

2013 Legal Writing: Precision and Persuasion
November 15, 2013 • AT&T Conference Center • Austin, TX
January 31, 2014 • Dallas

Friday Morning, Nov. 15, 2013

8:00 am In Austin Only	Registration Opens Includes continental breakfast.
8:25 am In Austin Only	Welcoming Remarks
8:30 am In Austin Only 0.50 hr	Beyond Commas Legal writing is professional writing. Legal writers should master not only basic writing mechanics but also advanced skills. In this session, learn the fine points of grammar that will add credibility and precision to everything you write. In addition, get to know the most reliable sources to consult when you need to answer a question that goes beyond commas—and when you need advice on commas, too. Kamela Bridges, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX Wayne Schiess, The University of Texas School of Law - Austin, TX
9:00 am In Austin Only 0.50 hr	Looks Matter In this session, learn to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • layout a legal document so it welcomes readers—even those who read it on a screen • use Word to enhance outlining and document navigation • generate a Table of Contents in 5 seconds • make Word’s grammar checker useful instead of laughable
9:30 am In Austin Only 0.50 hr	Point/Counterpoint Enjoy an enthusiastic and informative debate on three writing topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practical</i>: How detailed should your pleading be—general or specific? • <i>Persnickety</i>: Can we and should we avoid the default male pronoun (<i>he, him, his</i>) in legal writing? Are we sexist if we don’t? And can we use the singular <i>they</i>? • <i>Passionate</i>: Legal citations for practitioner documents—in footnotes or in text?
10:00 am In Austin Only	Break
10:15 am In Austin Only 0.50 hr	Too Little, Too Much, or Just Right? You found some relevant cases and you plan to rely on them, so shouldn’t you tell the reader about them? On the other hand, no one wants to read a series of lengthy case summaries. In this session, learn techniques for presenting legal authority concisely and efficiently, including selective use and placement of explanatory parentheticals.

10:45 am In Austin Only 0.50 hr	Pleasing the Court Judges have opinions about legal writing too. Hear the best advice collected from a variety of judicial sources about what judges do and don't like in legal writing.
11:15 am In Austin Only 0.50 hr ethics	Name that Penalty, Part 1 Guess the consequences for lawyers who misquote, exceed the page limit, attack the judge, and just plain write poorly in this entertaining and informative multiple-choice quiz.
11:45 am In Austin Only	Lunch on Your Own

Friday Afternoon, Nov. 15, 2013

1:00 pm In Austin Only 0.75 hr	Organization: Giving the Reader a Roadmap Sensibly ordering your writing is important, but not as important as ensuring that your reader knows the order you've chosen. Convey that order by using up-front conclusions and summaries, headings (both topical and explanatory), bullets, transitions, and connectors.
1:45 pm In Austin Only 0.75 hr	Persuading with Style In legal writing, exaggeration, hyperbole, and sarcasm don't persuade, and neither do <i>bold italics</i> , ALL-CAPS, or exclamation marks!!! Legal writers have more-effective tools, and this session covers sentence- and word-level writing techniques ranging from punctuation to classical rhetoric that legal writers can easily add to their tools for persuasive writing.
2:30 pm In Austin Only	Break
2:45 pm In Austin Only 0.50 hr	You've Got Questions Attendees anonymously submit a question related to writing, and the presenters answer them.
3:15 pm In Austin Only 0.50 hr	Lawyers Are Editors Bad writing becomes good and good writing becomes great only through editing. In this session, the presenters offer advice for improving your editing techniques, creating and using an effective editing checklist, implementing a thorough editing process, and editing in a time crunch.
3:45 pm In Austin Only 0.50 hr ethics	Name that Penalty, Part 2 More consequences for lawyers who fail to cite, omit binding law, blather on for pages, and just plain write poorly in this entertaining and informative multiple-choice quiz.
4:15 pm In Austin Only	Adjourn