

## Editing Checklists

The following are a list of topics for which your brief should be edited. For any read of the brief, focus on no more than one or two topics at a time. If you happen to notice an unrelated problem that should be edited, go ahead and mark it, then return to the subject of your edit.

Ideally, each topic edit should be done by two different team members. Assign people the editing topics with which they are most comfortable.

### Checklist for Edits of the Outline / Table of Contents

You should do these edits at two stages: (1) after you have completed a draft outline; and (2) after you have finished the brief.

Editing topic	editor 1	editor 2	deadline
For every A, is there a B? For every 1, is there a 2?		----	
Is every element of the outline a complete sentence?		----	
Does each sentence in the outline express only one thought or argument?			
Is each outline sentence a positive arguments for your position, rather than a neutral statement about the law or facts?			
Does the outline have enough layers of detail so that reader can see the flow of the argument?			
Does each header directly support the header under which it falls.			
Does the outline repeat key phrases and buzzwords? Or does it use synonyms? If there are synonyms, delete the synonym and replace with the word used previously in the outline for the same concept.			
(After completion of the brief) Are there points in the outline that are only followed by a few sentences of text? If so delete the header and merge the text into another appropriate part of the outline.			
(After completion of the brief) Is the outline in the table of contents identical to the outline headers that appear in the brief?		-----	
(After completion of the brief) Is the argument header a fair summary of the text that follows the header? Or does the argument of the section go beyond the scope of the header?			

## The Brief

Typically, a brief is edited in two phases: (1) heavy editing; and (2) proofreading. You should finish all heavy editing and make changes before you progress to proofreading.

### 1 - Heavy Editing

Editing topic	editor 1	editor 2	deadline
<b>Statement of facts – Order of subjects.</b> Identify the subject of each sentence in the statement of facts. Is the subject the most appropriate one for the sentence, or should the story of that sentence be told from a different perspective?			
<b>Statement of facts – Objective tone.</b> Does the statement of facts read as though it is being told by an objective narrator, but at the same time order the facts in a manner that is most advantageous to your client? To achieve an objective tone, avoid adjectives and adverbs that are not used in the record.			
<b>Statement of facts – emphasis.</b> Identify the parts of the story that you want to de-emphasize and the parts you want to emphasize. Are the parts you want to emphasize toward the end of the sentence? Are the parts you want to de-emphasize in subordinate clauses and/or in the middle of a sentence?			
<b>Issues.</b> Do your issues give the reader enough information to suggest an answer that is favorable to you?			
<b>Argument order.</b> Is your best issue first and your worst issue last? Within each issue, do you make your best arguments first? Readers are more likely to read with much more attention toward the beginning.			
<b>Logic.</b> Does the argument make sense? Are there obvious problems that need to be addressed?			
<b>Topic sentences.</b> Does each paragraph in the argument sentence have a topic sentence that explains the argument of the paragraph and appears in the first 1 - 2 sentences of the paragraph?			
<b>Paragraph breaks –</b> Does each paragraph focus primarily on one argument and the support for it? If the paragraph contains more than one argument, consider separate paragraphs? Is the paragraph longer than 2/3 of a page? If so, consider some way to shorten it or divide it.			
<b>Concision -</b> Are there unnecessary words or phrases that may be deleted? Are there redundant sentences or paragraphs that should be deleted?			

<b>Weaving</b> - Does every argument header and paragraph topic sentence weave together facts and law?			
<b>Cases</b> - Before any lengthy discussion of a case, does the brief explain why the case is being cited?			
<b>Explain why you win / connect the dots.</b> For each argument, is there an explanation of how it relates to the reasons why you win? Before going into an argument, does the brief give the reasons the argument is being made? Does the brief give a conclusion for each argument rather than expecting the reader to reach her own conclusion?			
<b>Clash/Join the Issue.</b> Does the argument briefly identify the best argument for the other side? explain why the other side’s argument is wrong? and explain why your argument is better?			
<b>Argument Section – Order of subjects.</b> Identify the subject of each sentence in the statement of facts. Is the subject the most appropriate one for the sentence, or should the story of that sentence be told from a different perspective?			
<b>Emphasis</b> – Are emphasis words located toward the end of the sentence? When the brief introduces new concepts or information, are they located toward the end of the sentence?			
<b>Summary of argument.</b> Is your summary approximately one page? Does it fairly and persuasively summarize the argument?			
<b>Other editing topics that you choose to emphasize:</b>			

## Proofreading

The following checks should be done in the last several days. I recommend doing them in the order listed, when possible.

Editing topic	editor 1	editor 2	deadline
<p><b>Briefing rules check.</b> Read your tournament's rules again. Does the brief meet all format requirements for your tournament? Does the brief meet all format requirements in the relevant rules (i.e., a brief hypothetically prepared for a federal court of appeals should follow the briefing rules in the Fed. Rules of Appellate Procedure.).</p>			
<p><b>Cite check.</b> One person on the team who did no research on a particular issue should check each citation on that issue and confirm that the cited material fairly asserts the point for which it is cited.</p>			
<p><b>Blue Book.</b> Check each citation against the Blue Book. After all other editing is completed, create short forms. [Note: if you create short forms too early, you may delete the long form in the editing process, leaving a short form with no preceding long form].</p>			
<p><b>Read aloud check.</b> This edit is done by two people at the same time. Take turn reading each sentence in the brief aloud to someone else who is just listening, not reading along with you. The person reading aloud should not be the person who wrote the particular section. Does each sentence make sense when read aloud? Are there problems with grammar or missing words that need to be fixed?</p>			
<p><b>Spell check.</b></p>			
<p><b>Pretty brief check.</b> Are the margins and spacing consistent? Do argument headers appear in bold and the remainder of the text in normal font? Are there widows and orphans that should be avoided? Is the brief pleasing to the eye?</p>			
<p><b>Table of contents / index of authorities.</b> Do the page numbers in the table of contents and index of authorities match correctly with the headers and authorities in the brief? <b>Save at least 2 days after finishing everything else to do the tables.</b></p>			
<p><b>Other editing topics that you choose to emphasize:</b></p>			