

8
MISTAKES
ON 1L
FALL
MEMOS

1 Miscapitalization of the word “court.”

In an office memo not tied to a lawsuit in state or federal court, do not capitalize the word “court” unless referring to the U.S. Supreme Court or when writing out a court’s full name or citation.

See Dear 1L chapter 6.1.

2 Misplacement of punctuation with quotes.

The comma or period goes **INSIDE** the quotes in US legal English.

See Dear 1L chapter 6.4.

3 Misformatted headings.

Make sure your headnotes don't float.

See Dear 1L chapter 5.13.

4 Citation gaffes.

1: Mispunctuated “id” references.

—The period after an id is underlined; the comma after the period is not.

✗ Id.,

✓ Id.,

2: Missing decision dates in full case cites.

—Check yours carefully.

3: Miscapitalization of “at” in citations.

—Make sure the system didn’t do it automatically.

4: Use of “id.” after a multi-source citation clause.

—You know you can't do that. Proofread to make sure.

(See generally Dear 1L Appendix D.)

5 Mismatched pronouns.

Your reader will read a pronoun as relating back to the closest preceding noun of the same number and gender.

Make sure yours all match with the nouns you intend!

(I am working on examples to illustrate the pronoun issues I see and will send out as soon as possible.)

6 Use of long-winded, clunky clauses.

✗ “Despite the fact that”

→ ✓ change to “Even though”

✗ “Due to the fact that”

→ ✓ change to “Because”

7 Use of long, unnecessary throat-clearing clauses.

✗ “It should be noted that ___”

✗ “It is important to ___”

8 Use of “clear” and “clearly.”

- Those are simply two words that should not appear in any analytical legal document.
- These are litigious issues! Nothing is clear.

Get the full list: Dear1L.com

