

RICHARD GRAND LEGAL WRITING COMPETITION – 2009

WHO MAY ENTER:

All current students of the James E. Rogers College of Law may enter the competition. J.D. students, advanced-degree students, visiting students, and transfer students may enter.

DATES AND TIMES:

The competition runs from Friday, October 23 to Monday, November 2. The problem will be posted on the College of Law web site no later than noon on October 23. All entries must be submitted electronically no later than 8:00 a.m. on November 2. No late entries will be accepted.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS:

Prior to Monday, November 2 at 8:00 a.m., please submit your finished entry electronically to donald.sheldon@law.arizona.edu. Please put your name only on the first page of your submission. After assigning a competition number to your submission, Mr. Sheldon will then remove your name -- and all metadata -- so that the submissions can be evaluated anonymously.

Please send your entry as an e-mail attachment in Word, WordPerfect, pdf, or Rich Text Format only. If you submit an entry more than once, we will accept the e-mail with the latest time listed.

QUESTIONS:

If a question arises about this competition, you may choose to resolve it yourself by including an explanatory note with your entry. If you need to speak to someone to resolve a question, please send an email to Professor Suzanne Rabe at rabe@law.arizona.edu. Include your phone number in the email. Professor Rabe will check her e-mail regularly and answer questions within a reasonable amount of time.

Important: If you feel that disclosure of your identity with your question might in any way – no matter how remotely – compromise the anonymity of your entry, please send your question to Donald Sheldon at donald.sheldon@law.arizona.edu. Mr. Sheldon, who will not be involved in the judging of the competition, will either (1) answer your question himself or (2) remove all indications of your identity before he seeks an answer from Professor Rabe.

JUDGING AND AWARDS:

Entries will be judged for accuracy, clarity, brevity, and persuasiveness. A winning entry will be well-written, well-reasoned, and interesting. Professors Suzanne Rabe and Susan Salmon will evaluate the student entries and choose five finalists. Then, a panel of outside judges will rank the finalists to determine the order of the awards. The awards will be announced in January, 2010.

RULES:

1. Submit your entry anonymously. Only include your name on the first page of your entry when you email it to Mr. Sheldon. He will then assign you a competition number and remove your name.
2. Although the problem will include links to some explanatory materials, you are not limited to these materials. You may consult newspaper or magazine articles or even outside legal sources. You may consult sources on the Internet or on Westlaw and Lexis. You may consult a dictionary, thesaurus, citation manual, legal-writing text, or style manual. You may use the spell-check and grammar-check features on your word processor. There is really no limit to the outside sources that you may consult except Rule #3, which prohibits participants from discussing the problem – either orally or in writing -- with anyone other than Professor Rabe and Donald Sheldon.
3. The work must be entirely your own. You may receive no advice concerning the competition from anyone. No one else may read, proofread, or critique your writing for this competition. Do not discuss the problem with anyone other than Professor Rabe or Donald Sheldon (the legal writing administrative assistant) until the competition is officially terminated at 8:00 a.m. on November 2.
4. Your entry must be your own original work prepared exclusively for this competition. You may not enter work that was written – in part or in full – prior to the beginning of this competition.
5. All entries must be typed, double-spaced, with 13-point font or larger. Block quotes may be single-spaced. The maximum length of the paper is eight pages. Margins must be one inch or larger on all four sides of the paper. Papers that exceed these limitations will not be judged. Include page numbers *on every page* of the entry.
6. If you choose to cite cases or other sources in your entry, we recommend that you cite them in footnotes or endnotes. It would be unusual to have in-text citations in an editorial, even an editorial for an audience of lawyers. To the best of your ability, use proper citation form – either ALWD format or Bluebook format.

7. If you are not familiar with proper ALWD or Bluebook citation form (i.e. if you are a 1L), you may either (a) choose not to cite sources formally in your entry, or (b) use a more informal system of citation that includes, at a minimum, the name of the source and the page number.

8. Several copies of the ALWD Manual are available in the legal writing office (Room 260) for 72-hour check-out.

9. While we ask that your entry be neat and carefully proofread, please know that your entry will be judged primarily on its substantive content. Focus on your argument and your analysis. Be accurate, succinct, clear, and persuasive. Look at the big picture. Dare to be interesting.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: How long do you think it will take to write an entry for this competition?

Answer: We think an excellent entry can be written over a weekend in one to two days—or maybe even less time. We do not anticipate that you will spend all your extra time during the 10 days of the competition writing and working on your entry.

Question: How important is proofreading, punctuation, spelling, and the like?

Answer: Those things are less important than the argument you make and the persuasiveness of that argument. But, we do hope you will proofread your entry. Professors Rabe and Salmon will look primarily for an interesting, persuasive, well-written entry. Their decisions will not be influenced by minor proofreading errors. We cannot guarantee, however, that the five outside judges – the ones who determine the order of the awards – will not take minor proofreading errors into account when making their decisions.

Question: What kind of writing style are you looking for?

Answer: We anticipate that we will read and enjoy a variety of writing styles among the entries submitted. We are looking for good writing – effective and interesting writing – and not for any particular style of writing. Your chosen audience and the subject of your profile will likely inform the style that you adopt. Your own personality may also come into play.

Question: Do you recommend any particular style manual? Should we use the *New York Times Manual of Style*? *The Chicago Manual of Style*?

Answer: For this competition, we neither require nor recommend any particular style manual. You will be fine if you follow the general conventions of American English. Most serious writers – and nearly all publications – do use a style manual. Style manuals answer questions about punctuation, grammar, numbers, abbreviations, spelling, capitalization, spacing, and more. Here in the legal writing office, we use *The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style* by Bryan Garner. You will find copies of *The Redbook* on reserve in the library.

Question: I have a spelling question and a punctuation question. May I ask someone in the legal writing office?

Answer: No. All writing and style decisions must be your own. You may, however, consult online sources or print sources to help you answer your questions. A dictionary, thesaurus, or style manual may be helpful.

Question: May I use metaphor, simile, and literary references in my entry? What about storytelling?

Answer: Absolutely. You may use literary devices to capture the interest of your reader and to communicate your argument in vivid, memorable prose. You may tell stories – in first, second, or third person.

Question: Do you recommend that I cite cases and other sources in the editorial – or do you think it would be more effective to write it in the style of a newspaper editorial with no formal citations?

Answer: This is entirely up to you. Whatever you do, though, strive for readability in your editorial. Sometimes you can be more persuasive and more compelling if you include citations. With footnotes and formal citations, though, you have to be careful that the editorial doesn't become too dry and academic. Remember, this is a writing contest. Your entry should be readable and interesting.

Question: The problem gives links to sample editorials from the *Arizona Attorney* magazine. Should we follow the style in these editorials?

Answer: Not necessarily. These links are included because every year we receive emails from students asking for samples. You need not write your editorial for a bar journal. You could instead write it for a newspaper, a newsletter, or even an online blog of some sort. You may write in a more conversational or informal style. Just keep in mind the requirement that your target audience must be made up of lawyers.