

10 Edits for your Legal Resume

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1 Separate your dates with EN-dashes.

Lawyers do NOT use spaces around en-dashes.

Consistency throughout is key.

2 Align all dates perfectly with right margin.

If you aren't using a template (and I hate templates), you need to set your right-facing tabs.

See Dear 1L chapter 13.2 for instructions.

3 Use past-tense verbs throughout, even for currently held positions.

You are writing about what you have done so far, so it is always in the past.

You want all verbs in the same tense throughout.

4 Be consistent in your bullet formatting.

Don't mix square and circle bullets.

Make sure all bullets are the identical size.

5 Be consistent with vertical spacing.

Err on the side of having more vertical spacing.

Don't cram entries up against each other vertically.

Adding a return that's shorter than a full, 12 pt return can free up space.

6 Be as concise as possible in experience entries.

1/ Remove articles (the, a, an) before nouns where can.

2/ Convert “of the” clauses to possessives where can.

See Dear 1L ch 13.3 for further guidance and examples.

7 Don't mix straight quotes and curly quotes.

Inconsistencies like this tend to stem from cutting and pasting from other sources.

These plague 1L fall memos, too!

8 Use consistent bold/italics on punctuation marks.

These are probably the hardest nits to catch.

Do a separate proofread to look exclusively for these types of inconsistencies. Consider using a magnifying glass.

9 Don't use adverbs.

Don't tell me you “meticulously prepared” things. That proves too much.

But if you received recognition for your meticulousness, do mention that.

See Dear 1L Interlude No. 3 for further guidance.

10 Add some personality in a Hobbies / Interests section.

I reviewed a law school applicant's resume today. The last item under Interests read, "playing gin rummy with my dad."

 How would you react to that type of entry on a resume?



3

BONUS

TIPS

 Use the active voice.

(It is shorter, clearer, and more affirmative.)

See Dear 1L Interlude No. 1.

 Don't tell me what you were “responsible for.”

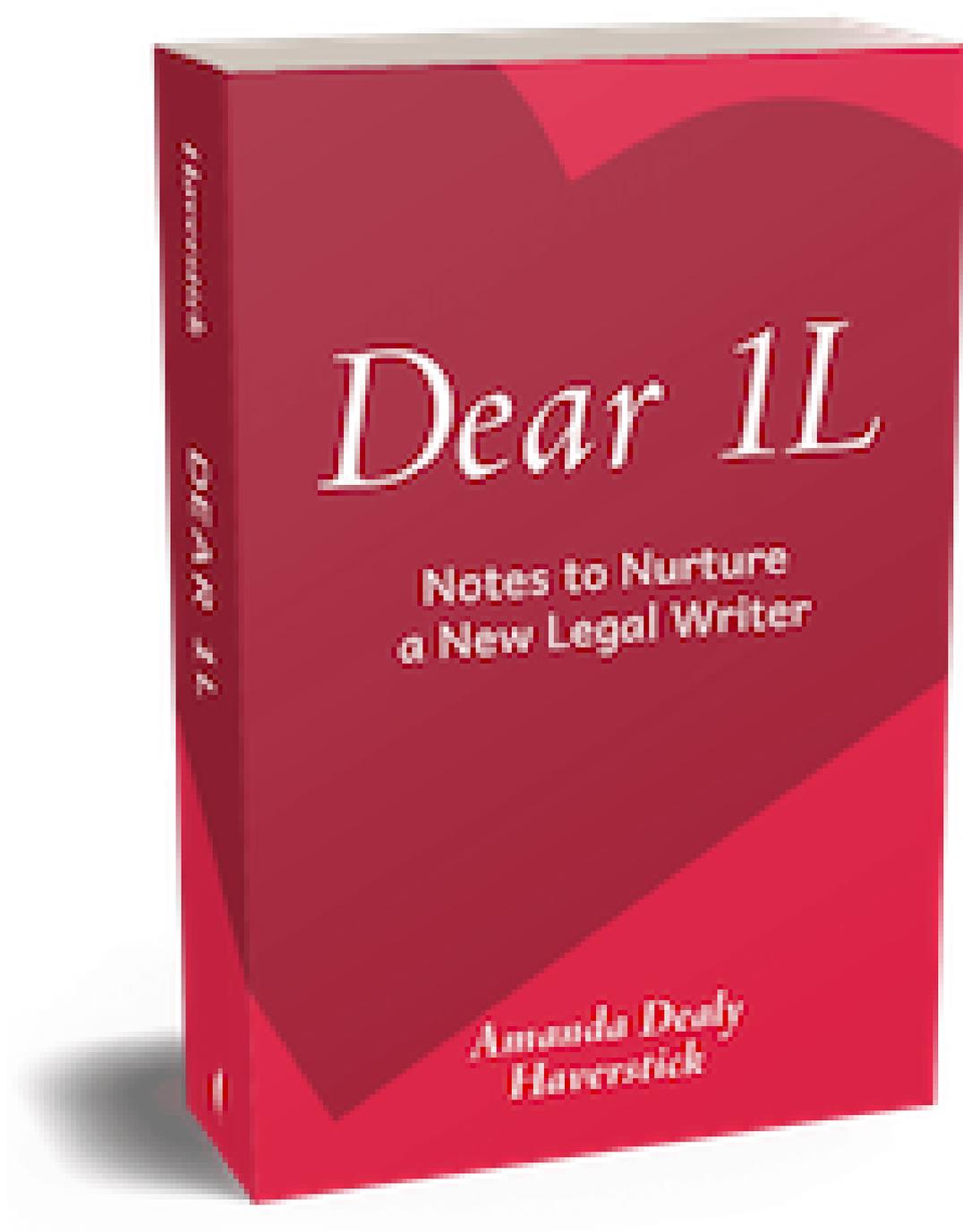
Do describe what specific tasks you performed.

See Dear 1L ch 13.4 for examples.

 Write in a big enough font
for older readers.

(Thank you! )

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your library & book store!

