

Kenneth A. Adams

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BOOKS

A Manual of Style for Contract Drafting (American Bar Association 5th ed. 2023). Since 2004, when the first edition was published, this book has been an ABA bestseller, selling tens of thousands of copies. In a review, the English Law Society Gazette said it's "extraordinary." It has been cited by the U.S. Supreme Court and Delaware courts, among others. For more information and reviews, go [here](#).

The Structure of M&A Contracts (Thomson Reuters 2011). For more information, go [here](#).

Legal Usage in Drafting Corporate Agreements (Quorum Books 2001). This book was the subject of a feature article entitled *Plain Language Key to Contracts*, New York Law Journal, 3 Aug. 2001, go [here](#).

TRAINING

Offers *Drafting Clearer Contracts: Masterclass*, an online course built around eight live hour-long sessions held once a week and supplemented by reading, quizzes, and short assignments. Go [here](#) for the course home page; go [here](#) for testimonials.

Conducts online and in-person *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations for companies, law firms, and trade groups. Go [here](#) for the presentations home page; go [here](#) for testimonials.

In 2026, started *Drafting Clearer Contracts: On Demand*, a subscription-based library of videos and automated quizzes. As of 4 August 2026, it consists of 138 videos and 14 quizzes.

Has presented in-house *Drafting Clearer Contracts* in the U.S., Canada, and internationally for companies, law firms, and government agencies. Corporate clients include Accenture, Aetna, AmerisourceBergen, Boeing, Cablevision, Cisco, Dassault Systèmes, Enbridge, Epic Games, Fidelity Investments, HCA Healthcare, Intel, Itron, Johnson & Johnson, Krafton, Mattel, Nestlé, Nokia, Nuance Communications, Pratt & Whitney, Sanofi, Schlumberger, Shell, Sony PlayStation, TransCanada, TSYS, Union Pacific, Viacom, Visa, VMware.

Conducted public *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in U.S. in partnership with Thomson Reuters (2008–2019) and in Canada in partnership with Osgoode Professional Development (2006–2019).

In partnership with Singapore Academy of Law, conducts online public *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in Singapore (2025–2026).

Conducted public *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in Europe hosted by law firms (Orrick, Roschier) and companies (EMBL, ABB, ECE, Maersk Line) (2014–2018).

In partnership with SiS Conference Consulting, conducted public *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in China (2015–2018).

In partnership with Melbourne Law School, conducted public *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in Australia (2012–2017).

In partnership with Thomson Reuters, conducts in-person and online *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in Asia (since 2012).

In partnership with Marcus Evans, conducted public *Drafting Clearer Contracts* presentations in South-East Asia and the Middle East (2012–2016).

Participated in panel discussions on contract drafting and contract automation at meetings of the Association of Corporate Counsel in 2017, 2016, 2010, and 2009 and ACC Europe in 2017.

Speaker at the 2017 annual meetings of the Association of Corporate Counsel and ACC Europe.

In May and September 2017 conducted contract-drafting presentations for the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Saudi Center for Commercial Arbitration under the auspices of the Commercial Law Development Program of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

In April 2008 conducted contract-drafting presentations for the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Kingdom of Bahrain Directorate of Legal Affairs under the auspices of the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative.

EXPERT WITNESS

Acts as expert on matters related to contract language. Representations include acting as expert witness for Rogers Cable Communications Inc. in its dispute with Aliant Telecom Inc. This high-profile dispute, and Ken's role as expert witness, were discussed in *The Comma That Costs 1 Million Dollars (Canadian)*, New York Times, 25 Oct. 2006 ([here](#)).

TEACHING

Adjunct professor at Notre Dame Law School, teaching contract drafting (fall 2014–fall 2016).

Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, teaching contract drafting (fall 2005–fall 2012). This course was the subject of *Penn Law Plans to Give Contracts the Write Stuff*, Legal Intelligencer, 15 Aug. 2005 ([here](#)).

Adjunct professor at Hofstra University School of Law, teaching business drafting (spring 2004–spring 2005).

LAW REVIEW ARTICLES

Author of the following law review articles (a copy of each can be found [here](#)):

- *The Word Material Is Ambiguous in Contracts, Why That's a Problem, and How to Fix It*, 21 The Scribes Journal of Legal Writing 83 (2023–24)
- *Interpreting and Drafting Efforts Provisions: From Unreason to Reason*, 74 Business Lawyer 677 (2019) (In *AB Stable VIII LLC v. Maps Hotels & Resorts One LLC*, No. CV 2020-0310-JTL,

2020 WL 7024929 (Del. Ch. 30 Nov. 2020), the Delaware Court of Chancery quoted this article, calling it “The most thorough analytical treatment of efforts clauses” and calling Ken “The leading commentator on efforts clauses.”)

- *Bamboozled by a Comma: The Second Circuit’s Misdiagnosis of Ambiguity in American International Group, Inc. v. Bank of America Corp.*, 16 Scribes J. Legal Writing 45 (2014–15).
- *Eliminating the Phrase Represents and Warrants from Contracts*, 16 Tenn. J. Bus. L. 203 (2015).
- *Dysfunction in Contract Drafting: The Causes and a Cure*, 15 Tenn. J. Bus. L. 317 (2014).
- *Revisiting the Ambiguity of “And” and “Or” in Legal Drafting*, 80 St. John’s Law Review 1167 (2006) (with Alan S. Kaye, professor of linguistics at California State University, Fullerton).
- *A Legal-Usage Analysis of “Material Adverse Change” Provisions*, 10 Fordham Journal of Corporate & Financial Law 9 (2005) (In *Akorn, Inc. v. Fresenius Kabi AG*, No. CV 2018-0300-JTL, 2018 WL 4719347, at *1 (Del. Ch. Oct. 1, 2018), the court cited this article seven times.)

OTHER ARTICLES

Author of the following articles (a copy of each can be found [here](#)):

- *Copy-and-Paste Contract Drafting Can Dull Your Wits or Leave You Demoralized. We Can Do Better!*, Contracting Excellence Journal (16 July 2026).
- *Fixing the Problem That Is “Agreement and Plan of Merger”*, Business Law Today (11 May 2026).
- *Merger Agreements Are Poorly Drafted*, Corporate Counsel Now (22 Apr. 2026)
- *On Better Terms: What Should We Do with “Nonlawyer”?*, ABA Journal (29 Aug. 2023)
- *Reviewing Business Contracts: What to Look For and How to Look for It*, ACC Docket (20 Dec. 2021) (with Michael F. Fleming)
- *How Contract Managers Can Gain More Control Over Contracts*, Contracting Excellence Journal (29 Mar. 2021)
- *Common-Law Drafting in Civil-Law Jurisdictions*, Business Law Today (20 Dec. 2019) (with Jan Asmus Bischoff)
- *Putting an End to “Endeavours” Nonsense*, The Lawyer (1 Oct. 2017)
- *When Contracts Seek to Preempt Judicial Discretion*, Judicature (Fall 2017) (with Vice-Chancellor J. Travis Laster of the Delaware Chancery Court)
- *Know Your Enemy: Sources of Uncertain Meaning in Contracts*, Michigan Bar Journal (Oct. 2016)
- *Litigating the Meaning of Contract Language? Consider Retaining an Expert* (Part II), Legal Solutions Blog (6 June 2016)
- *Litigating the Meaning of Contract Language? Consider Retaining an Expert* (Part I), Legal Solutions Blog (31 May 2016)
- *The Problem with Contract Drafting and What Young Lawyers Can Do About It*, The Lawyer (8 Mar. 2016)

- *Granting Language in Patent License Agreements: An Analysis of Usages*, Landslide (ABA Section of Intellectual Property Law) (Jan./Feb. 2016)
- *Reconsidering the Recital of Consideration*, New York Law Journal, 9 Dec. 2015
- *Adams v Anderson on Contract Drafting*, Law Society Gazette (30 Nov. 2015) (with Mark Anderson)
- *The Phrase Represents and Warrants Is Pointless and Confusing*, Business Law Today (Oct. 2015)
- *Fixing Your Contracts: What Training in Contract Drafting Can and Can't Do*, ACCDocket.com (22 Sept. 2015) (with Chris Lemens).
- *Inures to the Benefit and Trademark Licensing*, 105 Trademark Reporter 944 (2015)
- *Top Ten Tips in Drafting and Negotiating International Contracts*, Association of Corporate Counsel "Top Ten" Legal Resources (21 Apr. 2015) (with René Mario Scherr, Regional General Counsel, South Asia, East Asia & Oceania, Tetra Pak)
- *Beyond Words*, Solicitors Journal (30 Sep. 2014) (about *best endeavours* and its variants under English law)
- *Banishing Shall from Business Contracts: Throwing the Baby Out with the Bathwater*, The Australian Corporate Lawyer (Sep. 2014)
- *Termination-on-Bankruptcy Provisions: Some Proposed Language*, Business Law Today (June 2014)
- *With "Efforts" Provisions, Reasonable Is Better Than Best*, The Lawyers Weekly (16 May 2014)
- *It's Time to Get Rid of the "Successors and Assigns" Provision*, The Advocate (June/July 2013)
- *Asia: Different Contracts, Different Cultures*, Asian Legal Business (Jan. 2013)
- *The Illusion of Quality in Contract Drafting*, New York Law Journal (17 July 2012) (with Tim Allen, CEO of Business Integrity).
- *Making a Mess of Ambiguity: Lessons from the Third Circuit's Opinion in Meyer v. CUNA Mutual Insurance Society*, Business Law Today (20 Nov. 2011)
- *Whittling Away at Duty of Good Faith*, Recorder (28 June 2011)
- *The New Associate and the Future of Contract Drafting*, New York Law Journal (1 Apr. 2011)
- *The AAA Standard Arbitration Clause: Room for Improvement*, New York Law Journal (9 Mar. 2010)
- *Retooling Your Contract Process for the Downturn*, New York Law Journal (19 Feb. 2009)
- *Dysfunctional Drafting*, National Law Journal (8 Sept. 2008)
- *Merger Pacts: Contract Drafting, Cerberus Litigation*, New York Law Journal (19 Feb. 2008)
- *Transitioning Your Contract Process from the Artistic to the Industrial*, ACC Docket (Dec. 2007) (with Brian Quinn of Cisco Systems)

- *Making Sense of “Shall,”* New York Law Journal (18 Oct. 2007)
- *What Does “Material” Mean?,* Deal Lawyers (Sept.–Oct. 2007)
- *Behind the Scenes of the Comma Dispute,* Globe and Mail (28 Aug. 2007)
- *Revisiting Materiality,* New York Law Journal (16 Aug. 2007)
- *“Wordsmithing,”* New York Law Journal (21 June 2007)
- *Sending Contracts Offshore,* New York Law Journal (19 Apr. 2007)
- *Wiki, Anyone?,* New York Law Journal (15 Feb. 2007)
- *How to Avoid Contractual Train Wrecks,* National Law Journal (6 Nov. 2006)
- *M&A Contracts: Addressing Pre-Closing Knowledge of Inaccurate Representations,* National Law Journal (6 Nov. 2006)
- *Copyright and the Contract Drafter,* New York Law Journal (23 Aug. 2006)
- *Understanding “Material Adverse Change” Provisions,* M&A Lawyer (June 2006)
- *Teaching Contract Drafting: The Two Elephants in the Room,* 14 Perspectives: Teaching Legal Research and Writing 92 (2006).
- *Can Lawyers Be Trained in Contract Drafting?,* The Lawyers Weekly [Canada] (17 Mar. 2006)
- *Debunking Urban Legends,* New York Law Journal (2 Dec. 2005)
- *A Lesson in Contract Drafting: What’s Up with “Representations and Warranties”?,* Business Law Today (Nov.–Dec. 2005)
- *Translating English Language Contracts,* Bulletin of the Institute of Translation & Interpreting (Sept.–Oct. 2004)
- *Understanding “Best Efforts” and Its Variants,* Practical Lawyer (Aug. 2004)
- *Drafting a New Day: Who Needs that Recital of Consideration?,* Business Law Today (Mar.–Apr. 2003)
- *Drafting a Contract,* New York Law Journal (27 Sep. 2002)
- *Legal Usage in Drafting Corporate Resolutions,* Practical Lawyer (Sep. 2002)
- *The New New Rules of Drafting (Part One),* Michigan Bar Journal (July 2002)
- *The New New Rules of Drafting (Part Two),* Michigan Bar Journal (Aug. 2002)
- *Drafting Matters,* New York Law Journal (5 July 2002)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Ken blogs at [Adams on Contract Drafting](#). From December 2010 to February 2013 he maintained The Concise Drafter blog. From April 2006 to December 2010 he maintained the AdamsDrafting blog. All Ken’s blog posts (apart from those on the Adams Contracts Blog) can now be found at Adams on Contract Drafting.

He also blogs on the [Adams Contracts Blog](#).

Ken's LinkedIn profile is at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kaadams/>.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In an opinion issued in March 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court cites *A Manual of Style for Contract Drafting* in connection with a dispute over ambiguity involving the word and. See [this blog post](#).

In an opinion issued in August 2021, the Missouri Court of Appeals discusses *A Manual of Style for Contract Drafting*'s "categories of contract language" framework in connection with a dispute over a verb structure. See [this blog post](#).

In a November 2020 opinion, the Delaware Court of Chancery calls Ken's 2016 law review article on *efforts* provisions "The most thorough analytical treatment of efforts clauses" and calls Ken "The leading commentator on efforts clauses." See [this blog post](#).

In July 2014, the Legal Writing Institute awarded Ken the Golden Pen Award for 2014, "to recognize his exemplary work in contract drafting." The Golden Pen Award honors those who make significant contributions to advance the cause of better legal writing. For the text of the Legal Writing Institute's announcement, go [here](#).

After including Ken's blog in its "Blawg 100"—its list of the hundred best law blogs—for five out of six years, in 2015 the ABA Journal named Ken's blog to its Blawg 100 Hall of Fame.

ADDITIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE

- In November 2020, interviewed by Louise Kulbicki for her Study Legal English podcast. See [this blog post](#).
- On 13 August 2020, Business Law Today published [this item](#) on *A Manual of Style for Contract Drafting* after 16 years.
- On 21 October 2019, Above the Law published Olga Mack's interview with me about making the contracts process more efficient ([here](#)).
- On 12 September 2018, the ABA Journal published an article about, and a podcast featuring, Ken; both are available [here](#).
- In two posts, one dated 28 January 2018 ([here](#)) and the other dated 9 April 2016 ([here](#)), Casey Flaherty considers the significance of Ken's work.
- In [episode 54](#) of the Civil Engineering Podcast, released on 29 March 2017, Ken was interviewed about how to make engineering contracts clearer.
- On 8 October 2013, the WSJ Law Blog published [this item](#) about Ken's article critiquing an opinion of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.
- An article on practice support lawyers in the July 2011 issue of the ABA Journal ([here](#)) cites Ken's views and mentions his blog post on the subject.
- An article in the 29 October 2009 issue of The Wall Street Journal ([here](#)) quotes Ken on the subject of the phrase "throughout the universe."

- As part of its “Legal Rebels” project, in September 2009 the ABA Journal named Ken Adams one of fifty “legal innovators.” Click [here](#) to go to the ABA Journal’s profile.
- The 17 July 2009 issue of The Lawyers Weekly, the Canadian periodical, contains an article about Ken’s efforts to turn contract drafting into a commodity task (PDF copy [here](#)).
- An article in the 24 March 2009 issue of The Financial Times profiles Ken and his approach to contract language. Click [here](#) to go to it (free registration required); click [here](#) to go to a pdf copy.
- The 14 December 2007 issue of The Lawyers Weekly, the Canadian legal periodical (PDF copy [here](#)), contains an interview with Ken. (The first page contains a photo; the interview is on the second page.)
- An article in the 25 October 2006 issue of The New York Times ([here](#)) mentions that Ken was retained by Rogers Communications as an expert witness in the dispute over the “million-dollar comma.”
- An article in the 15 August 2005 issue of The Legal Intelligencer (PDF copy [here](#)) discusses Ken’s contract-drafting course at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.
- An article in the 31 August 2001 issue of The New York Law Journal (PDF copy [here](#)) profiles Ken and discusses his first book, *Legal Usage in Drafting Corporate Agreements*.

WORK EXPERIENCE

LegalSifter, a company applying artificial intelligence to contracts

- *Head of Adams Contracts*, a division of LegalSifter, Oct. 2023–present
Adams Contracts has developed highly customizable contract templates, as an alternative to endless copy-and-pasting. By combining Ken's expertise in contract language, expertise in transactions (under strong editorial control), and document-assembly technology, Adams Contracts allows users to create contracts that are clearer, more concise, and more relevant than anything else available. For more information, go to <https://adamscontracts.com/>.
- *Chief Content Officer*, Aug. 2020–June 2025
- *Advisor*, Apr. 2018–July 2020

Pulse Business LLC, a company funded by LegalZoom
Head of Contracts, Apr. 2019–June 2020

LAW-FIRM WORK EXPERIENCE

Lehman & Eilen LLP, Uniondale, New York
Senior Associate, Feb. 2004–Jan. 2006

Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP, New York, New York
Associate, May 1998–Apr. 2003

Winston & Strawn
Associate, Sept. 1994–Jan. 1998 (Geneva, Switzerland); July 1993–Aug. 1994 (New York, New York)

Jones Day, New York, New York
Associate, Oct. 1989–June 1993

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania Law School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.D. 1989; Law Review Board of Officers, Comment Editor 1988–89, Associate Editor, 1987–88.

University of York, York, England: B.A. (Honors), 2:1 Class, Archaeology, 1983.

BAR STATUS

Admitted to the New York Bar in April 1990.

PERSONAL

Fluent French; U.S. citizen; lived in Europe and Africa for 25 years.

4 August 2026