

MEMO CHECKLIST

Heading

- _____ I labeled the document as a Memo or Memorandum.
- _____ I included To, From, Date, and a Re (matter line).
- _____ On the matter line, I included the necessary information to identify the scope of the memo and to easily find it later in my files.

Question Presented

- _____ I labeled the Question Presented.
- _____ I included a couple of sentences of factual context.
- _____ I concisely asked the question addressed by the memo.
- _____ If I exceeded three sentences, I did it on purpose.

Brief Answer

- _____ I labeled the Brief Answer.
- _____ I directly answered the Question Presented at the beginning of the Brief Answer.
- _____ I provided a short summary of the rule, as it relates to both issues my memo addresses.
- _____ I provided a short summary of my reasoning by explaining how the rule I just summarized applies to the specific facts of the situation.

Statement of Facts

- _____ I labeled the Statement of Facts.
- _____ I included all relevant facts, including facts that are legally or emotionally significant, facts that provide important background information, and important unknown facts if there are any.
- _____ I organized chronologically unless I had a good reason not to.
- _____ I checked to make sure that all the information in my Statement of Facts either helps me make an argument or helps me tell the story.

_____ If I included facts that don't help me make an argument or tell the story, I did it on purpose.

_____ I did not make any arguments in the Statement of Facts.

_____ I remained objective, avoided characterizations of one party as "the good guy" or another party as "the bad guy," and maintained neutral language.

_____ I included a "where we are now" statement at the end of my Statement of Facts. For example, "The Durrances have contacted us to find out whether they can return their RV for a refund or exchange it for one of equal value."

Discussion

_____ I have labeled the Discussion.

_____ I have considered including a heading to represent either the big question addressed by the memo or the answer to that big question. For example,

I. Can the Durrances revoke acceptance of their RV?

or

I. The Durrances probably can't revoke acceptance of their RV.

_____ After that heading, I have included an umbrella paragraph to summarize the general rule, using the statute's language, and I provided the necessary citations.

_____ I have considered including a short explanation of the parts of the statute that are not at issue and why.

_____ I have stated explicitly what issues the memo will address in the order I address them.

_____ I have considered including a heading (either in the form of a question or a conclusion) for each separate issue I address in the Discussion. For example,

A. Is the value of the Durrances' RV substantially impaired to them?

or

A. The value of the Durrances' RV is substantially impaired to them.

- _____ After each heading, I state and explain the rule or rules only directly related to the issue announced by the heading.
- _____ To help explain the rule, I have included helpful factual illustrations of how the rule was applied in the cases I'm relying on.
- _____ I have cited when necessary in my rules sections, which really could be after every sentence.
- _____ I avoided discussing the Durrances' situation in my rules sections.
- _____ Once I finished the rules section for each issue, I included arguments for both parties. I did this in each CRAC.
- _____ I included a clear signpost at the beginning of my arguments. For example, "The Durrances may argue..."
- _____ I listed arguments for the party carrying the burden of proof first, then the other party's arguments, separating them with helpful transitional language. For example, "On the other hand, CJ's may argue..."
- _____ In my arguments I included helpful comparisons or distinctions between the facts of my case and the facts from the cases I'm relying on to strengthen my arguments.
- _____ I included a short conclusion at the end of each CRAC to indicate which party will likely prevail. I've included a very brief summary of my reasoning along with that conclusion in not more than two or three sentences.
- _____ I made sure that both CRACs meet this checklist's requirements.

Conclusion

- _____ I labeled the major Conclusion at the end of the memo.
- _____ My conclusion matches my Brief Answer in terms of the predicted outcome.
- _____ My conclusion is more detailed than my Brief Answer, but significantly less detailed than my Discussion.

General Concerns

_____ I did a cold edit, having stayed away from my finished memo as long as I could before I started the process.

_____ I proofread my memo more than once, and I considered proofreading a hard copy instead of proofreading on my computer screen.

_____ I spelled everything correctly.

_____ My grammar is flawless. For example, I didn't use the possessive Durrances' (with an apostrophe) when I meant to use the plural Durrances (without an apostrophe).

_____ Most of my sentences are around twenty words.

_____ I don't have any page-long paragraphs.

_____ Every sentence is readable and makes sense on the first read-through. I don't have to read anything more than once to understand what I mean.

_____ Every sentence sounds great when I read it aloud.

_____ I omitted all legalese. For example, I didn't use words like aforementioned, or herein, or heretofore. I also didn't use "such" as a modifier, like "such defects" or "such opportunity to cure." Instead I used a simple "the."

_____ I don't have any really long paragraphs.

_____ I cited everything correctly, using proper *Bluebook* form.

_____ I used the long-form citation for each source the first time I cited it.

_____ I considered how my document looks on the page, making sure that everything looks professional. For example, no headings fall at the bottom of a page with nothing underneath. And I tabbed over after the colons in my memo's heading, so the information lines up. And I considered whether everything looked balanced on each page. And I didn't tinker with the margins so much that my memo looks like it needs to loosen its belt after a huge meal.

_____ I numbered my pages.

_____ I am proud of this memo, and if I'm not, I know why.

