

# **INTRODUCTION TO ARTICLE WRITING**

**BY**

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I appreciate the organizers of this program for giving me the privilege to share my thoughts on article writing.

Please accept my apologies for starting behind schedule. Sorry also that I will try and go straight to the point. People are already tired of webinars and all of that

So I will make it short.

I wouldn't need to introduce myself again since I noticed that my profile has been shared here already.

I understand that I have two days to cover the topic.

## **OUTLINE ON INTRODUCTION TO ARTICLE WRITING**

### **PART 1**

1. Formulation of ideas
2. Framing a title
3. Writing an Abstract
4. Captivating introduction
5. Use of simple language
6. Structure

= the length of the article should

=Coherence/logical

Target audience

Length of paragraphs

## **PART TWO:**

### 1. Research

=statutes

=judicial precedents

=articles, books, etc

### 2. Adopting a style of reference

### 3. Writing a Conclusion/Recommendation

I will be guided by this outline

I will take part one today and conclude part two tomorrow.

## **FORMULATION OF IDEAS**

This is our first point.

The truth is that one cannot just start writing like that. Idea must have to come first.

Some writers can easily generate dozens of ideas while some struggle a lot even before the first step.

A lot of people have been contacting me as to where they are going to start from. On what should they write? They would be looking for topics but wouldn't fine any.

It has happened to me too several times. To be able to come up with an idea of what to write on, the few tips below may be of help:

1. Follow arguments and posts in social media (Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter)
2. Read Law Reports
3. Think of some rampant happenings in your environment

4. Follow articles of others (you may have a rejoinder)
5. Follow news about decisions/actions of government
6. Etc.

Once you can follow these tips, you will definitely have something to write on.

## **FRAMING A TITLE**

Since you now have an idea on what to write, it is very important to choose a title wisely

No matter how rich the content of your article is, once your title is not appealing, people will jump to the next pages or just scroll down for other posts if it is on Facebook.

Have you noticed something about newspapers and bloggers?

They always make their headlines controversial. It is the only way they will get to make people log in to read and if it is a hard copy, it is what will push people to buy the newspaper.

### **Note:**

1. Make your title short
2. You mustn't come up with a title before proceeding to write. It can unnecessarily delay you. The reason is that sometimes it is not easy to come up with short and appealing title.

You can rephrase it as many times as you can.

## **WRITING AN ABSTRACT**

**ABSTRACT** simply means the summary of your article.

It is not necessary for articles that are to be published online or in social media.

It would make it boring. Sorry to say that social media is full of unserious people.

So try and work with psyche of your targeted audience. If my post is for social media, I try as much as I can to make it very informal and short.

I don't include abstract.

Abstract is best for journals. Journal is for serious people. It is for professionals. That is why some journals even make writing of abstract compulsory.

## **CAPTIVATING INTRODUCTION**

It is not enough to have an appealing title. Please make your introduction short and soak it in suspens.

Say that you want to dissect the law on so so issue. You can also make it in form of a question. You will notice this in many of my articles.

Each writing is peculiar. I cannot make a general statement about catchy introduction.

Just study the circumstance and try as much as you can to rephrase your introduction as many times as you can.

So your introduction matters. It can also determine whether a reader should proceed to read the article or just move on

Now the 5th item on the outline.

## **USE OF SIMPLE LANGUAGE**

I am always concerned about this. Please make your language as simple as possible.

I tell you people will scroll down and abandon your article once they read two three lines without understanding anything.

I think some of these jargons and big grammars are for debaters. People will be clapping and shouting but when you ask them to explain what the speaker says, they can't tell.

Please avoid big English in your writing.

Always make passing of information your concern. Make it such that even a nursery school student will appreciate what you are saying as far as he or she can read.

This takes us to the last item for today.

## **STRUCTURE OF YOUR ARTICLE**

Please try to make it short. Only few people can read a long article. In fact, some people usually check the length of an article first before deciding whether to read it or not. I am sure even in this group, a lot of us do it.

But for Journals, make your article long. Journals are for professionals and serious people. So your long article can be read.

But for social media and newspaper, please make it short.

Secondly, please always arrange your work logically. Don't be careless about how your work is arranged.

Make it such that the reader will be flowing and would be eager to read the next paragraph so as to know what the conclusion is all about.

Lastly, make your paragraphs short. Long paragraphs make an article boring but short paragraphs can make an article interesting to read.

## **DAY 2**

Good evening everyone. I am glad to be here once again.

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We concluded part one yesterday. Tonight we would conclude the second

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I will henceforth be guided by this

And it is basically about how to make one's article well researched.

No lawyer or law student can survive as a professional without having research skills.

Research is very important. But what is research in the first place?

When we talk about research, we are basically referring to finding where the law is in respect of a particular situation.

Simple!

And that is what differentiates lawyers from non lawyers. Non lawyers do not know where to find the law...

An efficient and successful legal research usually involves the use of one or all of the following two stages:

Finding primary authority e.g. cases, statutes, regulations etc;

Searching secondary authorities such as law reviews, legal dictionaries, legal articles etc

## **STATUTES**

We have many Laws in Nigeria. Therefore when you get a topic to write an article on, you should try to know the relevant laws to use. Try to find out the laws that relevant to your research

I know for a new student, it would be difficult sometimes to know the laws that apply to certain situations.

But I am not also saying senior students know it all either.

The topic or case should compel one to look everywhere for the relevant laws. And we all know that our bus top is –library. But I don't think library is necessary today.

Internet has made things easier for us today. Once you get a topic and you want to know the laws that apply to the scenario, visit Google.

Example

Just type "Nigerian Laws that govern...."

Or type "Nigerian Laws that apply to ...."

Once you do that, you will see many articles and laws. Google may not give you what you want immediately. You will have to rephrase your words as many times as possible until you get what you want. So sometimes it is not easy. But you will definitely find what you want once you persist. There is almost nothing Google cannot give you. All you need is skills on how to use it.

Look for the laws online and look for sections that are relevant to your issue.

Now the next is decided cases.

I want to believe that everyone here knows about judicial precedent. Nothing makes one's argument stronger than judicial precedent. It works perfectly than Statutes.

You can make your argument stronger by citing just judicial authorities without the need for statutes. But quoting statutory provisions without cases does not make submissions much strong

Even on finding decided cases, you must not go to the library. All you need to do is to browse the internet. Even at the comfort of your bed, you can find decided cases. So your ability to find decided cases is very important.

By looking for cases, we mean relevant cases where courts decided on issues similar to the topic you want to write on.

Google still does the magic. Google can get you cases that you want

Simply type "*Nigerian cases on....*"

Example if you want to write on rape, you will simply type "*Nigerian cases on rape*"

If you don't get what you want, type "*What Nigerian Supreme Court says About Rape*"

Many results would pop up again. If you still don't find what you want, rephrase it again till you get what you want.

You will notice that in both searching for statutes and Cases, I repeated the word "Nigeria" in all the examples on how to search. It would even make your research easier. And in case you want the position of US, you simply do the same thing. If you want that of Canada, or Ghana etc, you do the same. As opposed to simply typing your problem on Google without specifying jurisdiction.

Actually that is how I do mine, it works perfectly for me. We can also devise other means.

You can also visit [Lawpavilionplus.com](http://Lawpavilionplus.com)

Lawpavilion today seems to be leading. It has made research easier than ever before. But seriously [Lawpavilionplus.com](http://Lawpavilionplus.com) is superb. It does magic a lot. It works just like Google. If you want cases on defamation, just type defamation on the search space, many cases will pop up.

I understand that NWLR has gone online too. I have been using it as well but it is not as convenient and effective as Lawpavilion.

### **Now listen**

Please read the cases from beginning to end. Read to see what transpired, how the lawyers argued and how the judge decided after considering both Arguments. Don't just use the ratios that Reporters deduced from the cases. Please this is very important.

It is only Law Report that gives practical knowledge and true position of the law. What you will read from Law Report overrides any other position you will read elsewhere. I tell you if you do this to four or five cases, many things about you will begin to change. I am saying this confidently. You will learn a lot about what you are writing on. It will give you the confidence to defend your position anywhere. Nothing can give you true legal position like Law Report. **I MEAN NOTHING**

### **REFERENCING STYLE**

In Nigeria, we have:

**THE NATIONALLY APPROVED UNIFORM FORMAT AND CITATION  
GUIDE FOR LEGAL RESEARCH WRITING IN LAW  
FACULTIES/INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA. JUNE 2015.**

Popularly called: **NALT UNIFORM FORMAT & CITATION GUIDE**

We also have: **OSCOLA (Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities)**

Then make your recommendations if any. After that you give a brief overview of what you write called conclusion.

With this we have come to the end of the session.

**THANK YOU ALL!!!**

