The memo assignment is an objective memorandum that provides you with the opportunity to review and research relevant case law, analyze the facts under that law, and accurately assess the potential outcome of a matter. The memo is an assignment law firm associates are frequently asked to provide to senior attorneys.

With Bloomberg Law®, you can learn how to understand the legal issues involved and prepare for your memo assignment.

LEARN THE BASICS

What is the difference between a closed memo and an open memo?
A closed memo is an assignment where you are given the case law or other primary law to be used to draft your memorandum. An open memo is an objective memorandum, based on a set of facts involving a particular client, whereby you will need to research the relevant law, analyze the facts, and provide a critical assessment of the issues.

What information is included in a memo?
Generally, a memorandum will contain the following information:

- **Introduction Caption** – a section identifying the recipient (To), the author (From), Date, and subject of the memo (Re)
- **Issue** – a brief statement which defines the legal question at hand
- **Brief Answer** – an answer to the issue statement and a short explanation
- **Facts** – a statement of the facts that sets out the legally relevant background information
- **Discussion** – several paragraphs that outline the various topics to be addressed and provides an analysis of the legal issues, usually ordered in subsections

How to Master the Memo:

- **STEP 1**: Understand the Legal Issues
- **STEP 2**: Develop a Research Plan
- **STEP 3**: Confirm Your Research
- **STEP 4**: Write an Objective Analysis
**Sample Assignment:**
Prepare an open memo on whether, under the Confrontation Clause of the Sixth Amendment, an autopsy report can be admitted as evidence when the author is unavailable to testify.

**STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE LEGAL ISSUES**

In a closed memo, you will be provided with all the cases and statutes you must use in the assignment. Be sure to thoroughly review the materials you are given and take notes to better understand the legal issues involved.

In an open memo, you will be tasked with researching relevant primary and secondary resources to include in your analysis.

Secondary sources, such as books, treatises, law reviews, and legal analysis publications, are a great starting point to assist you with your memo research. Although secondary sources are not binding on courts, meaning courts are not required to follow these sources, they are still helpful tools to use when you know very little about a topic.

Use the secondary resources on Bloomberg Law to better understand the main legal topics and issues as they relate to the facts in the memo assignment. Start your research on Bloomberg Law by running a search over BNA Law Reports, which include over 100 titles covering a variety of legal topics written by experts in the field. Use BNA Law Reports to help frame the issue and find leads to other relevant materials, including cases and statutes.

**EXAMPLE:** Begin your research by searching over BNA Law Reports using keywords. Click on the News & Law Reports tab and then select BNA Law Reports. For this assignment, start with these keywords: ("sixth amendment" or "confrontation clause") and (autopsy n/5 report) n/30 ("medical examiner" or coroner s/ unavailable) to locate relevant articles.

**RESEARCH TIP>>> KEYWORDS**

Keywords will be highlighted in the search results page, allowing you to quickly scan the results for relevant articles. You can also run a search over all Books & Treatises to gather additional background information through the Search & Browse tab.
**STEP 2: DEVELOP A RESEARCH PLAN**

Reviewing secondary sources will help you identify a list of relevant primary law resources, like case law and related statutes. Keep your research organized and create a research plan to identify key resources. The research plan will list out the relevant primary law and how the case or statute supports your argument.

**EXAMPLE:** In this assignment, some of the BNA Law Reports mention confrontation rulings on autopsy reports, including several U.S. Supreme Court Opinions like *Williams v. Illinois*, 2012 BL 150191 (U.S. 2012). Review these sources to reveal additional relevant cases and statutes to support your position.

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**RESEARCH TIP>>> WORKSPACES**

Save the relevant cases and statutes to your **Workspaces**, an electronic storage area on Bloomberg Law. You can add your notes and upload your drafts to stay organized.

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**STEP 3: CONFIRM YOUR RESEARCH**

Once you have your research plan, you want to make sure you rely on the most current law available. The Bloomberg Law citator, **BCite™**, helps you verify your research. Use **BCite** to review the history and citing references for a particular case.

BCite includes the following information:

- **Composite Analysis** displays the overall treatment of the case by other courts.
- **Direct History** shows how a case has moved through the court system.
- **Case Analysis** provides a list of cases that have subsequently cited to the case.
- **Table of Authorities** lists the cases relied on by the court in the main case.
- **Citing Documents** lists legal materials, such as court opinions, administrative decisions, and secondary sources that reference your case by citation.
EXAMPLE: To see whether Williams v. Illinois is still good law, enter the citation into the <GO> Bar and pull up the case. The right-hand side of every case on Bloomberg Law will display the BCite Analysis—a citation analysis indicator such as Positive, Distinguished, or Negative—to illustrate the overall treatment of the case by other courts.

BCite Analysis Indicators
Carefully review the BCite treatment to determine whether the case can be relied on in your memo.

RESEARCH TIP>>> COPY WITH CITATION
When you find a case you need for your memo, highlight the text you want to capture and then click the Copy with Citation button that appears. Copy the text from the resulting window and then paste it into your document.

STEP 4: WRITE AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS
Use your research plan to help organize your analysis. Remember to clearly state the law and the facts, and present your analysis in a logical manner. Bloomberg Law provides many articles and resources to assist you in preparing your memo. Use the materials on the First Year Resources Page, located on the law school landing page, to help you draft clear and compelling legal arguments for your memo and other legal writing assignments.

RESEARCH TIP>>> NOTEPAD
Use the Notepad in the sidebar to the right of a complaint, motion, court opinion, or other document you are reading on Bloomberg Law to take notes. Easily access your notes each time you open the document.