

Style Guide

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I. SHORT GUIDE TO BLUEBOOK (22nd EDITION)

A. Citations in Court Documents

1. Cases (Bluebook (“BB”) Rules B4, 10, and 18.3.1, with modifications)

Examples:

United Student Aid Funds, Inc. v Espinosa, 559 U.S. 260 (2010)

Alt v. U.S. (In re Alt), 305 F.3d 413, 418–19 (6th Cir. 2002).

In re Matteson, 535 B.R. 156 (6th Cir. BAP 2015)

ALTERNATIVE SHORT FORM: 535 B.R. at 156.

Modification: To follow common usage among federal courts, parallel cite United States Supreme Court cases as follows, only giving pin cites for the “U.S.” and “S. Ct.” reporters:

Field v. Mans, 516 U.S. 59, 67, 116 S. Ct. 437, 442, 133 L. Ed. 2d 351 (1995).

SHORT FORM: *Field*, 516 U.S. at 67, 116 S. Ct. at 442.

2. Bankruptcy Cases (BB Rule 10.2.1(a))

a. If the opinion was issued in the context of the main bankruptcy case, cite the case name as the last name of the debtor prefaced by “*In re.*” Phrases such as “in the matter of” or “petition of” are always abbreviated as “*In re.*” Example: *In re Elrod*, 570 B.R. 790 (Bankr. W.D. Tenn. 2015) (Croom, J.)

b. If the opinion was issued in the context of an adversary proceeding, list the adversary names on either side of a “v.” Phrases such as “on the relation of” or “on behalf of” are abbreviated “ex rel.” Example: *U.S. ex rel. Clausen v. Lab Corp of Am., Inc.*, 290 F.3d 1301 (11th Cir. 2002). When the opinion lists only the adversary parties, omit all procedural phrases except “ex rel.”

¹ Judge Barnett extends her gratitude to the late Honorable Michael G. Williamson and the Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida for sharing the style guide, which has been adopted by her chambers, with modifications.

Example: *Menchise v. Akerman Senterfitt*, 532 F.3d 1146 (11th Cir. 2008).

c. If both the adversary parties' names and the non-adversary case name are listed at the beginning of an opinion, list both in the citation. Example: *In re Mallard Pond Partners v. Commercial Bank & Trust Co. (In re Mallard Pond Partners)*, 113 B.R. 420 (Bankr. W.D. Tenn. 1990) (Kennedy, J.).

3. Statutes (BB Rules B12 and 12)

28 U.S.C. § 157(b) (2008).

11 U.S.C. §§ 544-548 (2008).

4. Federal Rules (BB Rules B5.1.3 and 12.9.3)

Fed. R. Bankr. P. 6003.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 8.

Fed. R. Evid. 410.

5. Books, Treatises, and Reference Materials (Non-Periodical) (BB Rules B15 and 15)

10 *Collier on Bankruptcy* ¶ 6003.02[2] (15th ed. 2008).

Black's Law Dictionary 712 (9th ed. 2009).

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et al. eds., 19th ed. 2010).

6. Articles in Periodicals (BB Rules B16 and 16)

Michael Barbado, *Retailing Chains Caught in a Wave of Bankruptcies*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 15, 2008, at A1.

Eugene R. Wedoff, *Means Testing in the New 707(b)*, 79 Am. Bankr. L.J. 231, 243 (2005).

7. Court/Litigation Documents (BB Rule B17 and Table BT.1)

Citations to court documents are enclosed in parentheses. The ending period of a citation sentence goes inside the parentheses, but a citation clause within a sentence has no final period and also should not be set off with commas.

Examples: (ECF No. 74; Pl.'s Ex. 13.) (Trial Tr. vol. 2, 21:12-23:4, Oct. 3, 2008.)

Examples in Text: The Debtor's schedules (ECF No. 1) reveal improperly exempted assets that were the subject of the Trustee's objection (ECF No. 15). The Court sustained the objection to the Debtor's claim of exemption in its order of July 9. (ECF No. 20.)

8. Legislative Materials (BB Rule 13)

H.R. 3150, 105th Cong. (1998).

H.R. Rep. No. 109-31 (2005), *reprinted in* 2005 U.S.C.C.A.N. 88.

9. Constitutions (BB Rule B11 and 11)

U.S. Const. art. 4, § 1.
Fla. Const. art. X, § 4.

10. Short Form Citation and “Id.” (BB Rules B4, 4.1, and 4.2)

a. The first time any authority is cited, it must be cited in full. After the first citation, if the reference is clear, a “short form” should be used. The following are all proper short forms *In re Elrod*, 570 B.R. 790 (Bankr. W.D. Tenn. 2015):

In re Elrod, 570 B.R. at 790

570 B.R. at 790

Id. at 790.

b. The short form “*id.*” is used to refer to the immediately preceding authority and may *only* be used when the preceding citation contains only *one* source. If no page number is given, “*id.*” refers to the page cited in the immediately preceding authority. “*Id.*” can be used as a short cite for all types of authorities.

11. Introductory Signals (BB Rules 1.2 and B3)

Citation sentences should often begin with an introductory signal to indicate the type of support provided by the authority. Examples:

See: signals that the cited authority clearly supports, but does not directly state, the proposition

Contra: signals that the cited authority directly contradicts a given point

But see: signals that the cited authority contradicts the stated proposition implicitly or contains dicta that contradicts the stated proposition

No signal should be used if the authority directly states the proposition, is the source of a quotation, or is referred to in the text.

12. Bluebook Tables: Abbreviations in Citations

<i>Category</i>	<i>Table</i>	<i>Related Bluebook Rule</i>
Case Reporters	BB T.1	Federal, p. 227; Tennessee, p. 285; BB Rule B4.1.2
Case Names	BB T.6	BB Rules B4.1.1, B4.1.1(vi) & 10.2; <i>c.f.</i> 10.2.1(h)
Court Names	BB T.7	Use in case cites, BB Rule 10.4
Geographic Terms	BB T.10	Use in case cites, BB Rules B4.1.1, 10.2.2 & 10.4
Months	BB T.12	Use in case cites, BB Rule 10.5
Periodicals	BB T.13	Use when citing law reviews, BB Rule 16
Subdivisions	BB T.16	Use in all citations, BB Rule 3

13. Spacing and Abbreviations (BB Rules B6, 6.1, 6.2, and B4.1.3)

- a. Generally, there are no spaces between unilateral capitals, which are single letter or numerical abbreviations, such as “2d” or “S.” Abbreviations longer than a single letter, such as “Supp.” or “Tenn.,” must always be set off by spaces from other abbreviations.
- b. Abbreviations should be followed by a period unless the last letter of the abbreviation is set off by an apostrophe. Examples: Ass’n and Gov’t, but, Ctr. and Dev.
- c. United States may, but need not, be abbreviated as “U.S.” only when used as an adjective. Example: U.S. Trustee or United States Trustee, but, “representing the United States.”

B. Text in Court Documents

1. Capitalization (BB Rules B8 and 8)

- a. The word “court” should be capitalized when naming any court in full or when referring to the U.S. Supreme Court. For instance, the “Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals” would be capitalized, but not “the courts of appeals.” Likewise, the “U.S. Trustee” is always capitalized.
- b. The word “court” is also capitalized in a court document when it is referring to the court issuing or receiving that document. For instance, “the Court has considered the evidence in this case,” but, “bankruptcy courts disagree on this issue.”
- c. Likewise, capitalize “plaintiff,” “defendant,” “debtor,” “trustee” or “creditor” when referring to the party in the case that is the subject of the order. For example, “The U.S. Trustee has objected to the Debtor’s claim of exemptions,” but, “The trustee in *Shoopman* objected, although the debtors had chosen to surrender their homes.”
- d. The title of court documents should be capitalized only if 1) the document was filed in the same matter as is the subject of your document and 2) the actual title or a shortened form is used. Do not capitalize generic document names. For instance, “In the Debtor’s Objection to Claim Number 5,” but, “this Court’s orders are ignored to your peril.”

2. Citations v. References in Text (BB Rules 1.1, 10.2.1, and B2)

a. Types of Cites: A citation may be either a sentence or a clause. A citation sentence occurs on its own after a textual sentence and is followed by a period. A citation clause occurs within a textual sentence and is set off with commas. A statute or case name may also be incorporated into a textual sentence, in which case it is not a citation at all.

Citation Clause: “The court in *Dicks*, 306 B.R. at 722, held that”

b. Abbreviation: In a case name in a citation clause, only abbreviate widely known acronyms, as well as “&,” “Ass’n,” “Bros.,” “Co.,” “Corp.,” “Inc.,” “Ltd.,” and “No.” Fully abbreviate case names in citation sentences by also abbreviating pursuant to BB T.6 and T.10.

c. Non-Citations: If a statute or a case name is being referred to in text, it is not a citation, so abbreviate nothing, and turn most symbols into words. Abbreviations should generally not be used at all in text.

Citation Sentence: “The exemption applies. Tenn. Code Ann. § 26-2-112.”

Statute Referenced in Text: “This Debtor can claim the exemption provided under section 26-2-112 of the Tennessee Code Annotated.”

3. Numbers (BB Rule B6 and 6.2, with modifications)

a. **General Rule:** Spell out numbers zero to ten in text. For numbers larger than ten, use numerals.

Exception: Spell out 1) any number that begins a sentence and 2) round numbers (hundred, thousand, million), if done consistently.

Exception: Use numerals 1) when referring to a section or subdivision, such as a code section, 2) if referring repeatedly to percentages or dollar amounts, 3) if the number includes a decimal point, and 4) for numbers in a series if any one number is over ten.

b. Use commas to set off sets of three digits in large numbers. For example: 34,567 and 1,478.

c. Never use superscript for ordinal numbers (numbers that indicate position in a series). In text, use “2nd” and “3rd.” In citations only, use “2d” and “3d.”

4. Symbols (BB Rules B6 and 6.2)

a. The section (§) and paragraph (§§) symbols are used in citations. In text, however, the words must be spelled out unless referring to a section in the United States Code. There should always be a space between the “§” and “§§” symbols and a numeral. Example: 11 U.S.C. § 707(b)(2); 10 *Collier on Bankruptcy* §§ 6003.02[2] (16th ed. 2009).

b. The dollar (\$) and percent (%) symbols should be used whenever numerals are used, and spelled out whenever numbers are spelled out, and should never begin a sentence. There should never be a space between the “\$” or “%” symbols and a numeral. Example: \$500,000 and 11%.

5. Proper Usage of Legal Terms

- a. Motions are either “granted” or “denied.” Applications are either “approved” or “disapproved.” Objections are either “sustained” or “overruled.” Claims are either “allowed” or “disallowed.”
- b. The main bankruptcy case is a “case.” In a case you have “final evidentiary hearings” on “contested matters.” An adversary proceeding is a “proceeding.” In an adversary proceeding, you have “trials.” Final evidentiary hearings may also be referred to as “trials.”
- c. When giving a deadline, using “through” and not “to” a specific date will avoid the possibly unintended consequence of shortening the period by one day.
- d. For clarity, the use of defined terms is recommended.

Example: THIS CASE came on for hearing on May 1, 2008, on the United States Trustee’s Emergency Motion to Appoint a Chapter 11 Trustee (“Motion”). After reviewing the case law and hearing the arguments of the Debtor and the United States Trustee, the Court concludes that the Motion should be denied without prejudice.

II. FORMAT OF ORDERS

A. Whole Document

1. Times New Roman, 12-point font
2. 8 ½ by 11-inch paper
3. Four-inch top margin on page one, all other margins are to be one inch
4. Page numbers centered in the footer on every page except the first

B. Caption

1. The caption of all orders entered in the main bankruptcy case should match the following format, beginning at the first line on the page:

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
WESTERN DIVISION

In re: Case No. 00-00000-DEB
Chapter 13
John Doe and Jane Doe,

Debtors.

_____ /

2. The caption of an order entered in an adversary proceeding should match the following format:

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
WESTERN DIVISION

In re: Case No. 00-00000-DEB
Chapter 11

Unfortunate Company, L.L.C.,

Debtor.

_____ /

Unfortunate Company, L.L.C., Adv. No. 00-ap-00000

Plaintiff,

v.

Liability, Ltd.,

Defendant.

_____ /

C. The Case/Proceeding Number

1. The case number should conform to the following: Case No. 00-00000-DEB
2. An adversary proceeding number: Adv. No. 00-00000
3. The first two digits signify the year the case or proceeding was filed

bk = bankruptcy case	ap = adversary proceeding	mp = miscellaneous proceeding
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4. The next five digits are the chronologically assigned case or proceeding number
5. The final three uppercase letters signify the judge to whom the case is assigned:

JDL = Chief Judge Latta	MRH = Judge Hagan	DEB = Judge Barnett
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D. Title of Order

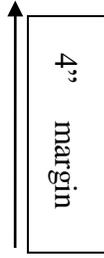
1. The title follows the caption after one hard return, is centered, in all caps, and bold.
2. If the heading runs onto several lines, no line should be longer than the line below it. Only the text of the bottom line of the heading should be underlined.
3. The title of the order should be a full, descriptive title detailing the nature of the motion or application ruled upon.

E. Body

1. The body of the order should be double-spaced, left-justified, and laid out in unnumbered paragraphs, each beginning with a single indent.
2. The first sentence of the order should begin with “THIS CASE” or “THIS PROCEEDING” in all caps. The sentence should recite the papers and events that resulted in the entry of the order. Orders entered “after a hearing” should include the hearing date. Papers should be identified by title, party and docket number.
3. If the order involves real property, it must contain a full and complete legal description of the real property.

F. Decretal Paragraphs

1. Before the Court’s decree should be the phrase “Accordingly, it is **ORDERED**” and “**ORDERED**” should be in all caps and bolded.
2. The decree generally is presented in either multiple numbered paragraphs or in a single unnumbered paragraph. For short orders in which there are four or fewer decretal paragraphs, the decree may be set out in multiple unnumbered paragraphs, all but the first beginning with “**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED**” in all caps and bolded.
3. Date and signature lines are not to be included.



UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
WESTERN DIVISION

In re:

John Doe and Jane Doe,

Debtor.*

Case No. 00-00000-DEB

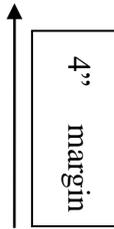
Chapter 13

**HEADING CENTERED IN ALL CAPS AND BOLDED
BUT ONLY THE TEXT OF THE BOTTOM LINE IS UNDERLINED**

This case came on for consideration without a hearing on the Court's own Motion for Uniformity in the Format of Orders (ECF. No. 1). Paragraphs in the body of this Order begin with a single tab indent and are unnumbered, double-spaced and left-justified. This Order is written in 12-point Times New Roman font. The page is 8 ½ by 11 inches in size with one-inch margins. There is one space between each sentence and one space between each word in a sentence.

Accordingly, it is **ORDERED** that the decree of the Court may be presented in a single unnumbered paragraph.

*All references to "Debtor" shall include and refer to both of the debtors in a case filed jointly by two individuals.



UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
WESTERN DIVISION

In re:

Unfortunate Company, L.L.C.,
Debtor.

Case No. 00-00000-DEB
Chapter 11

Unfortunate Company, L.L.C.,
Plaintiff,

v.

Adv. No. 00-ap-00000

Liability, Ltd.,
Defendant.

**HEADING CENTERED IN
ALL CAPS AND BOLDED BUT ONLY THE
TEXT OF THE BOTTOM LINE IS UNDERLINED**

This Proceeding came on for hearing on April 1, 2008, on the Court's own Motion for Uniformity in the Format of Orders (ECF No. 1). Paragraphs in the body of this Order are unnumbered, double-spaced, and left-justified. The first line of each paragraph has a single tab indent; the margins are set to one inch. The paper is 8 ½ by 11 inches. The font is 12-point Times New Roman. Page numbers are centered in the footer on every page but the first. There is one space between each sentence and one space between each word in a sentence.

Accordingly, it is **ORDERED**:

4. The decree of the Court may be presented in numbered paragraphs if there are two or more numbered paragraphs.

5. The date and signature may never stand alone on their own page.

*All references to "Plaintiff" or "Defendant" shall include and refer to multiple plaintiffs or defendants.

III. FORMS

A. Notice of Filings

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
WESTERN DIVISION**

In re
DEBTOR’S NAME,
Debtor.
_____ /

Case No. 00-00000
Chapter ____

**NOTICE OF FILING [DESCRIBE ITEMS BEING
FILED – TAX RETURNS, CASE LAW, EXHIBITS, ETC.]**

[NAME OF PARTY] files [or submits] the documents listed below in connection with [explain reason for notice of filing]:

1. Name of document (for example – full case citation, 2025 Tax Return, etc.).
2. Name of document
3. Name of document
4. Name of document
- 5.

Respectfully Submitted,

NAME OF THE LAW FIRM

/s/ Attorney’s Name
ATTORNEY’S NAME
Bar. No. 012345
123 Best Counsel Way
City, State 12345
(901) 123-4567
emailaddress.com
Attorney for _____.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, **name of the attorney or person serving document** certify that a copy of this *Notice of Filing* has been served on **January 9, 2026**, on the following:

List who received service.

Signature
Name of the person who served the document.