American Bar Association (ABA)  
Author Guidelines

Congratulations and thank you for agreeing to publish your manuscript with the American Bar Association. The information and guidelines that follow are designed to support your writing and editing process and to ensure that your invaluable contribution is delivered to the profession and the marketplace at the highest quality standards and as quickly as possible.
Dear Author:

Congratulations on joining the distinguished American Bar Association authors and editors who have helped contribute to more than 125 years of ABA history and its commitment to excellence in publishing.

Among our goals are to publish texts of the highest quality and usefulness to the legal profession and to publish with due speed. In pursuit of these goals, our aim is to provide you with the necessary tools and information to make your writing and editing experience clear, efficient, and effective on its timing.

These guidelines are intended to be used solely as a reference. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and questions.

ABA Book Publishing thanks you for your writing and editorial commitment and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Bryan L. Kay
Director of Publishing
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General Instructions

Submit a full, complete manuscript. Please include the following:

• Title page
• Dedication (Optional)
• Acknowledgments (Optional)
• Foreword (Optional)
• Preface (Optional)
• Contents
• Text
• Endnotes
• Tables and Figures (Optional)
• Bibliography (Optional)
• Glossary (Optional)
• Appendixes (Optional)
• Original art
• Permissions (If needed)

Note: Please consult with your editor about the necessity of items marked optional.

Write for your audience

ABA books are written for busy, practicing lawyers. The most successful books have a practical, reader-friendly voice. If you can build in features such as checklists, exhibits, sample contracts, flow charts, and tables of cases, please do so.
Take care with style and language

Our standard reference books are:

- *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (for spelling and hyphenation)
- *The Chicago Manual of Style* (for all style, punctuation, and capitalization matters in written text as well as general rules of book making)
- *A Uniform System of Citation* (the Bluebook—for citation forms in endnotes)*
- *The Elements of Style* (by Strunk and White—the bible of the economical, careful writer)

*Note that Bluebook rules apply only to citations.*

Follow traditional publishing practices in manuscript preparation

1. Use 8.5 x 11” white bond paper.
2. Print or type on one side only.
3. Double-space everything.
4. Keep all pages, chapters, exhibits, and appendixes in order.
   Number your manuscript consecutively from start to finish, not chapter by chapter.
5. If possible, send us one printed copy of the original. It is best to use a service that will trace the package (Federal Express, United Parcel Service, or a reliable messenger company).
6. If you e-mail your manuscript please call to verify your editor received it.
7. Always keep a copy for yourself.

Use your computer

The best word processing file for the purpose of typesetting is the simplest.

1. Most lawyers use WordPerfect and Microsoft Word. Let us know if you do not use one of these common word-processing software programs.
2. We prefer a CD for the files rather than e-mail attachments. Label the CD with your name, book title, and contents.

3. Do not put figure or graphics files in word processing files. Store figure or graphics files in separate files and reference their location in the appropriate spot in the word processing file.

4. Name files recognizably and keep them in order. “Chap7.pt1” is better than “Mybook.ch.”

5. Please run your text through a spell checker routinely to eliminate as many typos as possible.

6. Several common computer functions are unnecessary in manuscript: do not justify the copy. Use hard returns only at the ends of paragraphs, not lines. Do not add headers or footers. Do not use end-line hyphenation. Print it out in your default font.

7. On the other hand, traditional manuscript standards do still apply: double-space everything. Set your margins for at least one inch all the way around. If you’re sending a hard copy, please print out on white paper.

8. Keep a copy of the files on your hard drive for as long as possible.

9. Please send a copy of your CD or e-mail the file(s).
What to Include in Your Manuscript

Front matter

Front matter encompasses all the preliminary information that precedes the text material—the copyright data and the elements discussed below. Number the front matter pages with roman numerals in the upper right-hand corner.

The title page contains the full title of the book, including any subtitle, as well as the names of all the authors as they are to appear in the printed book. Please be sure your name appears here exactly as you wish it to appear in your book. But don’t spend any time formatting the page—it will be designed by the ABA’s in-house graphic designers.

A dedication runs from a few words to a few sentences. Type it on a separate page. A dedication is optional.

A foreword is a brief statement—up to three typed pages—about the book written by someone other than the author. The writer’s name should appear at the end. A foreword is optional; discuss your foreword with your editor.

A preface is your brief description of the scope, importance, reasons for writing, and special features of your book. A typical preface runs less than five typewritten pages. Be sure to include a definition of your audience and how your book should be used by the reader. Your editor can send you a sample of a good preface at your request.

Acknowledgments give special recognition to those people who assisted with the content and preparation of your book. Acknowledgments may be included at the end of the preface or supplied on a separate page. Credits and sources for research, tables, and art may appear here or as credit lines elsewhere. Acknowledgments are also optional.

List in the Contents all elements in the book except the title page, copyright page, and dedication. Make sure that part numbers and titles (if any), chapter numbers and titles, and back matter elements (appendix, glossary, bibliography, and index) are all worded exactly as they appear in the text. You may list your major subheads within each chapter; they too should use the exact wording of the text.
Text


**The most common ABA house style directives are:**

1. Spell out the word percent with figures (e.g., 5 percent).
2. Spell out the numbers ten and under.
3. Series commas should appear before a conjunction for all items in a series (e.g., red, white, and blue).
4. Differentiate between *that* and which: *that* introduces a restrictive clause; *which* amplifies the meaning of the original noun and is set off by commas.

**Minimize footnotes and other recommendations**

1. Discuss with your editor whether to use endnotes or footnotes.
2. Do not bury information in the endnotes. Endnotes should consist almost exclusively of citations.
3. Minimize spot citations. *id.* is not that important.
4. The Bluebook has never cited books properly: do it one better by including the author’s full name, the book’s full title, the publisher, and the year of publication. Your readers will thank you.
5. The ABA will prepare the index and Table of Cases.

Art

You must provide artwork suitable for reproduction. Please follow the instructions carefully and consult your editor if you have any questions. Remember, the art in your book can be only as good as the art you supply. Photos and illustrations must be at least 300 dpi for best quality. A blurry photo cannot be put into focus, nor can poor quality camera-ready art be made to look better.

Separate all original art from the manuscript and include photocopies of each piece in the manuscript for placement. Use pencil to number each piece of original art lightly and
indicate in the right margin where it is to appear in the text (e.g., insert Fig. 1.1 on page 00).

Line art has no shading or tonal quality. Drawings, graphs, charts, diagrams are all line art. Tearsheets and photocopies may be acceptable, but remember that using different sources of art will give an inconsistent look to your book. If you plan to supply graphics on CD, please let your editor know so that he or she can coordinate with the in-house art director about any hardware/software compatibility concerns.

Color illustrations will not appear in your book unless your agreement specifically allows for them.

**Back matter**

Back matter is ancillary reference material that follows the main text. Depending on the content of your book, some elements may be optional, except the index, which is required unless you or your editor have agreed otherwise. If you are unsure about whether to include any of the following items, discuss this with your editor.

**Appendixes** contain useful supplementary information such as listing of names, addresses, and phone numbers or other information referenced in the text. If you have more than one appendix, label (Appendix A, B, etc.) and title each.

A **glossary** consists of definitions of technical terms that appear in the text. Entries should be alphabetical, and terms lowercase, except proper nouns and acronyms.

If you do not have references in your book, you may want to include a **bibliography**. It can be a single alphabetical listing (by author) or multiple listings arranged alphabetically by chapter, topic, or type of source material.

A **Table of Cases** is a list of all the court cases cited within the text. The ABA prepares the table of cases.

Almost all books except alphabetical references should have an **index**. There is no need to provide index terms; the ABA prepares the index.

**Cover material**

If you have any suggestions for the design of your book cover or would like a particular piece of art from the book to be used, by all means let us know. We will be happy to consider your ideas, although we can’t promise to use them.
Multicontributor Books

If you are editing a multicontributor work, you are already familiar with consistency and scheduling problems. Remember that your name will appear on the front cover of the book. Do not accept any material of inferior quality.

We suggest that you refer your contributors to The Chicago Manual of Style and provide each with a copy of the ABA guidelines for authors. When you review their submissions, remember that your goal is a cohesive book rather than a haphazard compilation of unrelated chapters.

Include contributors’ names in the table on contents and the chapter titles. It is important that we obtain a signed work-for-hire agreement from each contributor. You are responsible for a proper preparation of manuscript and art, as well as all needed permissions. Again, contact your editor who can supply you with all the necessary forms.

Please provide current addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses (if available) for each contributor along with the manuscript.

The time between starting work on a book, and its appearance on the shelves, is generally in the range of 18 to 30 months.

Michael B. Gerrard, author of numerous ABA books, including Global Climate Change and the U.S. Law, has developed—and refined—a system for developing multicontribution books. Here is a summary of his development process:

The first step is to pick a right-sized topic. It should be large enough to deserve book-length treatment and to attract a reasonably-sized audience. It should be small enough to be manageable, and ideally to avoid overlap with a lot of other books. Once the topic is selected, these are the steps I have followed:

1. Using law review indexes and other sources, compile a bibliography of all the substantive articles that have been written on the subject.
2. Print out these articles and read them. From the footnotes in those articles, internet searches, and other materials that land on your desk; identify, gather, and read additional sources.
3. Prepare an initial chapter outline for the book. The ideal number of chapters is around 15–25. That way, each chapter is short enough to become a reasonable project for its author, but there are not so many chapters that managing the process becomes impossible.

4. As you continue to read, develop subtopics for each chapter. The organization within each chapter is not so important; what counts is making sure that every relevant subject is covered exactly once in the book. Prepare a more detailed outline of the book.

5. For each chapter, identify potential authors. The best authors are people who have previously written on the subject, which means that they know about it AND are capable of completing a written work product on it. Thus, the authors of the law review articles you have been reading are high on the list of potential chapter authors. Other potential authors can be found among people who have given CLE presentations or led bar committees on the subject. Write one or two chapters yourself, but no more, unless you have lots and lots of time for the book.

6. Send e-mails to your first choice authors for each chapter, attaching the detailed outline you have prepared and inviting them to write a specified chapter (though leaving open the possibility of having them write a different chapter that appeals to them more). Indicate that if they can’t write the chapter, you would appreciate other suggestions for someone who could. Give a set deadline for response—about three weeks hence.

7. A week after that deadline, e-mail everyone who has not responded and give them one more week to respond. If you still don’t hear from them, or they decline, invite your second choice. Continue this process until you have identified authors for each chapter.

8. When you confirm with authors that they will be writing a particular chapter, also ask them for comments on the draft book outline. Send them materials and references you have compiled that might be useful in writing the chapter. Also send them author guidelines (e.g., re footnote style) as supplied by the ABA.

9. Give each author an approximate page allocation. Start by dividing the number of pages anticipated for the book by the number of chapters to come up with a default page count (e.g., a 600 page book with 20 chapters will have 30-page chapters on average). Adjust each chapter’s page allocation to reflect the chapter’s scope, importance and complexity.

10. If your e-mail system allows, create a distribution list of all your chapter authors, so that you can communicate with all of them simultaneously without having to retype all their names.

11. Give each author two deadlines: one for the receipt of a detailed outline for their
chapter, and one for the first draft of the chapter text. Tell the authors that the chapter outline should cover all the topics allocated to that chapter in your detailed outline, but that the authors are free to come up with their own organization of topics within the chapter, and that they should add detailed subtopics, provided they don’t overlap with the coverage of other chapters. To the extent that the outlines nonetheless overlap, resolve the conflicts, perhaps using conference calls with the relevant authors.

12. A week before the deadline for the outlines, send each author an e-mail reminding them of the deadline and offering to answer any questions they may have.

13. A week after the deadline for the outlines, send an e-mail to each author who did not submit one, saying they are late and asking for their outlines.

14. Three weeks after the deadline, send another dunning e-mail, hinting that it may be necessary to find a different author if they’re not able to meet the deadlines.

15. If this fails, fire the author and find another one. NOTE: It is essential to be willing to fire authors who do not produce. For most of my books, I have had to fire one or two (or at least impose a co-author)—though I have taken pains to do so gently so that they remain friends. But if you aren’t prepared to fire non-producing authors, one or two will hold up the whole book.

16. Review and comment on each chapter outline, making sure again that every relevant topic is covered exactly once in the book. In providing comments, also remind the authors of their page allocations and the deadline for their first drafts.

17. Two weeks before the deadline for the first drafts, remind each author of the deadline and offer to answer any questions.

18. A week after the deadline, send an e-mail to each author who didn’t produce. Follow the same procedures as given above for the outlines, with e-mails and telephone calls, each with a gradually escalating tone of urgency and exasperation, demanding the chapters.

19. Read and mark up each chapter. Give chapter authors a deadline about a month hence to submit revised chapters.

20. A week before the deadline for revised chapters, remind the authors of the deadline. Then follow the above procedures to ensure you receive the revised chapters.

21. Invite those authors who have produced their chapters to peer review other draft chapters.

22. Review the revised chapters.

23. Ask each author to keep an eye open for new cases and other developments relevant to their chapter. Get a date from the publisher for the outside time when new developments can be accepted, and give the authors a “pencils down” deadline of about a week before.

24. Ask all authors for one-paragraph biographies.
25. Compile all the completed chapters. Add the front matter (acknowledgments, preface, author bios, perhaps a table of acronyms and glossary). Submit the completed manuscript to the publisher in both hard copy and electronic form.

26. Respond promptly to the publisher’s queries.

27. Upon receipt of chapter proofs, circulate to the respective authors, and give them strict deadlines for corrections.

28. Work with the publisher’s marketing department in developing a plan to market the book. Suggest reviewers, mailing lists, etc.

29. Upon publication, assist in the marketing, and urge the chapter authors to do so as well.

30. Await plaudits and (perhaps) royalties.

31. Keep an ongoing file of new developments for the second edition (or post them on an update web page).

To give a sense of how the timing works out for a one-volume book, here is what transpired for *Global Climate Change and U.S. Law*:

- **Summer 2005**: Compile and read materials; prepare outline
- **Fall 2005**: Line up chapter authors
- **January 2006**: Deadline for detailed chapter outlines
- **May 2006**: Deadline for first draft chapters
- **Summer 2006**: Review and comment on draft chapters
- **Fall 2006**: Deadline for final draft chapters
- **November 2006**: Submit completed manuscript
- **March 2007**: Anticipated publication date
Scheduling is vital for all ABA member-entity book programs. It is extremely important to meet your deadlines during the editing and production process. The work of many people, both in-house and freelance, all of whom are simultaneously working on a number of other projects, must be perfectly coordinated to avoid extensive delays.

The first deadline you will face is delivery of your completed manuscript. Because marketing efforts, including seasonal catalogs, begin months in advance, it is important to contact your executive editor or book board liaison immediately if you foresee any difficulty in meeting your manuscript due date.

Most books will be published within four to eight months (or less) of acceptance of your final manuscript and after its peer review. Every project has unique characteristics that may shorten or extend the time involved, but the following is a typical timetable of the production process once we have accepted your manuscript:

- **Peer review**: 2-3 weeks
- **Author revision (if necessary) to incorporate peer review comments**: 2-3 weeks
- **Copyediting**: 3-5 weeks
- **Typesetting**: 6-10 weeks after author review
- **Author review**: 1-2 weeks after copyediting
- **Proofreading and indexing**: Concurrent with typesetting
- **ABA review of cover and final pages**: 1 week
- **Printing, binding, and shipping**: 2-3 weeks

Please let us know ahead of time if you will not be available at any time during the production process.
Acceptable Manuscript Checklist

☐ Is the manuscript complete, including all front and back matter (except the Index and Table of Cases)?

☐ Are all the pages of the text numbered from 1 to the end consecutively?

☐ Is the copy double spaced?

☐ Is there at least a one-inch margin on all sides of the copy?

☐ Are all levels of headings distinct?

☐ Are all tables included and typed double spaced?

☐ Is the position of tables or art illustrations in relation to the text indicated by insertion of photocopies in the text manuscript?

☐ Are all the figures double numbered (e.g., Figure 1.1) by chapter and referenced in the text manuscript?

☐ Is the original art package separate from the manuscript? Is all art included and properly labeled?

☐ Is all line art in ink, on disk, or in some reproducible medium? (Pencil is not acceptable.)
Are all black-and-white photos glossy, in-focus originals?

Are copies of all necessary permissions and release forms for text, tables, and art included, with clear indications which material they cover?

Are all sources properly credited in captions, sourcelines, and references?

Have you e-mailed files to your editor or made a copy of the disk to send to the ABA?

Have you printed out the manuscript on a laser-quality printer to send to the ABA?

Did you keep the original files?

Did you make a copy of your manuscript for your reference?