

## Preface

We're thrilled to welcome you to the third edition of *The Handbook for the New Legal Writer*—a legal writing textbook that is grounded in the realities of modern law practice.

The *Handbook* has evolved in the decade that we have been brainstorming, planning, writing, rewriting, class-testing, and updating it. But the third edition remains true to the ideas that originally motivated us to write it.

Law students want concise and easy-to-follow instructions for how to write the foundational legal documents they will be assigned in their first year of law school and in their first jobs as lawyers. They want annotated examples, both bespoke and from the “real world,” that demonstrate how to analyze legal questions and write about them with care and clarity. And they want to have a single comprehensive book that can accompany them from law school to practice with all the guidance they need for the following key skills:

- how to write objective documents—including office memos, law school exams, and judicial opinions—and persuasive documents—including trial motions and appellate briefs;
- how to draft other forms of legal communication, including correspondence via letter, email, and instant message;
- how to prepare for and deliver oral arguments;
- how to present their work in a polished, plain-language style; and
- how to research and cite legal authorities.

For the third edition, we have added more examples of effective legal writing from recently decided cases and more examples of the types of documents students write in first-year legal writing courses. At every step, the *Handbook* includes annotations to show, rather than tell, students how to be successful legal writers.

The *Handbook* uses the term “anchors” throughout the text to show students how to analyze legal questions.

In this third edition, we added annotations focused on mindfulness, equity, and inclusion—concerns that today's law students have prioritized for law schools and the profession. They are identified with this icon and we hope they will foster important discussions about how the skills of legal analysis, writing, and research intersect with questions of professional identity, wellness, and justice.



If the best answer in law school is, “It depends,” then we finish the answer by stating, “It depends on the anchors.” Anchors are the facts, rules, and reasons that the answer to a legal question depends upon. We coined this term as a tool to help students understand how to read and synthesize legal authorities and how to analyze a client’s legal problem. We have enjoyed watching students and professors adopt this term over the last ten years, and we think that this new edition offers even more detailed instruction in using anchors to conceptualize and organize legal documents.

We hope that by offering clear direction and pertinent examples with a concern toward student well-being, the *Handbook* will be an accessible, trustworthy, and valuable guide for the new legal writer.

Anchors aweigh!

Jill and Rachel  
February 2023