


KA-POW!

**WITH BONUS
MATERIAL AT
THE END!**

**The Amazing
Adventures of**

**LEGAL
WRITING
GIRL**



Good legal writing is hard work, but somebody's got to do it.

My name is Michele Valentini.
By day, I'm your ordinary law
student. By night,

I'M LEGAL WRITING GIRL!

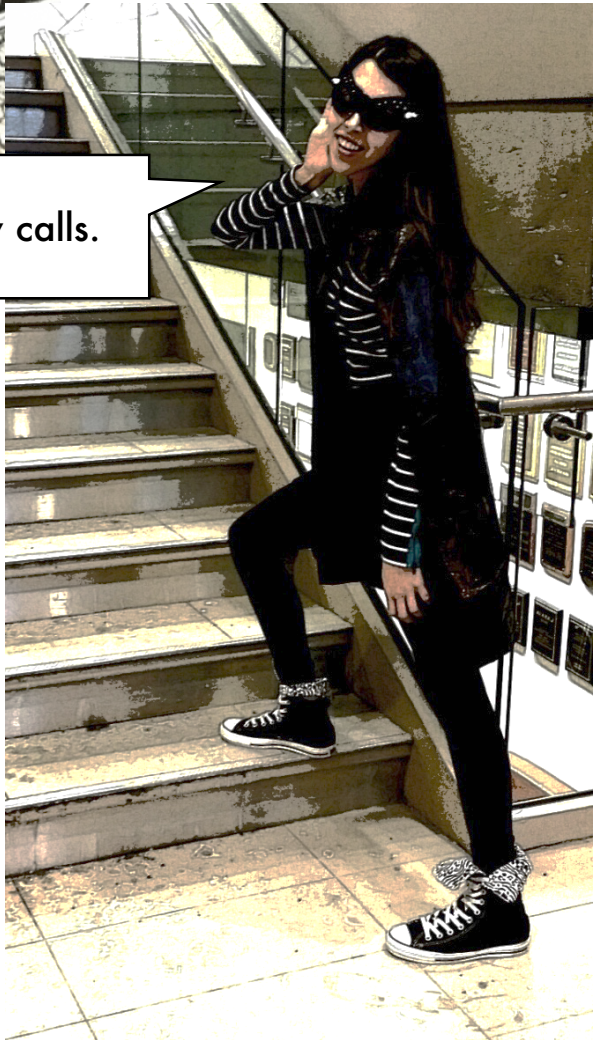




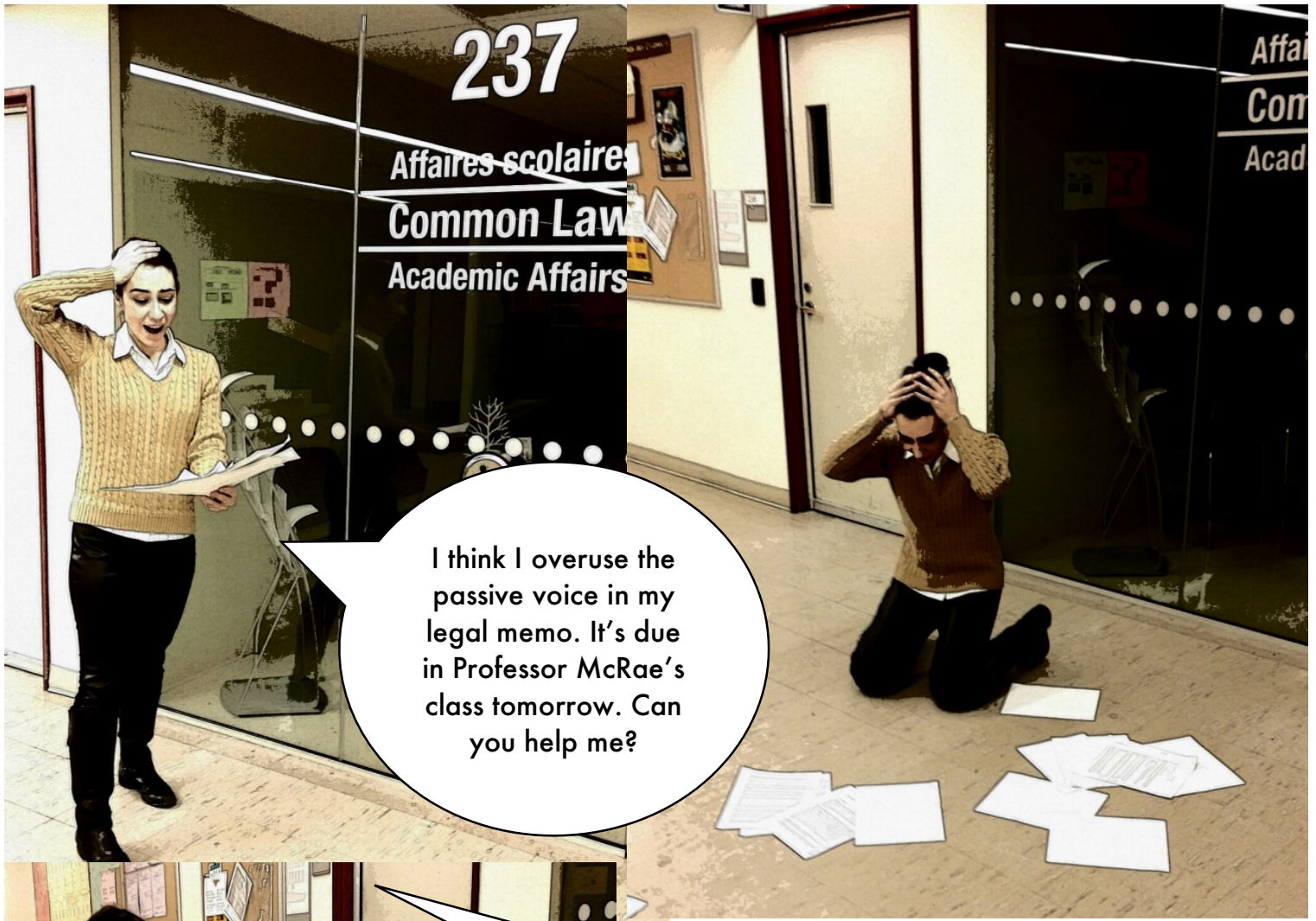
My mission is to destroy bad legal writing, but it is easier said than done. Good legal writing requires practice, self-reflection, and—

HELP!
Save me, Legal Writing Girl!

Duty calls.



WHOOOSH



I think I overuse the passive voice in my legal memo. It's due in Professor McRae's class tomorrow. Can you help me?



Sure! Try to **revise sentences that use a form of the verb "to be" plus the past participle of another verb**. While you can use the passive voice to downplay a point, its overuse can make your writing unclear. Also, **SVO order will keep your sentences active**.

Thanks, Legal Writing Girl!



What is that sound?

*Nom-nom-nom-nominalizaattioons
—decision-nom-nom-
interpretation—nom-
nom...*

Oh, #%&@! Zombies!



*Nom-
nom-nom*



Unfortunately for you two, I don't run away from zombies: I hunt and destroy them!

POW!

BOOM!

WHAM

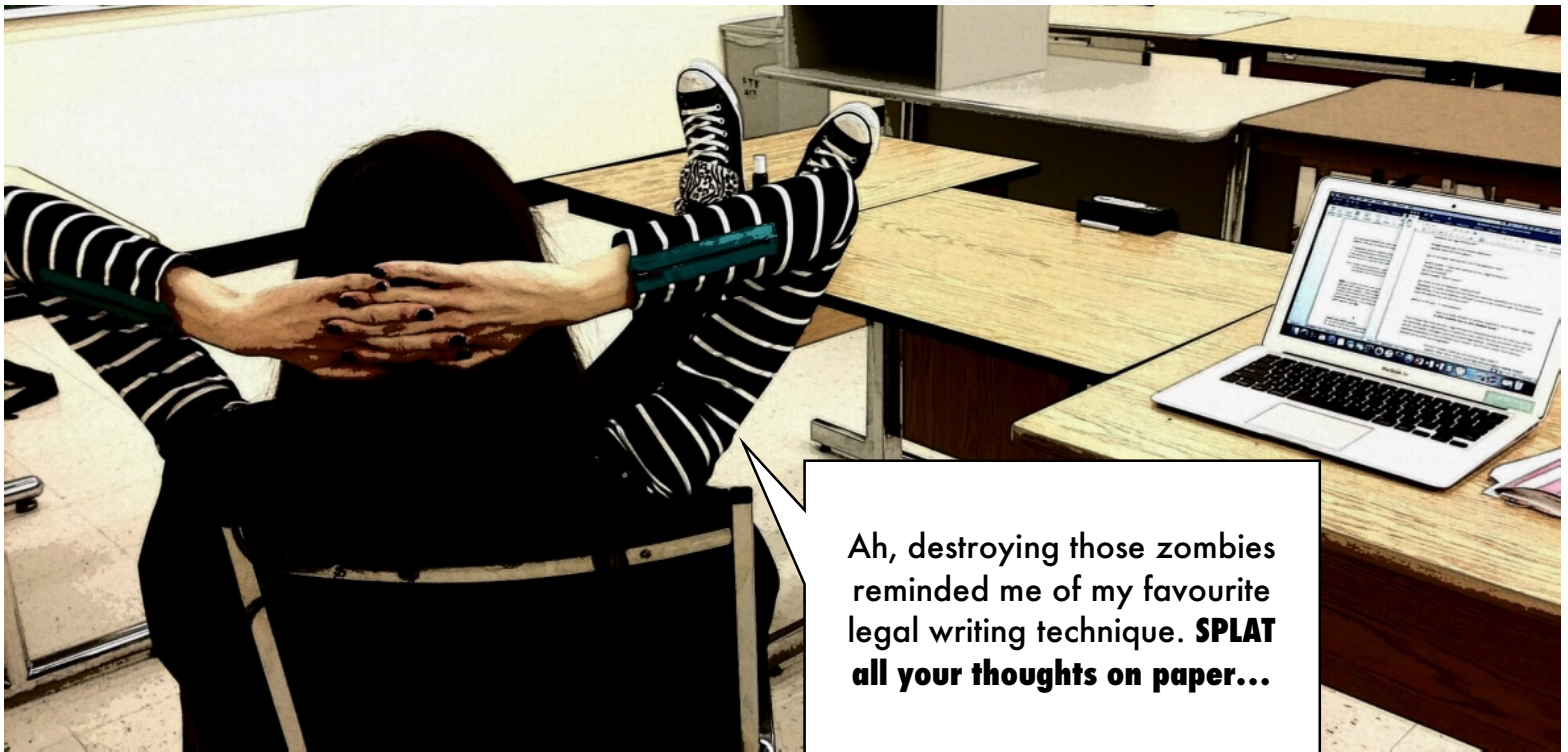
BAM!



YAY!
You saved us, Legal Writing Girl! Do you have any other writing tips?

Yes. Always use the **double-highlighting technique** when editing your facts and analysis sections!

I never leave home without them.



Ah, destroying those zombies reminded me of my favourite legal writing technique. **SPLAT** all your thoughts on paper...

SPLAT!



Then, **POLISH, POLISH, POLISH!**

Oh,
NO!

Ahhhh!

OMG!

Get out!!!

Someone call
**LEGAL
WRITING GIRL!**



I wonder what all the
fuss is about...

I've been waiting for you,
Legal Writing Girl...

GASP!

**WORD
TWISTER!**

Muahahaha!

It is quite comical that you think you have the capabilities to rid the world of bad legal writing. If you think helping a sufficient number of law students with the aforementioned issue will destroy it, you are inaccurate!

Save your bulky phrases for another superhero, Word Twister. **I am here to show students how to omit needless words.**

"Your mission was futile *ab initio*! Notwithstanding the fact that your efforts are admirable, good legal writing is a mysterious myth. Never has one uncovered, *inter alia*, the secrets, techniques, strategies, and tools of good legal writing. I challenge you to set forth a reasoned explanation of how to achieve your mission. I am of most certain mind that your attempt will be *prima facie* laughable!"



Could you use anymore legal jargon!?



Well, Word Twister, good legal writing **is about making choices**. You should **never write on auto-pilot**. Instead, you must focus on **context, audience, and purpose**, and **make it impossible to be misunderstood!**

"Hm, well, although that advice might work in the majority of instances, we are future lawyers. It is part of a lawyer's job to produce complex documents that exceed the bounds of comprehension!"



No, legal writing must be clear! **You should write like a real person, not like a lawyer!**



Ah-ha! I know what will help you...



Where would you like to start?

Legal Memos Made Easy

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Noooooo!
PointFirstWriting.com
- my only weakness!



No, Word Twister!
Point-first writing will
give you strength!



Ahhhh, you are
right! Thank
you for being a
Writing Leader.



You are welcome,
Word Twister! I
am proud of you!



WOO HOO!

Another law student on her way to better legal writing.
My work here is done...for tonight!

But, before I go, I leave you with the most important lesson of all...



**"Writing is thinking;
thinking is writing. If you
can get better at one, you
can get better at the
other. In order to get
better at one, you must
get better at the other.
And it doesn't matter
with which you begin"
(George Gopen).**



...THE END

Acknowledgements



Thank you to my friends who are as passionate about legal writing as I am!



Corey Stewart
"Student/Zombie"
Creative Director, Photographer



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"Student/Zombie"
Photographer



Michaela Chen
"Word Twister/Student"
Photographer



Ashley Yoannou
"Frazzled Student/Student"
Photographer

**BONUS
MATERIAL!**

My Top 10 Legal Writing Lessons Learned

1. Revise sentences that use a form of the verb “to be” plus the past participle of another verb to limit the passive voice.
2. The **subject**, **verb**, **object** order will keep sentences in the active voice.
3. “Hunt and Destroy Zombies”: Avoid nominalizations and the passive voice.
4. Double-highlight the “Facts” and “Analysis” sections in your legal writing.
5. “Splat and Polish” to write and edit.
6. Omit ~~needless~~ words.
7. Legal writing is about making choices. You must never write on auto-pilot.
8. Context, audience, and purpose (CAP) will guide you.
9. Write like a real person, not like a lawyer.
10. Writing is thinking; thinking is writing.