

Five Editing Lenses Checklist

Use this checklist after an AI tool produces or revises legal writing. The goal is not cleaner prose; it is work product you can stand behind.

Before editing

Keep the prompt, output, facts, sources, audience, and client or assignment objective nearby. Mark anything unverified as [NEEDS CONFIRMATION].

LENS	CHECK BEFORE RELYING ON, SHARING, OR SUBMITTING THE DRAFT
1 Accuracy <i>Law and facts</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Every factual statement is traceable to the record, client facts, or provided materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Names, dates, dollar amounts, defined terms, posture, and jurisdiction are correct. <input type="checkbox"/> The draft has not added facts, chronology, parties, claims, or remedies. <input type="checkbox"/> Legal standards are accurate and stated at the right level of specificity.
2 Structure <i>Required elements and logic</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Every required element, issue, claim, defense, or rule component is included. <input type="checkbox"/> Organization fits the task: memo, brief, client advice, letter, clause, or email. <input type="checkbox"/> Each paragraph does one job and connects logically to the next. <input type="checkbox"/> Gaps, missing facts, and open questions are flagged rather than hidden.
3 Authority Hygiene <i>Support and verification</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Every legal proposition is tied to authority that exists and has been checked. <input type="checkbox"/> Each citation supports the specific sentence it follows, not just the general topic. <input type="checkbox"/> Jurisdiction, court level, effective date, and treatment are verified. <input type="checkbox"/> Unsupported assertions are separated from supported conclusions.
4 Tone <i>Audience fit and professionalism</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Tone fits the audience: judge, client, supervisor, opposing counsel, or file. <input type="checkbox"/> Language is precise without overstating certainty or advocacy. <input type="checkbox"/> Client-facing language is readable and practical without losing legal accuracy. <input type="checkbox"/> Biased, speculative, inflammatory, or one-sided phrasing has been edited or flagged.
5 Strategy <i>Judgment and client objective</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> The draft advances the client or assignment objective, not a generic statement of law. <input type="checkbox"/> Procedural posture is right, and requested remedies or options are clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Counterarguments, weaknesses, defenses, and practical risks are addressed. <input type="checkbox"/> Choices about what to include, omit, soften, or emphasize reflect judgment.

Final sign-off questions

What did I verify? What did I change? What remains uncertain? Why does this version serve the client, audience, and legal task better than the AI draft?

Optional AI self-critique prompt

Review this draft through the five editing lenses. Use only the facts and sources I provide. Do not add law or facts. Return issues to review, not a final rewrite.