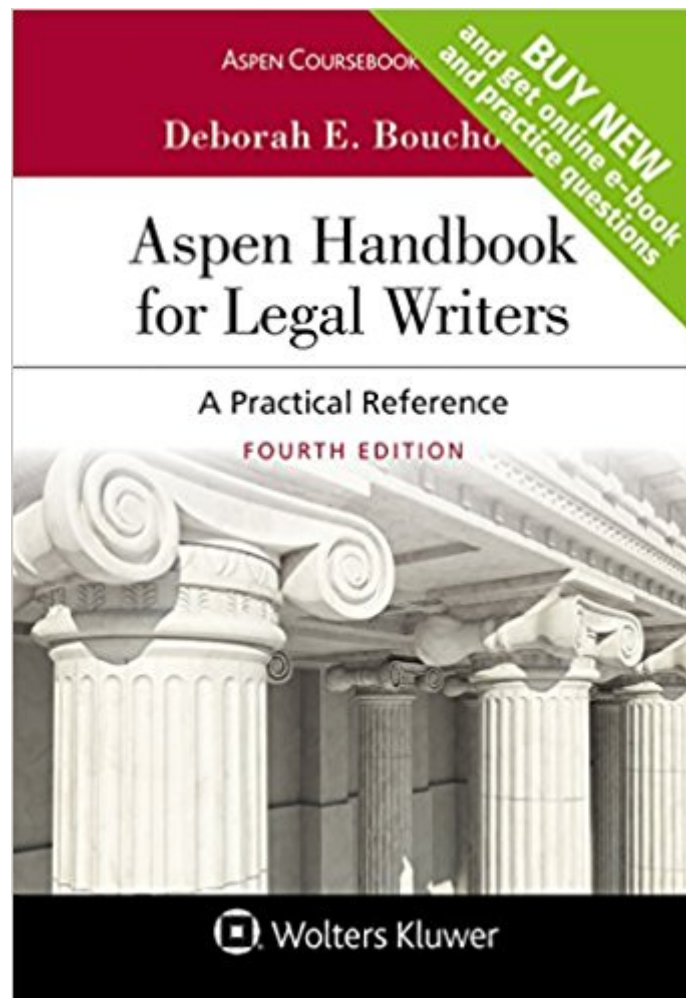




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Aspen Handbook For Legal Writers: A Practical Reference [Connected Casebook] (Aspen Coursebook)



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

The Aspen Handbook is an outstanding reference text for law students who need a refresher on basic writing skills in a real-world legal context. As a law professor who teaches legal reasoning, analysis, and writing, I have required this textbook each year since it was initially published. One of its most attractive features is the sample memos and briefs in the back of the book, which offer helpful examples of the specialized formats lawyers use in practice. At the beginning of each chapter, the author includes website links to interactive exercises for particular writing challenges. The book also includes "challenge" questions for additional practice. The book is published in a convenient, looseleaf format. Each chapter is just a few pages long and tackles a relatively narrow writing issue. As I review first-year law student writing and diagnose distinct writing idiosyncracies, I routinely recommend specific chapters for students to brush up on their writing skills. As I tell my students, writing well is a lifelong learning exercise! This helpful, straightforward book is an excellent resource for law students, who soon learn that excellent legal writing is an essential skill for all successful lawyers.

The only good thing I can say about this book is that it offers countless examples of what good writers shouldn't do. Did this book have an editor? It recites established rules -- e.g., "don't use

unnecessary words" -- and then proceeds to violate them right and left. It contains rampant verbosity, misplaced modifiers, "creative" abuse of punctuation, comically bungled phrases, a grade-schooler's command of traditional sentence formation, and more! Anything you can think of to screw up a phrase, sentence or paragraph, this book has it. One needn't be a grammatical prude to take offense at its mauling of our language. This from someone holding herself out as a writer? Did she dictate this thing and not bother to proofread it? I'm stunned by its lameness. And Aspen is a highly reputable publisher -- go figure. On top of everything else, this book has been RE-released. Have Aspen's top people even glanced at it? I've read a number of books in this field, and any one of them would be better than this. If you're really interested in improving your writing, go with something -- anything -- by Bryan Garner. Or, if you're shooting for something simpler, get a secretary's guide. Something you select at random will surely be better.

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