



CONTENTS

Introduction xvii

CHAPTER 1

THE DECISION TO APPEAL 1

A. Appeals and the Appellate Process 1

1. Appeals Defined 1
2. Appellate Courts and Their Jurisdiction 2
3. Appellate Lawyers and Appellate Briefs 3
4. Generative AI in Appellate Brief Writing 5

B. Appealable Error 7

1. Identifying Trial Court Errors and Appealable Decisions 7
2. The Time for Appeal 10
3. The Trial Court Record 10
4. Preservation of Issues for Appeal 12

Summary 13

CHAPTER 2

THE THREE OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES OF APPELLATE BRIEF WRITING 15

A. Thinking Like an Appellate Lawyer 15

B. The Perspective Principle: Seeing the Appeal from the Appellate Court's Viewpoint 16

1. Putting Yourself in the Shoes of the Appellate Judge 16
2. Blazing a Seamless Trail Through the Briefing Thicket 19

C. The Structural Principle: Build the Brief Around Analyses of Issues and Standards of Review 21

1. The Core Function of Appellate Judging 21
2. The Relationship Between the Issues and the Function of Appellate Review 21

D. The Organizational Principle: Separate the Analytic Process from the Writing Process 22

1. Think (Long and Hard) Before You Write 22
2. Reaping the Benefits of Organizing First 25

Summary 26

C H A P T E R 3

APPELLATE RULES AND STANDARDS OF REVIEW 27

A. The Role of Appellate Rules and Rules of Court 27

1. The Sources and Scope of Appellate Rules 28
2. Why Appellate Rules Matter in Practice 28

B. The Standards of Appellate Review 30

1. The Review Function of Appellate Courts 30
2. Locating the Standard of Review for an Issue 31
3. The Principal Standards of Review 32
4. Waiver, Prejudice, and Harmless Error 37
5. Explaining the Standard of Review to the Court 37
6. The Relationship Between the Standard of Review and the Issues Raised 39
7. Using the Standard of Review 40

Summary 42

C H A P T E R 4

AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPELLATE BRIEF 43

A. Types of Appellate Briefs 43

1. The Core Briefs: What the Parties Write 44
2. The Range of Supplementary Briefs 44
3. Voices from the Sidelines: The Role of Amicus Curiae Briefs 45

B. Determining the Contents of an Appellate Brief 47

C. The Basic Parts of an Appellate Brief 49

1. Jurisdictional Statement 49
2. Statement of Issues 49
3. Statement of Facts 49
4. Statement of the Case 49
5. Standard of Review 50
6. Summary of Argument/Introduction 50
7. Argument 51
8. Conclusion 51

D. The Mechanics of Producing the Brief 52**Summary 53**C H A P T E R 5**THE STATEMENT OF ISSUES 55****A. The Purpose of Separately Stating the Issues 55****B. Drafting the Statement of Issues 56**

1. Selecting the Issues 56
2. Formulating the Issue 58
3. Questions, Law, and Facts 60
4. Choosing What to Emphasize 61
5. Ordering the Issues 63
6. Referring to Parties 64

C. Recognizing a Good Statement of an Issue 64**Summary 65**C H A P T E R 6**THE PRELUDE: THE STATEMENT OF FACTS AND THE PROCEDURAL HISTORY 67****A. The Statement of Facts 67**

1. Supplying Dispositive Facts 67
2. Context Facts: Telling a Story 68
3. Identifying the Relevant and Dispositive Facts from the Record 69
4. Lining Up the Facts in Order 70
5. Accuracy and the “Favorable Light” 72
6. Setting Up the Subheadings as Guideposts 75
7. Applying the Principles 75

B. The Procedural History 77

1. The Function of the Procedural History 77
2. Only Essential History Wanted 77
3. Applying the Principles 79

Summary 79

C H A P T E R 7

THE ROAD MAP: POINT HEADINGS 81

A. Creating a “Road Map” Before Writing the Argument 81

1. Extending Your Analytical Thinking 81
2. A Look at the Table of Contents 82
3. The Multiple Functions of Point Headings 83
4. Thinking About the Order of the Issues 87

B. Writing a Point Heading 89

1. Complete Sentences That Use Facts and Persuade 89
2. Subheadings That Break Down the Overall Argument 91
3. Style Conventions in Drafting Headings 92

C. Using Point Headings as an Organizing Tool 92

Summary 93

C H A P T E R 8

BUILDING THE ARGUMENT: CASES, STATUTES, AND TRANSITIONS 95

A. Using Cases and Statutes 96

1. The Mental Process of Using a Case Precedent 96
2. When a Complete Analysis Is Needed 99
3. Applying Statutes and Constitutional Provisions 100
4. The Basic Building Blocks of Argument 102

B. Constructing an Argument on an Issue 103

1. A Review of What You Already Know 103
2. Setting Up the Argument: Supplying the Necessary Legal Background 103
3. Previewing the Upcoming Argument 107
4. Framing the Specific Issue 108
5. Making Factual Comparisons 110
6. Distinguishing Cases 113
7. Applying Statutes 114
8. Policy or Intent Arguments—Know Your Audience 115
9. Using Quotations in Making Arguments 116
10. To Footnote or Not? 117

C. Transitions 118

1. The Structure of Transitions 119
2. Caution and Precision 120

Summary 121

C H A P T E R 9**THE INTRODUCTION OR SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT 123****A. Previewing the Case to the Court 124**

1. The Perspective Principle (Once Again) 124
2. Differentiating an Introduction from a Summary of Argument 124
3. Checking the Court's Rules 125
4. Purposes: Summarizing and Persuading 125

B. Common Questions for the Brief Writer 126

1. Location in the Brief and Its Consequences 126
2. Deciding the Length 127
3. Sources of Material 127
4. When to Write the Introduction or Summary: A Debate 127

C. Techniques 129

1. Capturing the Court's Attention 129
2. Telling the Story 130
3. Employing Themes 131
4. Requesting Relief 133
5. Framing the Opponent's Argument 134

Summary 136C H A P T E R 10**BASIC WRITING RULES AND OTHER MECHANICS 137****A. Good Writing Is Not a Matter of “Style” 137****B. Ten Writing Principles to Follow 139**

1. Sentence Length 139
2. Paragraph Length 143
3. Minimize Use of the Passive Voice 145
4. Keep Subjects Near Verbs and Verbs Near Objects 148
5. Omit Surplus Words 149
6. Do Not Turn Verbs into Nouns 150
7. Avoid Noun Chains 150
8. Avoid Vague Referents 151
9. Do Not Assume Knowledge by the Reader 152
10. Use Topic Sentences and Stress Locations 153

C. A Short List of Usages to Avoid 155**D. Citations: A Few Words of Warning 157****E. Writing Improvement in Perspective 159****Summary 160**

C H A P T E R 1 1

EDITING AND FINALIZING THE BRIEF 161

A. The Process of Editing 161

1. The Importance of the Editing Function 162
2. Creating an Approach to Editing 162
3. The Need to “Break Away” 164
4. Developing Editing Skills Through Practice 165
5. Using Generative AI to Support the Editing Process 165

B. Finalizing the Brief 167

1. Cite Checking 167
2. Double Checking Compliance with Rules 168
3. Final Proofreading 168

Summary 170

C H A P T E R 1 2

ORAL ARGUMENT 171

A. After the Briefing Is Complete 172

1. The Waiting Period 172
2. The Court’s Internal Analysis 172

B. Preparing for Oral Argument 173

1. “Hot” and “Cold” Benches 173
2. Refamiliarizing Yourself with the Case 174
3. Outlining Your Argument 175
4. Taking Control of the Beginning and the Conclusion 175
5. Confronting the Hardest Questions 176
6. Practicing the Argument and Properly Using Notes 177
7. Knowing and Using the Record 177
8. Using Generative AI to Prepare for Oral Argument 178

C. The Mechanics of Arguing 179

1. The Formal Decorum of Oral Argument 179
2. Conducting Remote Oral Arguments 179
3. Engaging in a Conversation 180
4. Using a Moderate Tone 180
5. Avoiding the Speed Trap 180

D. Argument Procedure 181

1. Introducing Yourself and Reserving Time for Rebuttal 181
2. Creating a Road Map for the Argument Ahead 182
3. The Respondent’s Argument 182

- 4. The Concluding “Time Crunch” 183
- 5. Using Rebuttal Time Effectively 184

E. Answering Questions 184

- 1. The Initial Response: A Full Stop 184
- 2. Answer, Then Explain 185
- 3. Always Respect the Court 186

Summary 186A P P E N D I X A**Sample Appellate Brief 189**A P P E N D I X B**Chapter Exercises 217*****Index 251***