

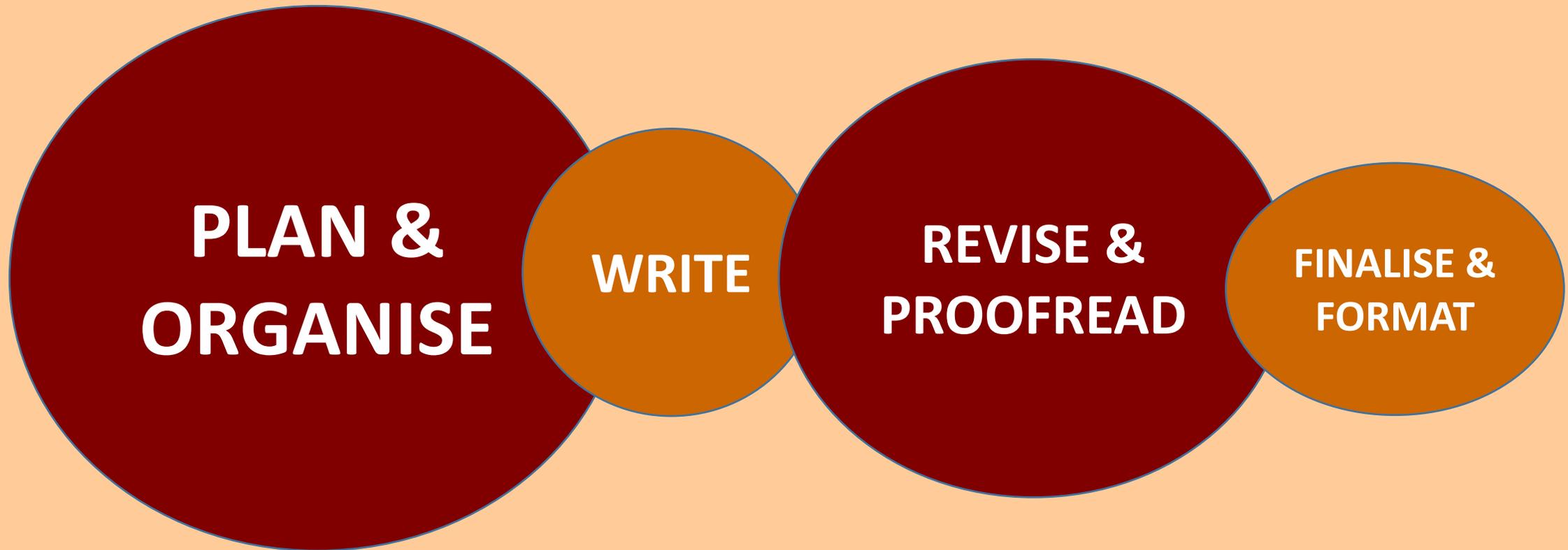
Advocacy Advice for Civil Society

WRITING SKILLS



Dianne Hubbard
Legal Assistance Centre
2022

Steps for good writing



This assumes that your **RESEARCH** has already been done.
Planning and organising are the biggest tasks.

“Steps for Writing”

What is wrong with
this diagram?

1. The word “writing” is misspelt.
2. Some words are out of order.
3. Use of capitalisation is inconsistent.
4. The spaces between the words are not uniform.



WHY are you writing this document? **WHO** are you writing it for?

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

Purpose

*The reason or goal
that you have for
writing about your
topic*



Audience

*The specific people
that you are writing
for*



TIP: Force yourself to state your goal clearly.

I am writing a _____

TYPE OF DOCUMENT

for _____

AUDIENCE

with the goal of _____.

PURPOSE

First step: Make an outline

- Good organisation is the most important part of good writing.
- A good presentation of your ideas and recommendations will make them much more effective.
- Identify your main points first, and then decide on your sub-points.
- Note that you may need to revise your outline as you work through your document.

Outline	
I.	Intro
II.	First point
A.	Detail
B.	Detail
C.	Detail
III.	Second point
A.	Detail
B.	Detail
C.	Detail
D.	Detail
IV.	Third point
A.	Detail
B.	Detail
C.	Detail
V.	Conclusion

TIP: Use questions & answers to organise your writing. Think about what your reader will want to know.

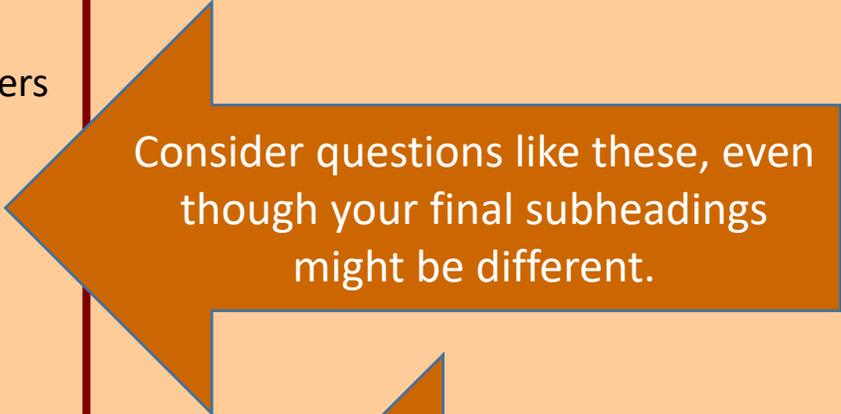
EXAMPLE: Advocacy document on a draft government policy

PURPOSE: To persuade stakeholders to support your input

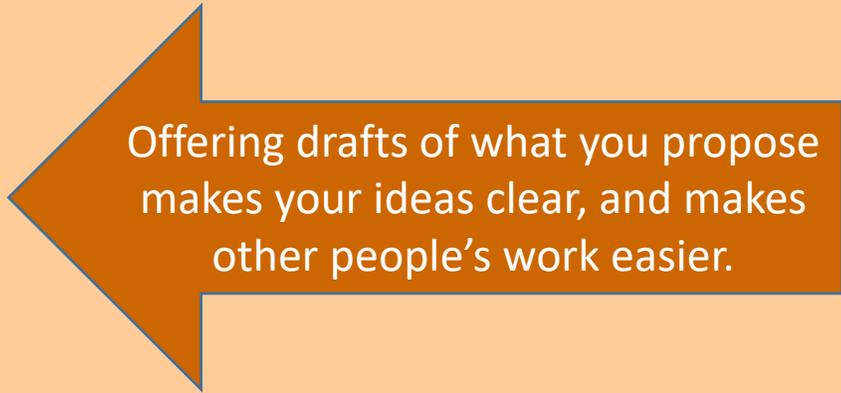
PRIMARY AUDIENCE: Civil society, other stakeholders & decision-makers

- What is the background to the policy document?
- What are its key points?
- What is good about it, and why?
- What aspects of it should be changed, and why?

Consider putting forward re-drafted provisions that incorporate your recommendations.



Consider questions like these, even though your final subheadings might be different.

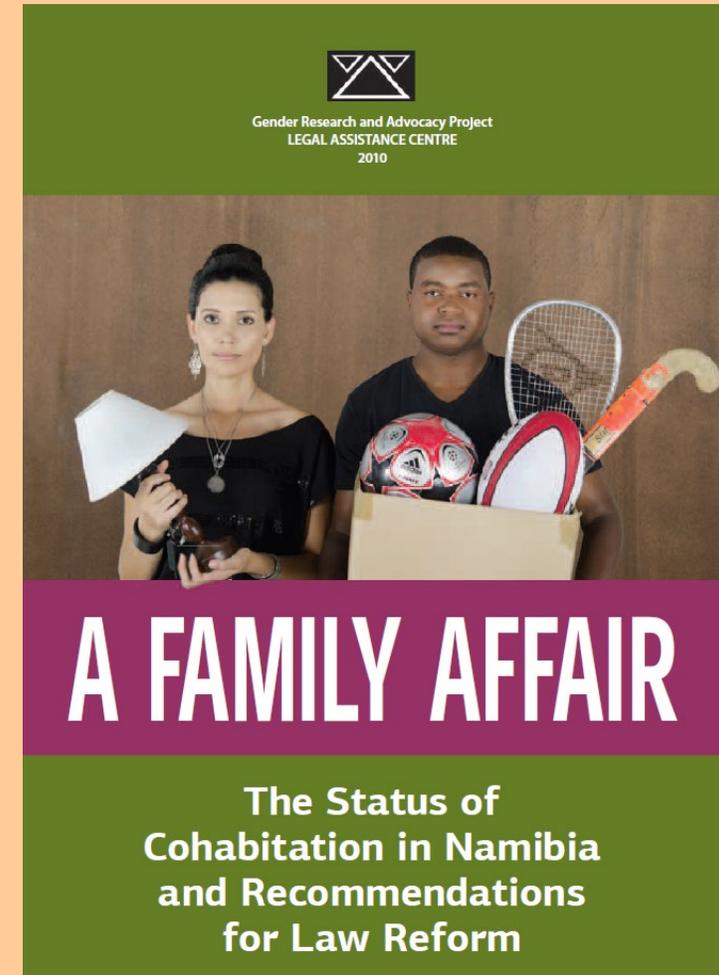


Offering drafts of what you propose makes your ideas clear, and makes other people's work easier.

Sample outline: Advocacy for law reform

SHORT SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- 1) Introduction: Purpose of your memo
- 2) Current legal position
- 3) Shortcomings of current legal position
- 4) Field research in Namibia (optional)
- 5) Constitutional background
- 6) Relevant international law
- 7) Comparative law from other jurisdictions
- 8) Recommendation for Namibia



Possible approaches: Educational material on a law

- **Follow the order of the issue in real life,** not necessarily the order of the issues in the law.
- **Pretend that you are talking to someone who wants to know about the law.** People often explain clearly in speech, but freeze up when they start writing.
- **Use lots of illustrative examples.** Do not choose random examples. Think about what examples will clarify the rules.

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THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE	Inside back cover

EXAMPLES

Namibian Citizenship Act 14 of 1990

- What does the law do?
- What is the purpose of the law?
- When did the law come into force?
- What does the Namibian Constitution say about citizenship?
 - Citizenship by birth
 - Citizenship by descent
 - Citizenship by marriage
 - Citizenship by registration
 - Citizenship by naturalisation
 - Honorary Namibian citizenship
- Dual citizenship
- Losing Namibian citizenship
- Crimes
- Gender equality in Namibian citizenship
- The challenges of determining “ordinary residence”
- Statelessness

Married Persons Equality Act

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TIP: If you are writing for busy policy-makers, be as brief and clear as possible. Consider “listicles”.

- A “listicle” is an article written in list-format.
- It breaks up complex content into bite-size pieces for your readers.
- It is more inviting to read than a long, dense document.
- Sometimes you will want to provide more detail, but a summary in list form may provide an effective overview.

30 Cute Cat Photos



10 WAYS TO LOOK 10 YEARS YOUNGER

7 REASONS TO PROTECT SAME-SEX COUPLES UNDER THE COMBATING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT



Legal Assistance Centre, 2020

The current *Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003* is about to be amended. The assistance for victims of the Act lists several forms of domestic relationships. The assistance for victims applies only to these listed types of relationships. Currently, the section is worded as people “of different sexes” who are cohabiting or in dating relationships. Thus, same-sex couples are excluded from any protection under the Act. The LAC suggests removing the “different sexes” from the Act, so as to extend protection against domestic violence to same-sex couples, for the following reasons:

1. Failing to protect persons in same-sex relationships from domestic violence is unconstitutional. The Namibian Constitution, which is Namibia’s Supreme Law. This could violate the right to dignity and protection against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Art 10(1)). Even though the Supreme Court of Namibia in the *Frank* case¹ that the existence of a same-sex relationship was irrelevant to an applicant’s residency, the Court explicitly stated: “Nothing in this judgment justifies discriminating against homosexuals as individuals, or deprive[s] them of the protection of other provisions of the Constitution.”

2. All persons living in Namibia, regardless of their sexual orientation, are entitled to protection from violence. Protecting same-sex couples from domestic violence does not mean that the government approves of or encourages such relationships. It merely fulfills the obligation to protect all persons in the Namibian house. It is a reality that some Namibians live in same-sex relationships. Protecting same-sex couples against violence will not discourage them from living in such relationships; conversely, failing to protect same-sex couples from violence will not discourage them from staying together.



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Note 1. Among the benefits of breastfeeding: It is cheaper, safer, cleaner and faster than bottle feeding. Breast milk also helps to prevent the development of allergies and babies who are breastfed have a lower risk of developing health problems such as obesity, health disease, high blood pressure and some kinds of diabetes later in life. Breastfeeding is also better for the mother. Breastfeeding immediately after birth helps to reduce bleeding from the uterus. Breastfeeding also delays the start of ovulation and menstruation, which will help stop the mother from becoming pregnant again right away. Breastfeeding also helps the mother to lose weight from the pregnancy and helps protect against breast and ovarian cancer. Breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer affecting women in Namibia.

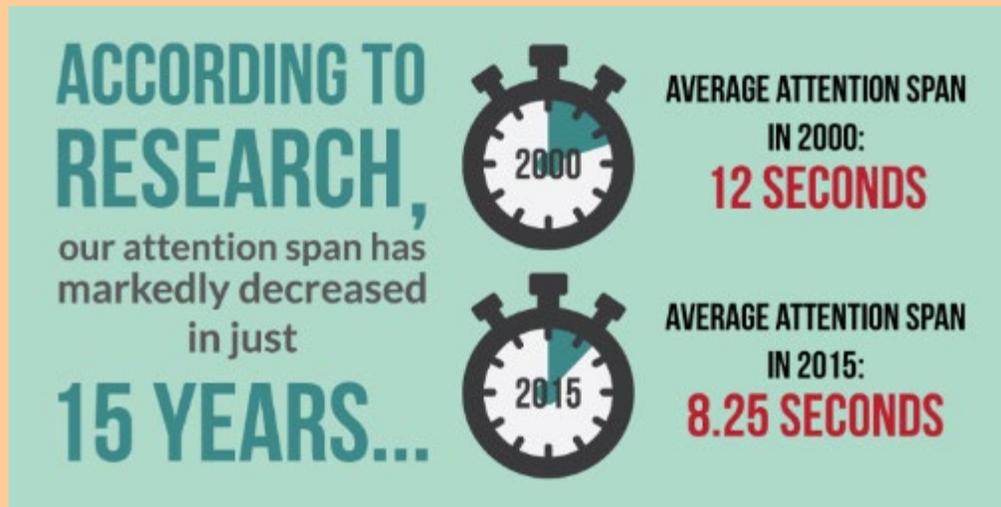
10 REASONS TO EXTEND MATERNITY LEAVE TO 6 MONTHS AFTER BIRTH

1. The National Agenda for Children states that the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life is a government priority. This is in line with the World Health Organisation recommendation that mothers should exclusively breastfeed their children for six months. However the National Agenda does not make it clear how the government intends to balance this commitment with the provisions in the Labour Act and Social Security Act which provide for just eight weeks maternity leave after the birth of the child. The current maternity leave provision is a push factor for many mothers to wean their children early. Extending maternity leave to six months after the birth of the child will allow mothers to exclusively breastfeed their children for six months. Whilst not all mothers will take advantage of this opportunity, allowing mothers the option to do so will provide an enabling environment and it is likely that over time more and more women will exclusively breastfeed given the numerous benefits for their child and for themselves.

2. The Ministry of Health and Social Services National Guidelines for Infant and Young Child Feeding, which are in line with World Health Organisation guidance, state that HIV-positive mothers should also exclusively breastfeed their children for six months

KEYS TO GOOD WRITING

1. Use an **orderly progression of ideas**.
2. Use **short sentences and paragraphs**.
3. Make sure that **each paragraph has ONE key point**.
4. Use **plain, straightforward language**.
5. **Be direct**. Be sure that your recommendation / demand / concern is clear.
6. **Ask someone to read your draft and give you feedback**. Then revise and improve.
7. **Step away from your draft** for some time and then **read it again with fresh eyes**.



More tips for good writing

1. Good writing anticipates reader questions.

Good writing anticipates what questions readers will have as they read a piece, and answers them in advance.

2. Good writing is grounded in data.

Data puts your content in context and gives you credibility.

3. Good writing tells a full story.

Mention counterarguments and opposing viewpoints and then answer them.

4. Good writing is simple, but not simplistic.

Assume the reader knows nothing about the issue, but don't assume that the reader is stupid.



TIP: Consider numbered paragraphs to organise a complex document (key points and sub-points)

2.4. Courts have recognised a few limited exceptions to the common law rules on standing.

2.4.1. In some circumstances, an applicant will be allowed to make an application to protect the liberty interest of another, provided a sufficiently good reason is shown why the individual cannot make the application on his or her own behalf.¹⁶ This may be allowed, for example, in cases where the interested person is in detention or fears victimisation.¹⁷

2.4.2. Where a particular law was designed to protect a certain group, South African courts have allowed a member of that group to bring suit pertaining to that law without showing actual damage.¹⁸ As part of the common law at the time of Namibia's independence, this rule should remain good law,¹⁹ although a search of the case law has not revealed any cases in which a Namibian court has applied this exception.

2.4.3. The High Court has suggested that a broadened approach to standing may be justified where necessary to curb an abuse of public power, but no such exception has actually been recognised in Namibia to date.²⁰

TIP: Avoid ambiguity

Check your writing to see if a statement could have more than one meaning.

EXAMPLE: “I saw someone on the hill with binoculars.”

- Did you use binoculars to see someone on the hill? **OR**
- Did you see someone on the hill who was holding binoculars?

EXAMPLE: “For each of the thirty-four (34) Magistrate’s courts in Namibia, a Clerk of Court is appointed for both the Criminal and Civil sections.”

- Is there a single Clerk of Court that handles Criminal and Civil matters? **OR**
- Is one Clerk of Court appointed for Criminal matters and another for Civil matters?

EXAMPLE: The members of the Cabinet shall have the following functions:
(a) to direct, co-ordinate and supervise the activities of Ministries and Government departments including para-statal enterprises, and to review and advise the President and the National Assembly on **the desirability and wisdom of any prevailing subordinate legislation, regulations or orders pertaining to such para-statal enterprises**, regard being had to the public interest;

Consider “subordinate legislation, regulations or orders...”

- Must all three of these things relate to “such para-statal enterprises”? **OR**
- Is it only “orders” that must relate to para-statals?



TIP: Take care with the passive voice

The passive voice is often problematic because it does not identify the person or institution responsible for an action.

Passive: The document must be updated annually.

Active: The Director must update the document annually.

Passive: This agreement may be cancelled by giving 30 days' notice.

Active: Either party to the agreement may cancel it by giving 30 days' notice to the other party.

But passive voice may sometimes be the right choice -

- when the actor's identity is unknown or would be complex to describe
- when there are multiple actors
- when the intent is to leave the statement ambiguous
- when you want to emphasise the action instead of the actor.

EXAMPLE: My car has been stolen!

EXAMPLE: The Legal Assistance Centre was established in 1988.



TIP: Minimise use of acronyms

“NCO pioneered the printing of MUAC tapes locally, the only CO in the ESAR to achieve this.”

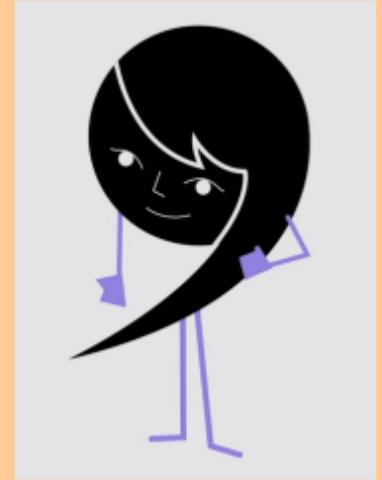
UNICEF Annual Report 2021



- **NCO** = Namibia Country Office
- **MUAC** = not explained in document; appears to be mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measuring tapes used to detect malnutrition
- **CO** = Country Office
- **ESAR** = not explained in document, but probably Eastern and Southern Africa Region

TIP: Take care with your commas

- You can find lots of guides to correct comma use on the Internet.
- A fast and easy way to test your comma use is to read your sentence aloud and PAUSE at the comma. If this sounds wrong, you have probably used a comma where it was not needed.



EXAMPLES:

The Minister must be satisfied that “the proposed rehabilitation facility, has a clinic...”.

“A person does not qualify for appointment as member of the Board, if the person has, been convicted, whether in Namibia or elsewhere, of theft, fraud, forgery or perjury...”

TIP: Use parallel structures



This may be boring in some kinds of writing, but it is useful in educational material.

Not Parallel: Mary likes hiking, swimming, and **to ride** a bicycle.

Parallel: Mary likes hiking, swimming, and riding a bicycle.

Not Parallel: The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and **in a detailed manner**.

Parallel: The production manager was asked to write his report quickly, accurately, and thoroughly.

Not Parallel: The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and **his motivation was** low.

Parallel: The teacher said that he was a poor student because he waited until the last minute to study for the exam, completed his lab problems in a careless manner, and lacked motivation.

Not Parallel: The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **to do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

Parallel: The coach told the players that they should **get** a lot of sleep, not **eat** too much, and **do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

Even better: The coach told the players that they should **get** a lot of sleep, **eat** lightly, and **do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

EXAMPLES

It is a crime to obstruct the work of the Financial Intelligence Centre or any other institution that is carrying out duties under this law. Trying to unduly influence or interfere with the Centre's work is also a crime.

It is a crime to obstruct the work of the Financial Intelligence Centre or any other institution that is carrying out duties under this law. It is also a crime to try to unduly influence or interfere with the Centre's work.

The Inspector-General of Police has the following duties:

- making provision for balanced structuring of the police force
- to make suitable appointments to the police force
- efficient administration of the police force.

The Inspector-General of Police has the following duties:

- making provision for balanced structuring of the police force
- making suitable appointments to the police force
- ensuring the efficient administration of the police force.



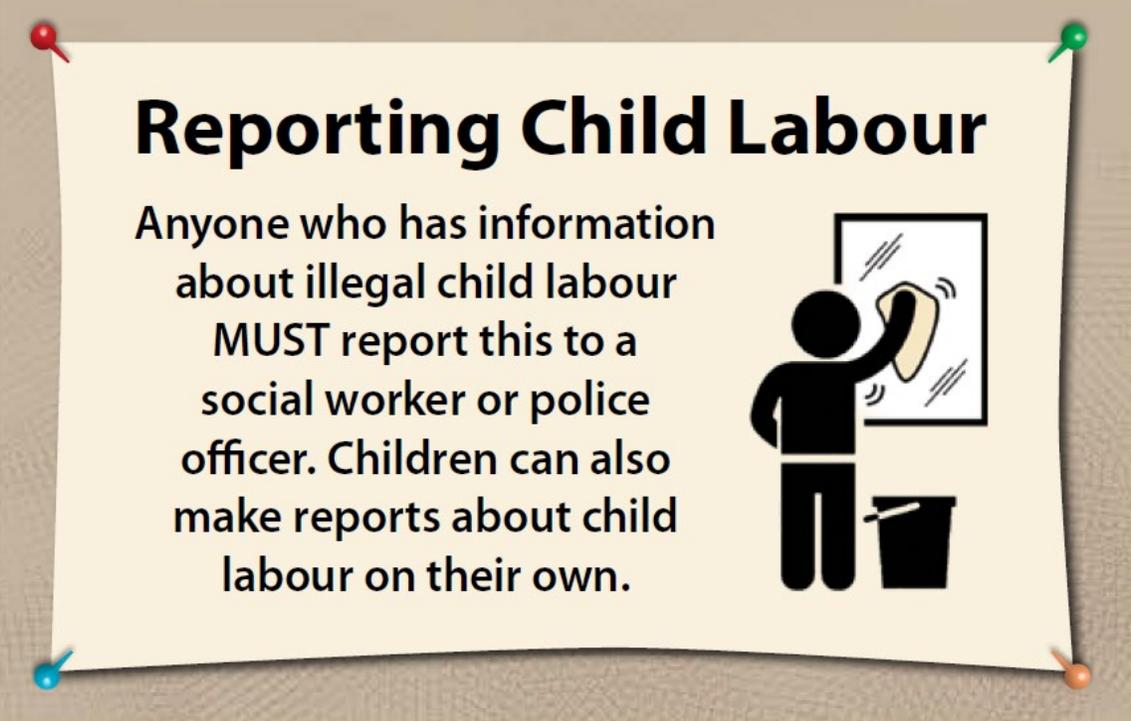
PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION

Child Labour and Child Activities

Reporting suspected child labour is **mandatory** for people who perform certain professional / official duties involving children, including: school principals / teachers, psychologists, religious leaders, social workers, and lawyers (unless information is privileged). It is also mandatory that anyone who has information about illegal child labour report this. Therefore, any situation involving potential child labour requires mandatory reporting.

Children can report instances of child labour themselves.

Comic: Draft versus final



Reporting Child Labour

Anyone who has information about illegal child labour **MUST** report this to a social worker or police officer. Children can also make reports about child labour on their own.

The poster features a stick figure pointing at a board with a yellow eraser, and a trash can with a pencil inside it.



Short pamphlet: Draft versus final

According to Articles 8 and 10 of the Constitution of Namibia, the dignity of all persons shall be inviolable and all persons shall be equal before the law. Additionally, according to Article 95 of the Constitution of Namibia, the State shall adopt policies aimed at promoting and maintaining the health of its citizens. It is imperative that Namibia not discriminate against LGBT individuals with regards to the human right of accessing healthcare.

The Constitution says that the State must adopt policies aimed at improving public health. The “public” includes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

The Constitution also says that all people are equal, and that a person’s dignity must always be respected. If lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individuals are not able to access healthcare services, their constitutional rights to equality and dignity are being violated.

LEARN ABOUT THE LAW: STATUTE SUMMARIES

Public Enterprises Governance Act 1 of 2019

Which draft do you find more clear and informative?

What is the purpose of the law?

The law restructures the governance of public enterprises (PEs) under the Ministry of Public Enterprises (MPE) as a central governance unit. Given that PEs carry out functions for the government good governance is necessary to assure they are being held accountable, meet their objectives and contribute to Namibia's economic development in a sustainable way.

What is the purpose of the law?

The law reforms the governance of public enterprises. Since public enterprises carry out functions for the Government, good governance practices are necessary to make sure that they -

- meet their objectives
- are held accountable for their performance
- contribute to Namibia's economic development in a sustainable way.

TIP: Do not use “academic” or “legal” words for no reason. Use short sentences with clear language.

To simplify the sustenance of the agency theory and its application to the context of this study, the following explanation is essential... To address the above-lamented issues and guiding research question, the study is structured as follows here forth...



...Before embarking on this journey I see the need to, and I will, present a brief exposé of the perspectives, their nature and then move onto the varieties, pretensions and problems of the rational choice perspective. A concoction of this will give one the crux of the matter: the borders, limitations and contributions of the thought....



The administration of justice requires that a trial court not only determine criminal responsibility, but also impose an appropriate punishment on an offender. A court’s power to impose punishment may be prescribed by legislation or determined on the basis of common law precedents. Where the legislature has dictated the appropriate sentence to be imposed, the trial courts enjoy no discretion in formulating an appropriate sentence and must administer the sentence as prescribed. Where the law does not provide guidelines for the imposition of punishment, sentencing courts have wide discretionary powers in imposing appropriate sentences according to the circumstances of each case. This discretion ought to be exercised reasonably, properly and judicially, as opposed to being exercised arbitrarily.



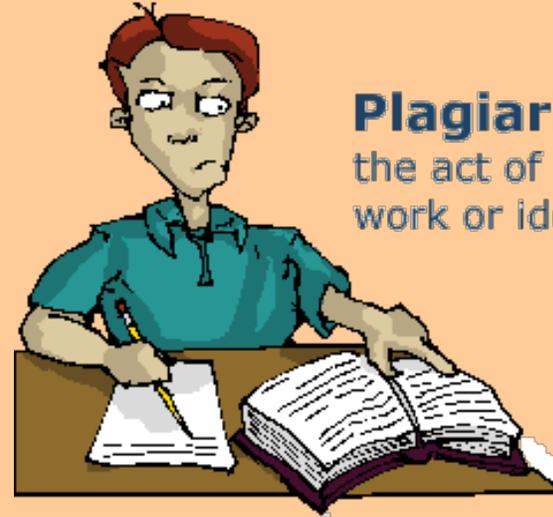
“Writing is thinking. To write well is to think clearly.
That’s why it’s so hard.” — David McCullough

“Examine every word you put on paper. You’ll find a
surprising number that don’t serve any purpose.” —
William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*

“The writer who breeds more words than he needs is
making a chore for the reader who reads.” —Dr. Seuss

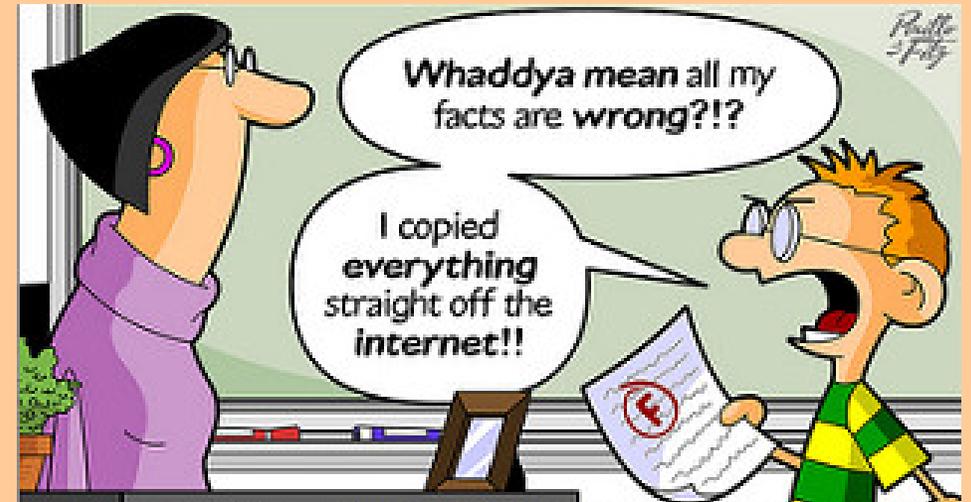
TIP: Avoid plagiarism.

1. **A quotation** is a direct copy of the words from your source material. *All quotations must be in quotation marks and you must cite the source.*
2. **Paraphrasing** presents information or ideas from the source material *in your own words* (not just changing a word or two). You must cite the source.
3. **Take careful notes.** If you copy and paste something into your draft from an online article, *put the material in quotes and make a note of your source right away.* Otherwise you might “accidentally” plagiarise later on, or you might struggle to locate your source in order to give proper credit in your final document.



Plagiarism:

the act of presenting another's work or ideas as your own.



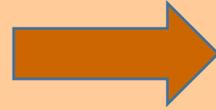
TIP: Identify your sources, in the text or in footnotes.

- **Give credit where credit is due.** Presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own is theft.
- References help your readers **fact-check** your data if they wish.
- References help your readers **find out more** about the topic if they wish.
- If you found the source online, include the **web address** to help your readers.



TIP: Use colour and visuals, with a purpose if possible.

In this example, the colours help the reader to trace each branch of government through the table.

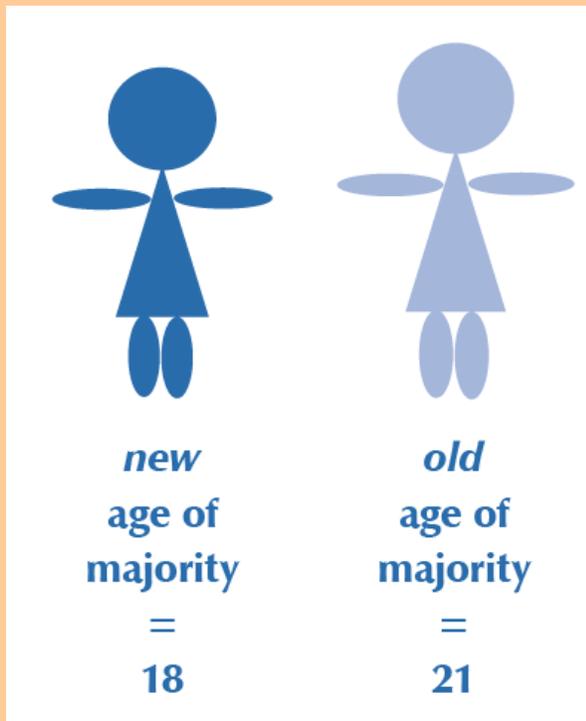


Colour can also be used to highlight headings & sub-headings, or to guide the reader to key words.

CHECKS AND BALANCES How each branch of government monitors and limits the others		
<p>EXECUTIVE BRANCH</p>  <p>The President and Cabinet <i>implement</i> laws.</p>	<p>Checks on Judicial Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The President appoints judges on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission.• The President may remove a judge from office on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission, but <i>only</i> for mental incapacity or gross misconduct.• The President has the power to pardon convicted offenders.	<p>Checks on Legislative Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The President and Ministers propose bills for consideration by Parliament.• The President can refuse to sign a bill passed by Parliament (but cannot withhold consent to a bill passed by a 2/3 majority in the National Assembly).• The President nominates eight non-voting members to the National Assembly.• The President can dissolve the National Assembly on Cabinet's advice if the government is unable to govern effectively (which leads to new elections for National Assembly and President within 90 days).
<p>LEGISLATIVE BRANCH</p>  <p>Parliament <i>makes</i> laws.</p>	<p>Checks on Executive Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parliament approves the budget for government.• The National Assembly can force the President to remove a member of Cabinet by a majority vote of no confidence.• Parliament can impeach the President by a 2/3 vote in the case of serious misconduct.• If the National Assembly passes a bill by a 2/3 majority, the President cannot withhold consent to that bill.• The National Assembly can disapprove an action of the President and review, reverse or correct it by a 2/3 vote.	<p>Checks on Judicial Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parliament enacts statutes which govern the operation of the courts.• Parliament can amend statutes if it disagrees with an interpretation of the statute by the court.• Parliament can amend the Constitution by a 2/3 vote if it disagrees with a court's interpretation of the Constitution (as long as this does not weaken any of the fundamental rights and freedoms).
<p>JUDICIAL BRANCH</p>  <p>The Courts <i>interpret and apply</i> laws.</p>	<p>Checks on Legislative Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courts interpret laws passed by Parliament and apply laws to specific cases.• Courts can invalidate a law passed by Parliament on the grounds that the law is unconstitutional.	<p>Checks on Executive Branch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Courts interpret laws passed by Parliament, and so guide government agencies on how to implement those laws.• Courts can declare actions of the executive unconstitutional.• The Attorney-General can refer a matter to the Supreme Court for decision, to guide the executive branch.

TIP: Use illustrations to expand or reinforce your message.

- Illustrations can function as examples or summaries, or they can add additional talking points.
- Even if you just use simple icons found online, they can help the reader remember where to find certain parts of the text.



TIP: Provide a summary if the input is lengthy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The Electoral Act should clearly require **Namibian citizenship** (and not birth in Namibia) as a qualification for voting, to be consistent with Article 17(3) of the Namibian Constitution.
- 2) Proof of citizenship for purposes of voting should take advantage of the computerised Population Register maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which identifies the citizenship of all persons registered and incorporates information about renunciation or deprivation of citizenship where relevant. **The citizenship status of anyone who seeks to register to vote upon presentation of an identifying document should be checked against Namibia's Population Register by the Electoral Commission of Namibia.** This would be much more accurate than relying on sworn statements about renunciation (or deprivation) of citizenship and could also take advantage of determinations of ordinary residence of foreign parents made by the Ministry.
- 3) Because of the importance of the right to vote, we would also propose instituting an **accessible appeal procedure** where it transpires that a person who tries to register to vote is either (a) not listed in the Population Register at all or (b) listed in the Population Register but not identified as a Namibian citizen.

TIP: Make sure your headings are helpful

NAMIBIAN LAW ON CIVIL MARRIAGE

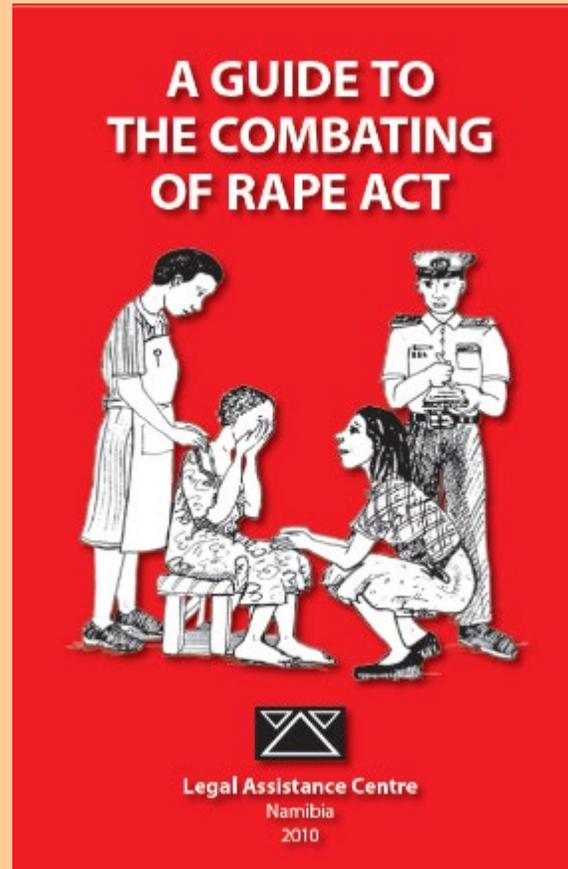
A Question and Answer Package

- **Who can get married?**
- **What is the minimum age for marriage?**
- **Can family members marry each other?**
- **What facts must be disclosed before the marriage takes place?**

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TIP: Use a clear table of contents in a long document

- Use main headings and sub-headings.
- Don't get too complicated, or the document may look inaccessible.



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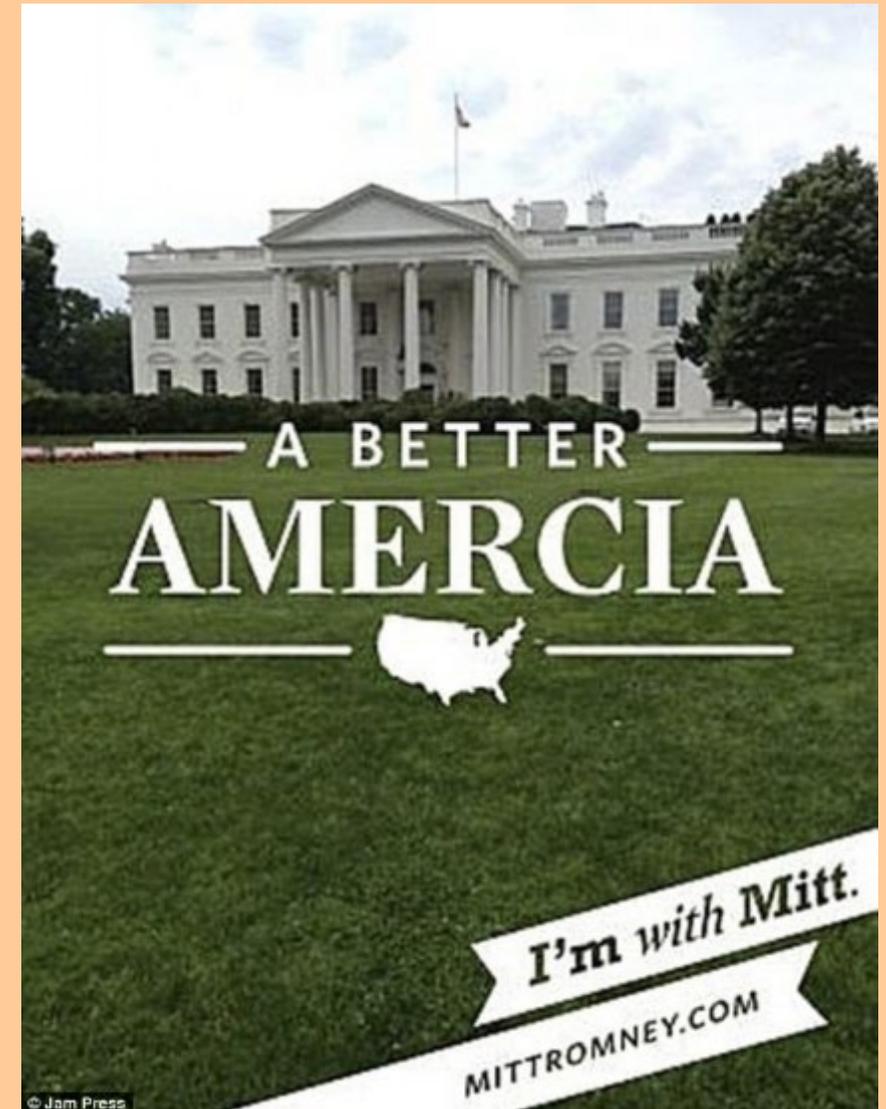
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TIP: Proofread carefully

Why
proofreading
is important

VIOLATORS
WILL BE TOWED
AND FINE \$50.

SHOPLIFTERS WILL
BE PROSTITUTED



Local examples



Errors can be confusing.

Errors can be embarrassing.

Errors look unprofessional,
which can undermine public
confidence in your
information.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

No. 261 Request for submission of names of vegetarians for nominations for appointment as members of
Namibia Medicines Regulatory Council: Medicines and Related Substance Control Act, 2003

Why proofreading is challenging

**Do yuo fnid tihs
smilpe to raed?
Bceuase of the
phaonmneal pweor
of the hmuan mnid,
msot plepoe do.**

Proofreading aids

1. **Use your computer's spellcheck**, which can also be set to check grammar. But note that the computer is not always right, especially for complex sentences. When in doubt, google the grammar rule.
2. There are many **free proofreading tools available online**. My favourite is **grammarly** www.grammarly.com.
3. **Ask a friend** to proofread your work. If you read your own work, you are likely to see what you meant to say instead of what is actually there.
4. **Print out a hard copy** to proofread. Seeing your work in a different format can make errors more visible.
5. If you are proofreading something vital, consider **reading it aloud**. This is time-consuming, but it may slow you down and help you locate errors.



TIP: Make your format professional

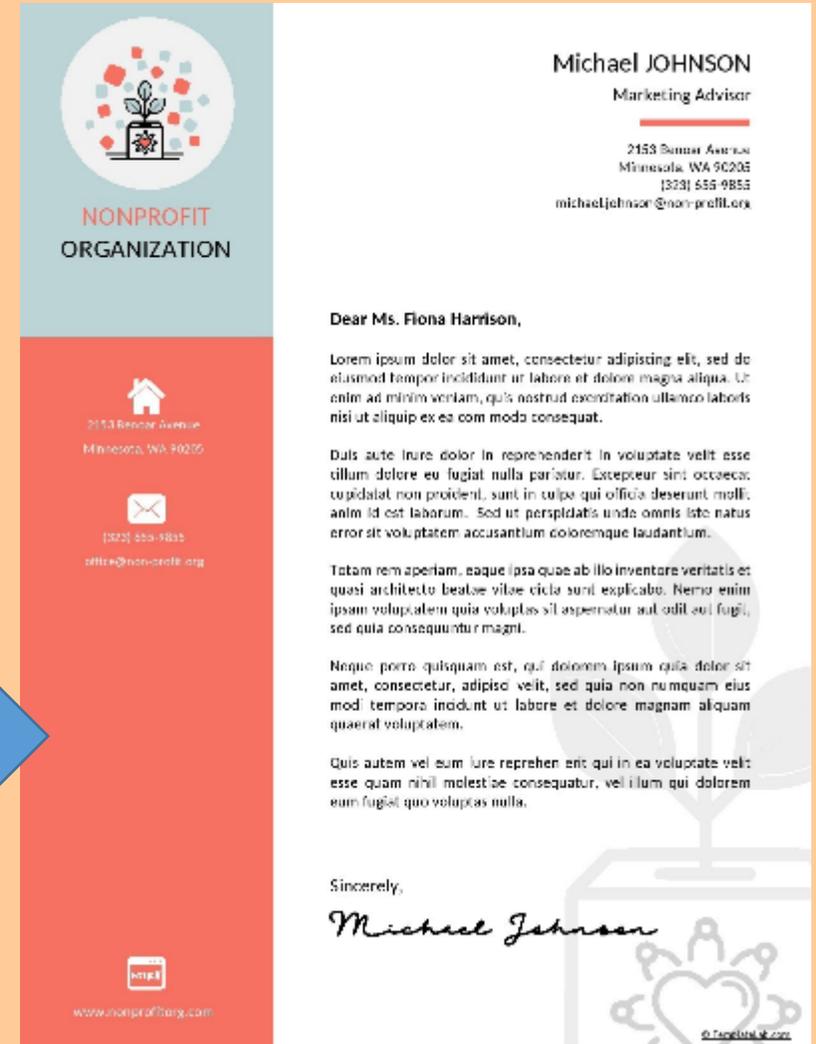
Are there places where you should insert a **manual page break** (for example, to move sub-heading that appears all by itself at the bottom of a page)?

Are the **spaces between the paragraphs** uniform? Automatic spaces before and after paragraphs are *not* useful in my experience.

Even a simple document like a letter on your organisation's letterhead looks more professional if it is **well-formatted**.



- Text centred on page
- Neat spacing
- Professional image



TIP: Avoid distorted photos

This is a common error in Namibian documents, PowerPoints & websites.



Examples of distortion



How to re-size a photo properly

To re-size photos that you paste into a document, use the corner handles to avoid distortion.



TIP: Finishing touches

Date: Omitting the date is a surprisingly common mistake! Your reader needs to know how recent your analysis is.

Add an ISBN: An ISBN is an International Standard Book Number made up of 13 digits. It is the unique “ID” of the document based on standard international practice. You can get ISBNs from the National Library of Namibia. This may facilitate international circulation of your publication, or stocking of it in bookshops

Copyright: If you want to control the document’s further use, add the copyright symbol beside the publisher’s name.

Legal deposit: Give **five copies** to the National Library of Namibia. This is a requirement under the *Namibia Library and Information Service Act 4 of 2000*.

National Library of Namibia = www.nln.gov.na:8081/client/natlib1

Gender Research and
Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE

2006



|ISBN: 978-99945-61-57-5

99945= LAC’s number
as the publisher

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fax: 061-234953
email: info@lac.org.na

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publication by adding
the copyright symbol ©
next to your
organisation’s name

FINALLY: Get the information out

Distribute your document to all relevant stakeholders, or to the targeted recipient. This can be done in hard copy or soft copy (electronic version). Always provide a soft copy to encourage policy-makers to copy and paste your input.

Add a polite **cover letter or email** explaining what the document is and why you are sending it. If feasible, highlight the key points.

If it is for public consumption, send it to **print and broadcast media** with a **press release** and announce it on **social media**.

Keep a list of the recipients for follow-up information.

“Enclosed please find some suggestions for revising the draft Social Welfare Policy to make it more responsive to women.”



Legal Assistance Centre Namibia

10 August · 🌐



Our Update on International Law / Namlex Appendix is out!



LAC.ORG.NA

Presenting the 2022 Namlex Appendix update!!

Namibia is one of the few countries in the world that makes international agree...

Posts with pictures



Legal Assistance Centre Namibia

28 April · 🌐



Combating of Rape Act 8 of 2000, section 2(3): "No marriage or other relationship shall constitute a defence to a charge of rape under this Act."

More on the topic:

<http://www.lac.org.na/index.php/projects/rape/>

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RAPE LAW

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
Legal Assistance Centre



2022

LAC.ORG.NA

The Combating of Rape Amendment Bill 2022 was tabled in Parliament

The Combating of Rape Amendment Bill 2022 was tabled in Parliament by the Minister of Justice on 22 February 2022. This Bill fine-tunes and strengthens the Combating of Rape Act.



IPPR Namibia

20 September at 11:52 · 🌐



OUT NOW. The latest Procurement Tracker bulletin - 'Money Being Wasted on Vanity Awards'

PROCUREMENT TRACKER NAMIBIA



Money, resources wasted on vanity awards

IPPR.ORG.NA

Money Being Wasted On 'Vanity Awards' - IPPR

This edition of Procurement Tracker focuses on 'Money, resources wasted on vanity awards' with updates on green hydrogen procurement issues and what the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) says about public procurement.



TIP: Consider a press release drafted with the needs of journalists in mind. Make it easy for them to understand the context and highlight the key points.

1. WHY DID WE CONDUCT THIS RESEARCH?

This is the first study to assess the operation of Combating of Domestic Violence Act of 2003. No one can anticipate exactly how laws will work in practice, and it is unlikely that any new law will ever be perfect. Therefore it is always vital to study laws in action, to see if they are serving their intended purposes....

2. HOW DID WE DO THE STUDY?

The study is based on data from the court files of 1122 protection order applications from 19 different magistrates' courts in 12 regions ...

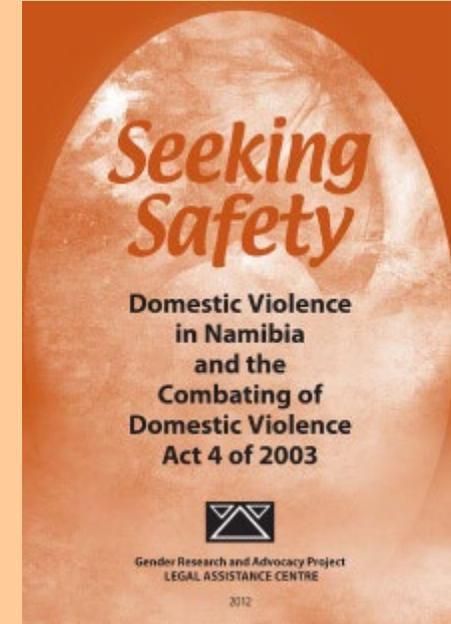
3. WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Five key findings were summarized

4. WHAT ARE OUR RECOMMENDATIONS?

A short list of the key recommendations followed.

Email soft
copies and
hand out hard
copies.



**Press release on the launch of the
report
*Seeking Safety***

**Gender Research & Advocacy Project
Legal Assistance Centre
31 July 2012**



Learn more about Namibia's Child Care and Protection Act

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE



The Child Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015 is Namibia's key legislation on children. It came into force in early 2019. This law covers a wide range of topics, including the respective rights and duties of parents of children born outside marriage, procedures to assist children in need of protective services, the registration of various facilities for the care of children, consent to medical interventions involving children, kinship care, foster care, adoption and social grants for children. The materials described below have been prepared by the Legal Assistance Centre in partnership with the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication, and Social Welfare.

1. Factsheets

A set of 23 factsheets, available in English, Afrikaans and Oshwambo, which can be used individually or combined as a set in a summary booklet.

2. Comic books

Nine comics on specific topics in the Act:

- Age of majority
 - Parenting plans
 - Kinship care
 - Child protection proceedings
 - Children born outside marriage
 - Guardianship after the death of a parent
 - Exploitation of children
 - Reporting child abuse and neglect
 - Medical interventions involving children
- There is also an illustrated booklet on this topic.
- Reporting child abuse and neglect
 - Medical interventions involving children
- There is also a pamphlet on this topic, as well as a poster suitable for display at clinics and other medical facilities.

3. Guide to the Child Care and Protection Act
A detailed illustrated Guide in 28 chapters which can be used individually or combined into a comprehensive manual.



4. Four sets of PowerPoints

- Overview: for the general public
- Summaries: for community workshops
- Guide chapters: for service providers and trainers
- Police presentations: for police training

OTHER RELATED MATERIALS:

The LAC has also produced many materials on alternatives to corporal punishment: a research report and research brief, a fact sheet on the links between corporal punishment and gender-based violence, two comics, a short animated cartoon and a film available on DVD.

One way to publicise your materials is via a newspaper advert.

Thin documents can be distributed as newspaper inserts, to reach people throughout the country who might not otherwise have exposure to your information .

This advert is sponsored by UNICEF. The materials featured were funded by the Finnish Embassy, UNICEF, the European Union and the German Embassy.



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Email info@lac.org.na • Website www.lac.org.na



TIP: Research and write a comprehensive document first, then use it as a foundation for different documents.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

National and International Perspectives

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Windhoek, Namibia
2010

RESEARCH REPORT

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

National and International Perspectives

Legal Assistance Centre
Research Brief
2015

Promoting alternatives to corporal punishment

The effects of corporal punishment

Some people think that corporal punishment is an effective and harmless means of disciplining children, but a number of studies suggest otherwise.

Research in various countries suggests that the use of corporal punishment is connected with children experiencing various problems including –

- ▶ increased aggression
- ▶ depression and other emotional problems
- ▶ poor academic achievement; and
- ▶ a poor relationship with parents.

Studies also suggest that parents may increase the amount of force used over time until it becomes serious physical abuse. There are a number of cases in Namibia where children have been severely injured or even killed when “discipline” from a caregiver got out of hand.

Children need discipline. The aim of discipline is to teach a child the difference between right and wrong, but corporal punishment does not do this. Although corporal punishment does often result in immediate compliance, it has been shown to be a poor method for helping children understand what constitutes good behaviour or acquire the ability to control their own actions. Take the situation when a child hits another child. If a parent hits the child in punishment for this, the child is certain to be confused. How can using force teach a child that violence is wrong?

Children learn to be aggressive when they are treated with aggression. International research shows that corporal punishment of children can add to the cycle of violence. Children who are beaten learn to see violence as a legitimate response to problems, and have less opportunity to observe non-violent methods of responding to others. As a result, children who are disciplined with corporal punishment are more likely to use violence against their own spouses or children when they become adults. Corporal punishment thus perpetuates violence in Namibia. The prevention of violence in society should begin with efforts to reduce the use of corporal punishment on children.

RESEARCH BRIEF

FACT SHEET

Gender Research and Advocacy Project
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Windhoek, Namibia, May 2017

The Links between Corporal Punishment and Gender-Based Violence

What is corporal punishment?

Corporal punishment is when a person in authority uses physical force with the intention of causing pain for disciplinary purposes. Corporal punishment of children usually includes things like slapping, spanking, beating with the hand or beating with an object like a stick or a belt. It can also involve other actions such as kicking, shaking, pinching or burning.

Why is corporal punishment bad for children?

A recent review of studies which have been conducted during the last fifty years, involving more than 160 000 children, found that the more children are spanked, the more likely they are to defy their parents and to exhibit anti-social behaviour, aggression, mental health problems and intellectual difficulties. Studies of adults who were spanked as children have similarly found that these adults were more likely than other adults to suffer mental health problems and to behave in anti-social ways.³

Arguments for and against corporal punishment

For	Against
Corporal punishment is part of my religious belief and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other people interpret the same religious teachings to have a different meaning that does not justify the use of corporal punishment. • Wife-beating was also an accepted part of many cultures in the past, but this is changing now.
There is a difference between a vicious beating and a light spanking or smack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is true, but it is difficult to judge how the punishment is perceived by the child who experiences it. • Adults who administer corporal punishment are not always able to control themselves when they act in the heat of the moment. This is why serious injuries and even death have resulted from corporal punishment in Namibia.
Corporal punishment was used on me when I was a child, and I do not have any problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different people react differently to violence and aggression. It is undeniable that Namibia as a whole is suffering unhealthy levels of violence – so something is not well with our society. • Alternative forms of discipline could teach children non-violent ways of problem-solving.

Corporal punishment is prohibited in Namibian schools

Corporal punishment is not permitted in Namibian schools, although many instances of it are still reported. The Namibian Supreme Court ruled in 1991 that corporal punishment by organs of state, including in public schools, is a violation of children's constitutional right to human dignity.¹ The Education Act 16 of 2001 prohibits corporal punishment in both public and private schools. The application of this prohibition to private schools was clarified by the High Court in 2016, in a case stressing that no parent or learner can overrule the prohibition by giving “consent” to corporal punishment.²

Corporal punishment of children in other settings

Corporal punishment is used in many homes. In Namibia there have been cases of excessive physical force used against children in the home, with children being seriously injured or burned and in some cases even beaten to death. Namibia's Child Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015 says that anyone who has control of a child, including a parent, must respect the child's constitutional right to dignity. It prohibits corporal punishment in many settings: residential child care facilities, foster care, places of care, shelters, early childhood development centres, public and private schools, prison, police cells or any alternative care which results from a court order. The Act also gives the Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare a duty to provide education and awareness-raising programmes on the rules on corporal punishment and to promote alternative forms of discipline which have a more positive impact on children in all regions of Namibia.

It is widely known that corporal punishment in Namibia's schools is against the law. When teachers hit learners, the real message being communicated is that it is acceptable both to use violence and to disrespect the rule of law.

Daddy told me that hitting is wrong. He beat me with his belt because I hit my little sister. I am confused.

FACTSHEET ON A SINGLE SUBTOPIC

TIP: If you have many publications, make sure that they are easy to find on your website. Consider a publications catalogue.

ProBono

HOME / NEWS / PROBONO

Probono 76 – A Sex Offender Register for Namibia? Right idea – Wrong solution!

A sex offender register is a list of persons who have committed certain criminal offences and recommendations.

Probono 75 – The Divorce Bill: What is good and what is not

The LAC welcomes the Divorce Bill and describe the changes it will bring and the faults that it has.

Probono 74 –What is Namibia doing about Urban Land Reform?

Here we take a look at urban land rights in Namibia and the importance of making them work for everyone.

Probono 73 – The Land Bill: What is it all about and is it needed?

This column gives a brief overview of the September 2020 version of the Land Bill and comments on it.

Probono 72 – Covid Vaccines for Children and the Law of Consent

Vaccinations against COVID-19 are now available for children from the age of 12. But what about the law of consent? This column discusses the Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015 and in this Probono article.

www.lac.org.na/index.php/news/probono/

GENDER PUBLICATIONS LIST

Gender Research & Advocacy Project
Legal Assistance Centre
January 2022

1. RAPE



A Guide to the Combating of Rape Act

GUIDE: This guide gives a clear and comprehensive explanation of the Combating of Rape Act. It includes what situations are now defined as rape, where to report a rape and what evidence needs to be collected. New court procedures designed to make the trial less stressful and the impact of the crime on the complainant in the longer term are also discussed. This detailed guide is aimed at service providers.

English
Afrikaans
Oshiwambo
Otjiherero
Damara-Nama
Rukwangali
Silozu
A4, 44 pages



Pocket Guide: Combating of Rape Act

PAMPHLET: This small gatefold pamphlet explains briefly the meaning of rape, what someone who is raped should do to safeguard evidence, where they should go to report the rape and what medical help they need. It also lists the special steps which can be taken during a rape trial to minimize the trauma for the rape victim. This pamphlet is suitable for the general public.

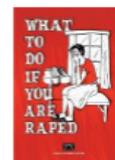
English
Afrikaans
Oshiwambo
Otjiherero
A4 gatefold



Basic Facts on the Combating of Rape Act

FACTSHEET OR POSTER: The poster briefly lists details of what rape is, what actions someone who is raped should take and what medical treatment is available to try to prevent pregnancy or the risk of serious infection as a result of the rape.

English
Afrikaans
Oshiwambo
A4 or A3, 1 page



What to Do if You Are Raped

BOOKLET: This booklet gives a comprehensive definition of rape, when and where to report the rape, what evidence should be collected and by whom, the need for medical examination with appropriate treatment and advice about giving a statement to the police. This short booklet is suitable for the general public.

English
Afrikaans
Oshiwambo
Otjiherero
A5, 12 pages

Produced with the support of the Hanns Seidel Foundation

