WRITE A SUCCESSFUL MEMO

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Your first legal memorandum is a major milestone. With a little help, you'll be able to hit your first important assignment out of the park.

A legal memo is an objective memorandum that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of each side, supported with both facts and arguments. The memo then concludes with a statement determining which party is more likely to prevail. It is not as important to choose the right side in your conclusion as it is to analytically assess in your discussion of the issues how the court probably would decide, as opposed to how it should. These tips will help ensure an excellent grade on your memo.

Closed Memo

Your first memo assignment is an opportunity to shine right from the start. A closed memo is one in which you write a prognostic memo based on a set of research materials that are provided to you. Use the style rules at the right once you've completed these three easy steps:

1. **Create a folder to organize your materials.**
    Run a search for all citations given to you and save them to a folder in Lexis Advance®. Once saved, you can highlight in multiple colors and annotate the documents. Now all of your materials and remarks are available in one succinct spot.

2. **Use LexisNexis® tools for efficient, timesaving research.**
    Statutes: Use the Case Notes (annotations) to see how cases have interpreted your statute.
    Cases: Use LexisNexis® Case Summaries and LexisNexis® headnotes* to quickly gain an understanding of the facts and issues in the case.

3. **Shepardize®*.**
    Make sure the holdings in the cases you're citing in your memo are good law.

FIVE STYLE RULES FOR AN EFFECTIVE MEMO

1. Clearly and concisely state the facts in short, simple sentences.

2. Identify and define the legal issues in the case.

3. Research, select and read the cases and statutory authority relevant to the facts and legal issues.

    (Remember, for closed memos you simply use the research materials provided to you.)

4. Apply the law to the facts.

5. Organize your analysis of the law and the facts using either the CRAC or IRAC method.

    CRAC = conclusion, rule, analysis, conclusion
    IRAC = issue, rule, analysis, conclusion

Open Memo

An open memo is more challenging because you must write a predictive memo based on your own research of the applicable law. This is your first open research assignment. Don't worry, though. You're ahead of the game with these four easy steps:

1. **Using the hypothetical your professor provides, formulate your search.**
   - Using either natural language or terms and connectors, compose your search based on the keywords and issues from the hypothetical you were given.
   - For tips on using terms and connectors, at the initial search screen, select Filters > Advanced Search and identify the connectors you want to use.

2. **Start your research with secondary sources.**
   Persuasive authority from secondary sources will give you the background knowledge you need to understand an issue and will lead you to primary authority. Use law review articles, treatises, jurisprudence, practical guides and restatements.

3. **Complete primary law research.**
   Statutory Research:
   Although you will likely find many key statutes using secondary sources, you will find additional relevant statutes under Statutes and Legislation. Double check that you have all the relevant statutes in order to make sure your research is complete. Statutes are fully annotated so you'll see the law, plus the important decisions interpreting it, in the Case Notes.

Case-Law Research:
Although you'll locate many important cases with your secondary source research, also do case-law research to make sure your research is complete. Once you've found some good cases, maximize your efficiency with these tools:
- *LexisNexis® Case Summaries and Headnotes* help you quickly determine if a case is on point with your issue.
- *Topic Summaries* explain a new issue or area of law, giving you a jump start in the research process.
- *Legal Issue Trail™* ensures you don't miss important cases by showing you the cases that agree with yours and the cases that your case relies on to make its argument.

4. *Shepardize*
   Use *Shepard's®* Citations Service to validate all of your authority plus expand your results. Remember, not all authority is created equal. When *Shepardizing™*, use the filters to find the most persuasive, on-point cases from a controlling jurisdiction to expand your research.

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