

Oklahoma Bar Association

Guidelines for Written Material

Your materials are due to the OBA **AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO THE FIRST SEMINAR DATE.**

Page Numbers:

Number each page with the page number. Begin numbering the second page of text with the "2" at the bottom in the center.

Page Limits:

There is a 30-page limit for a 50-minute presentation and a 15-page limit for a 25-minute presentation. This may be adjusted depending upon the time allotted to the topic.

To help save trees, please do not include copies of a case or statute unless it is "hot off the press." Instead, list the statute(s) and case(s) in the index.

Index:

Include subtopics, attachments, charts, etc. Most attendees refer to the number course book more when it is indexed.

Miscellaneous:

**DO NOT STAPLE THE PAGES*

Send a "camera ready" copy of your materials. The copies need to be free of black margins and lined-up straight on the paper.

*Be sure to cover all the topics on the program. OBA/CLE is obligated to deliver what was advertised, especially forms.

Put your materials in text form (preferably in PDF format) and email to Nina Anderson, (ninaa@okbar.org). This allows us to more easily accommodate some of the visually impaired members of the OBA

*Forward the hard copy and disk of your work to Nina Anderson, 1901 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105.

Copyright Information:

The OBA has a copyright to the collected work in which your material will appear. You retain the individual copyright to your own material, allowing you to freely sell or otherwise distribute it and revise or republish it at will. Submission of your material grants the OBA a nonexclusive license for the benefit to reproduce, sell, and otherwise distribute all or portions of your material under your name, individually or as part of collective and derivative works, on paper or through any other kind of medium (including electronic) now known or that might be created.

Oral Presentation: You and the OBA have the same rights with respect to your oral presentation as with your written presentation.

Please execute and return the enclosed agreement.

OBA/CLE
A CHECKLIST:
Writing Your CLE MATERIALS

Before you write

- Determine what information the audience expects.
- Develop a thesis: one that anticipates the needs and interest of this audience (basic, intermediate, advanced).

When you write

- Write in a narrative format, not an outline format. Seminar materials should stand as an independent source and notes or other sources should not be required to make the book a useful legal source.
- Deliver the substance promised by the published program.
- Deliver the substance the audience expects.
- Deliver forms if promised.
- Define the scope of materials, such as “these materials are not exhaustive, but the materials do cover...the following.”
- Don’t make citations part of a sentence. Put citations at the end of the sentence.
- Don’t use footnotes. If it is important enough to be included, it is important enough to be in the narrative of your materials.
- Don’t attach copies of statutes or cases unless you are presenting from the ACTUAL language of the attachment.
- Include a direct quote from another source only if you cannot improve on the language or if the specific language creates a legal issue. It is always better to paraphrase and put into your own words - even if it is the law.
- If you do quote, try to include the quotation in your text. Keep the quotes as short as possible.
- If you do include a direct quote, use the blue book rule on format: if fewer than 50 words include in direct quotation marks in text, double spaced. If 50 or more words, double indent, single-space the quote, and do not use quotation marks. All punctuation goes inside quote marks except for the semi-colon. There are some instances where ? goes inside quotation marks and some instances where the ? goes outside quotation marks, but that should not be a concern for you because your materials won’t include questions!
- Use topic sentences. (A topic sentence is the thesis for each paragraph. See below how topic sentences help with editing.)
- Use transitions. Place transitions as the end of the prior paragraph or at the beginning of the next paragraph.
- Don’t use passive sentences: Bad -The room was cleaned by the maid. Good - The maid cleaned the room.
- Don’t use fancy words/legalese. Use simple language.
- Keep the subject of the sentence close to the verb of the sentence.
- Use active verbs.
- Use short sentences and short paragraphs. Do you have lots of commas/ Is the flow of your work interrupted by clauses? Phrases? Something may be wrong with your organization if have these problems.

Signpost! First, Second (not secondly), Third (not thirdly) and deliver on the promised information. Headings can also serve as signposts.

Don't use indefinite pronouns - what is "it?"

Spell check, BUT edit for spelling with your own eyes (to, too, two - spell check won't necessarily find the *right* one).

Confirm gross organization is effective by reading each topic sentence. If you have drafted good topic sentences and ordered the paragraphs properly, you can read each topic sentence out loud and the entire presentation should be understood. Does it flow? Does it make sense? If the topics sentences read together fail to clearly explain the presentation, step by step, then your gross organization is off or your topic sentences are not good.

Edit out unnecessary words.

Edit out slang or jargon.

Use headings. Appropriate headings make your written work more useable to the reader.

Form over substance?

You have received written material guidelines. Have you conformed?

Index? Margins? Type size? Type font? Page Numbering? To staple or not to staple? Hard copy? Provide disk or email? Line spacing? Columns?

Meet the printing deadline given to you.

If your materials are not included in the seminar course book, it may reflect negatively on your organizational skills. If you look at CLE presentation opportunities as a chance to obtain referrals, you need to show the registrants you can make deadlines.

If you cannot meet the deadline, give the appropriate OBA/CLE staff person as much notice as possible.