

Tips for Students from Students

TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE MEMO

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WHAT IS A MEMO? WHY ARE MEMOS IMPORTANT?

A memo, or legal memorandum, refers to a comprehensive and organized written document that summarizes and applies the relevant laws on a particular legal question or issue to support a conclusion. Legal memos are a great way to have all the relevant research that applies to a legal problem concisely organized in one document. This research, along with the application of it to the facts, allows lawyers to make informed decisions for their clients. Law students and lawyers are frequently writing legal memos, so it is an important skill to master. Here are tips for writing an effective memo:

Content tips:

1. Make sure to fully understand the facts presented to pinpoint the legal issues. Clearly and concisely state the facts in short simple sentences.
2. Identify and define the legal issues in the case.
3. Take the time to extensively research and identify all cases and statutes that are relevant to the legal issues. See the tips for using Lexis Advance Quicklaw below.
4. Synthesize the relevant law and apply it to the legal issues.
5. Provide an informed conclusion based on your research and application.

Format and Style Tips:

1. Use headings and subheadings to organize the memo. Some examples of headings to use include: introduction, statement of facts, analysis, conclusion.
2. Write clearly using simple sentences and the active voice.
3. Start each paragraph with a topic sentence.
4. Proofread the memo at least twice for any errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling.
5. Make sure all citations are accurate and in the correct format. Use the Copy Citation button in Lexis Advance Quicklaw.

Lexis Advance Quicklaw has all the sources you need to write the most effective legal memo:

Content Type	Practice Area	Jurisdiction (NEW)	Advanced Search
Cases	Current & Historical Legislation	Secondary Materials	Popular Sources
Court Decisions	Legislation	Commentary & Textbooks	Halsbury's Laws of Canada
④ Tribunal Decisions	Acts	Quantums	① JurisClasseur Québec
Case Summaries	③ Annotated Legislation	Drafting Materials (Precedents)	Tables of Concordance
⑤ Pleadings, Motions and Facta	Regulations	② Law Reviews & Journals	Smart Charts
	Court Rules	Current Awareness	
	Historical Legislation	Dictionaries	

1. **Legal Encyclopedias:** Start your research with Halsbury's Laws of Canada and Jurisclasseur Quebec, exclusively on Lexis Advance Quicklaw.
2. **Law Reviews and Journals:** Get extensive analysis of your issues with a comprehensive collection of Canadian and international law reviews and journals.
3. **Statutes:** With annotated statutes and legislative citators, you'll not only see the law, you'll see the important decisions interpreting it as well.
4. **Court and Tribunal Decisions and Case Summaries:** You won't miss any important decisions with case-law coverage dating back to the 1800s.
5. **Pleadings, Motions and Facta:** See the filed court documents from pivotal cases in key practice areas – including legal memoranda and facta, to see how litigators have framed similar arguments.

Exclusive research tools to help you uncover the best sources for your memo:

Related Content: Lexis Advance provides direct links from case law to History of the Case, Citing Cases, Case Summaries, Commentary Referring to this Case and, where available, Pleadings, Motions and Facta from the case.

Canadian Case Summaries and All Canada Digests: Collections of summaries of important decisions, indexed and searchable by areas of practice, jurisdiction and legal topics.

Research Map: Graphical track and revisit your legal research history to rerun and update your searches or to find similar documents.

Headnotes, Catchwords and Case Summary: For leading cases, you'll quickly see the most important keywords, quotations, and a summary of the case, conveniently listed above the decision.

Citing Cases: Note up with QuickCITE and see the treatment and citing cases for a decision, using the same graphical tool lawyers, judges and other legal professionals use, to ensure the cases cited in your memo are good law.

You can visit the LexisNexis [Documentation and Training](#) page for manuals and videos on how to utilize these and other exclusive tools.

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