language (<i>not dramatic</i>)	
Facts Only (<i>no opinions, no legal conclusions</i>)	
Party Descriptions	
 Deeper Dive	
Exercise 15	45
Fact Selection (<i>relevant details, negative facts, conflicting evidence, specificity</i>)	
Structure (<i>logical order, paragraphing, good flow</i>)	
Exercise 16	47
Fact Selection (<i>relevant details, specificity</i>)	
Structure (<i>logical order, paragraphing, topic sentences, bridging words, good flow</i>)	
Tone and Language (<i>not dramatic</i>)	
Chapter 5 • Discussion	49
A. Roadmap	51
Summary of Skills Tested	51
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 17	53
Conclusion (<i>comprehensive, reasoning explained</i>)	
Legal Background (<i>overall rule, legal context</i>)	
Memo Contents (<i>included items, relationship between items</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>no issue-specific material, order follows memo structure</i>)	
Exercise 18	55
Conclusion (<i>comprehensive, reasoning explained</i>)	
Legal Background (<i>overall rule, legal context</i>)	
Memo Contents (<i>excluded items, included items, relationship between items</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>no issue-specific material, order follows memo structure</i>)	

B. Discussion Conclusions	57
Summary of Skills Tested	57
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 19	59
Answer the Question	
Give a Reason When Possible	
Consistency (<i>vary wording but not substance,</i> <i>consistent prediction language</i>)	
Exercise 20	61
Answer the Question	
Give a Reason When Possible	
Keep It Short	
Consistency (<i>vary wording but not substance,</i> <i>consistent prediction language</i>)	
C. Rule and Explanation	63
Summary of Skills Tested	63
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 21	66
Rule Contours (<i>broad to narrow</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations</i>)	
Exercise 22	68
Rule Contours (<i>choice of authority, rule tailoring</i>)	
Exercise 23	71
Case Illustration (<i>introductory sentence, fact selection,</i> <i>reasoning and holding</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations</i>)	
Exercise 24	73
Rule Contours (<i>broad to narrow, rule tailoring</i>)	
Case Illustration (<i>introductory sentence, fact selection,</i> <i>reasoning and holding</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations, quotations, past tense</i>)	
Exercise 25	75
Rule Contours (<i>broad to narrow, rule tailoring</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations, quotations</i>)	
Exercise 26	77
Treatment Depth (<i>parenthetical, short explanation</i>)	

Exercise 27	78
Rule Contours (<i>rule tailoring</i>)	
Case Illustration (<i>introductory sentence, fact selection, reasoning and holding</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>no client facts, past tense</i>)	
Exercise 28	80
Rule Contours (<i>choice of authority, broad to narrow, rule tailoring</i>)	
 Deeper Dive	
Exercise 29	82
Rule Contours (<i>broad to narrow, rule tailoring</i>)	
Treatment Depth (<i>parenthetical, short explanation, case illustration</i>)	
Exercise 30	84
Rule Contours (<i>rule tailoring</i>)	
Treatment Depth (<i>parenthetical, short explanation, case illustration</i>)	
Case Illustration (<i>introductory sentence, fact selection, reasoning and holding</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations, quotations, past tense</i>)	
Exercise 31	87
Case Illustration (<i>introductory sentence, fact selection, reasoning and holding</i>)	
Multiple Case Illustrations	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations, past tense</i>)	
Exercise 32	89
Rule Contours (<i>broad to narrow, rule tailoring</i>)	
Case Illustration (<i>introductory sentence, fact selection</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citations, no client facts, quotations, past tense</i>)	
D. Application	91
Summary of Skills Tested	91
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 33	94
Effective Analogies (<i>how to analogize, relevant comparisons</i>)	
Exercise 34	95
Effective Analogies (<i>how to analogize, relevant comparisons</i>)	

Exercise 35	97
Effective Analogies (<i>relevant comparisons, proximity or pattern</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>be specific</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>objective tone</i>)	
Exercise 36	99
Structure (<i>thesis statement, arguments rather than cases</i>)	
Exercise 37	101
Structure (<i>thesis statement, analysis parallels case illustration</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>weave client facts and case information, tie back to the rule</i>)	
Exercise 38	104
Structure (<i>analysis parallels case illustration</i>)	
Effective Analogies (<i>proximity or pattern</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>weave client facts and case information</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citation</i>)	
Exercise 39	106
Structure (<i>base arguments on rules</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>be specific, tie back to the rule</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citation</i>)	
Exercise 40	107
Structure (<i>base arguments on rules</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>be specific, tie back to the rule</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>objective tone</i>)	
 Deeper Dive	
Exercise 41	109
Effective Analogies (<i>relevant comparisons, proximity or pattern</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>weave client facts and case information</i>)	
Exercise 42	111
Structure (<i>base arguments on rules</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>weave client facts and case information</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citation</i>)	
Exercise 43	113
Structure (<i>thesis statement, arguments rather than cases, base arguments on rules, analysis parallels case illustration</i>)	
Effective Analogies (<i>how to analogize, relevant comparisons</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>be specific, weave client facts and case information</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citation, objective tone</i>)	

Exercise 44	116
Structure (<i>thesis statement, arguments rather than cases, base arguments on rules, analysis parallels case illustration</i>)	
Effective Analogies (<i>how to analogize, relevant comparisons</i>)	
Show Your Work (<i>be specific, weave client facts and case information, tie back to the rule</i>)	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>citation</i>)	
 E. Counterargument and Rebuttal	119
Summary of Skills Tested	119
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 45	121
Substance (<i>only viable counterarguments, no new law</i>)	
Exercise 46	123
Structure (<i>detail the counterarguments, explicitly rebut</i>)	
Substance (<i>rebut with new analysis</i>)	
Clear Transitions	
 Deeper Dive	
Exercise 47	125
Structure (<i>detail the counterarguments, separate multiple counterarguments, explicitly rebut</i>)	
Substance (<i>only viable counterarguments, rebut with new analysis</i>)	
Clear Transitions	
Exercise 48	127
Structure (<i>detail the counterarguments, explicitly rebut</i>)	
Substance (<i>rebut with new analysis</i>)	
Clear Transitions	
 Chapter 6 • Memo Conclusion	129
Summary of Skills Tested	129
 Lightning Round	
Exercise 49	130
Keep It Short	
Give the Reasons	
Consistency	
Give Any Advice	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>answer immediately</i>)	

Exercise 50	132
Keep It Short	
Give the Reasons	
Consistency	
Give Any Advice	
Nuts and Bolts (<i>answer immediately, no citations</i>)	
 Chapter 7 • Email Memos	135
Summary of Skills Tested	135
 15 Lightning Round	
Exercise 51	137
Format (<i>short sentences and paragraphs, white space</i>)	
Language (<i>professional, grammatical</i>)	
Content (<i>specific subject line, concise, efficient</i>)	
Exercise 52	138
Format (<i>short sentences and paragraphs, headings and labels, white space</i>)	
 30 Deeper Dive	
Exercise 53	139
Format (<i>short sentences and paragraphs</i>)	
Language (<i>less formal, professional</i>)	
Content (<i>specific subject line, concise, efficient, rule-based analysis, few cites</i>)	
 60 Extended Practice	
Exercise 54	142
Format (<i>short sentences and paragraphs, headings and labels, white space</i>)	
Language (<i>less formal, professional, grammatical</i>)	
Content (<i>specific subject line, concise, efficient, rule-based analysis, few cites</i>)	
 Chapter 8 • Sample Memos (with Annotations)	143
Single-Issue Memo	145
Two-Issue Memo	151
 Chapter 9 • Sample Answers (with Annotations) to Even-Numbered Exercises	161

Master Skills Tested Chart

CHAPTER	SKILL	SUBSKILL (IF ANY)	EXERCISE TESTED
2: HEADING AND INTRODUCTION	Content	client information	1, 2
		date	1, 2
		specific issue	1, 2
	Format	alignment keep it short	1, 2 1, 2
3: QUESTION PRESENTED AND BRIEF ANSWER	Consistency	language	5, 8
		same format	8
		same order	8
		number of questions and answers	8
	Stands Alone		3, 4, 5, 7, 8
	Accepted Format	under/does/when	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
		whether	3, 4, 5, 7
		multi-sentence	3, 4, 5, 7, 8
	Legal Context		4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	Precise Question		4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	Facts	specific	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
		determinative	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
		objective	4, 6, 7
	Conclusion Not Assumed		5

CHAPTER	SKILL	SUBSKILL (IF ANY)	EXERCISE TESTED
3: QUESTION PRESENTED AND BRIEF ANSWER <i>(continued)</i>	Readability	subject/verb placement punctuation conciseness	5, 7, 8 5, 6, 7, 8 6, 7, 8
	Answer	short answer first echo question language	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
	Conclusion- Rule- Application- Conclusion Format		3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
4: STATEMENT OF FACTS	Fact Selection	relevant details	9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16
		negative facts	13, 15
		conflicting evidence	15
		specificity	13, 14, 15, 16
		dates and time indicators	12
	Structure	logical order paragraphing topic sentences bridging words good flow	11, 12, 15, 16 11, 15, 16 11, 16 11, 16 12, 15, 16
	Tone and Language	objective not dramatic no stereotypes	9, 10 10, 14, 16 10
	Facts Only	no opinions no legal conclusions	10, 14 14
	Party Descriptions		14

CHAPTER	SKILL	SUBSKILL (IF ANY)	EXERCISE TESTED
5: DISCUSSION			
A: ROADMAP	Conclusion	comprehensive reasoning explained	17, 18 17, 18
	Legal Background	overall rule legal context	17, 18 17, 18
	Memo Contents	excluded items included items relationship between items	18 17, 18 17, 18
	Nuts and Bolts	no issue-specific material order follows memo structure	17, 18 17, 18
B: DISCUSSION CONCLUSIONS	Answer the Question		19, 20
	Give a Reason When Possible		19, 20
	Keep It Short		20
	Consistency	vary wording but not substance consistent prediction language	19, 20 19, 20
C: RULE AND EXPLANATION	Rule Contours	choice of authority broad to narrow rule tailoring	22, 28 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 32 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32
	Treatment Depth	parenthetical short explanation case illustration	26, 29, 30 26, 29, 30 29, 30

CHAPTER	SKILL	SUBSKILL (IF ANY)	EXERCISE TESTED
C: RULE AND EXPLANATION <i>(continued)</i>	Case Illustration	introductory sentence fact selection reasoning and holding	23, 24, 27, 30, 31, 32 23, 24, 27, 30, 31, 32 23, 24, 27, 30, 31
	Multiple Case Illustrations		31
	Nuts and Bolts	citations no client facts quotations past tense	21, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32 27, 32 24, 25, 30, 32 24, 27, 30, 31, 32
D: APPLICATION	Structure	thesis statement arguments rather than cases base arguments on rules analysis parallels case illustration	36, 37, 43, 44 36, 43, 44 39, 40, 42, 43, 44 37, 38, 43, 44
	Effective Analogies	how to analogize relevant comparisons proximity or pattern	33, 34, 43, 44 33, 34, 35, 41, 43, 44 35, 38, 41
	Show Your Work	be specific weave client facts and case information tie back to the rule	35, 39, 40, 43, 44 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44 37, 39, 40, 44
	Nuts and Bolts	citation objective tone	38, 39, 42, 43, 44 35, 40, 43

CHAPTER	SKILL	SUBSKILL (IF ANY)	EXERCISE TESTED
E: COUNTER- ARGUMENT AND REBUTTAL	Structure	detail the counterarguments separate multiple counterarguments explicitly rebut	46, 47, 48 47 46, 47, 48
	Substance	only viable counterarguments no new law rebut with new analysis	45, 47 45 46, 47, 48
	Clear Transitions		46, 47, 48
6: MEMO CONCLUSION	Keep It Short		49, 50
	Give the Reasons		49, 50
	Consistency		49, 50
	Give Any Advice		49, 50
	Nuts and Bolts	answer immediately no citations	49, 50 50
7: EMAIL MEMOS	Format	short sentences and paragraphs headings and labels white space	51, 52, 53, 54 52, 54 51, 52, 54
	Language	less formal professional grammatical	53, 54 51, 53, 54 51, 54
	Content	specific subject line concise efficient rule-based analysis few cites	51, 53, 54 51, 53, 54 51, 53, 54 53, 54 53, 54

