



Andrew M. Ayers

AndrewMAyers.com

877-262-9377

December 2025

2 Brothers, 1 Christmas

Building a New Generation of Family Traditions

Christmas has long been a festive time at our house as our three kids have grown into their preteen and teenage years. But this Christmas, it promises to be even more so.

On tap is our first Minnesota Christmas together with my brother, his wife, and their two small children, ages 2 and 4, who are all flying in from New York City. Our kids, who are 15, 13, and 10, are even more excited than usual at the prospect of seeing their younger cousins. They are already thinking about all the ways they can make the holiday special.

A Minnesota Christmas

They want to take their cousins on a real sledding outing, and they'd love to go ice skating, too, if



we can find skates to fit our guests. Our kids want to go all out in decorating, too. We have a high ceiling in our living room (much taller than in their cousins' New York apartment), so they are looking forward to getting a really tall tree. The kids are pulling out all the stops to make sure their cousins have a Christmas to remember.

The cousins already know each other from our summer trips to the Jersey Shore and our visits to see them in New York City. However, this is their first trip here, solely for the purpose of celebrating and enjoying Christmas together. Our family group will number 11 in all, and it will be fun to see how our new, shared traditions unfold.

One thing is certain: Christmas morning will be a circus. We'll have a pile of presents under the tree. Our kids know that if they get up early, they have to wait for the adults to arrive before they start opening gifts. Fortunately, they can help by holding their little cousins back, too. Our kids can also help distribute the gifts, and we will have a big old gift-opening session, with presents flying everywhere.

In another one of our popular Minnesota traditions with the kids, I prepare smoked pork nuggets with an apricot barbecue sauce and a Texas-style sugar rub. I make more of these delicacies on our smoker every year, and there are never any leftovers! Our kids are dying to see their cousins try them for the first time, and they're taking bets on whether they'll like them. I'm not taking any chances, and I intend to make as many pork belly nuggets as I possibly can!

For my brother and me, the visit marks a new phase. He is just three years younger than I am, and we grew up in a small, tight-knit family. We share countless warm memories, from taking family road trips as kids to watching soccer matches together in London as adults. We can go for months without seeing each other and still feel as close as ever when we meet again.

One of my greatest hopes is that the strength of our bond will trickle down to the next generation. I hope the long-term lesson our kids take away from this Christmas together is that their cousins are part of their own close, tight-knit family. We want to connect with them again soon, and many more times through the years.

I hope you will have opportunities this season to deepen ties with your loved ones as well. From the Ayers' home to yours, wishing you peace and joy throughout the New Year!

- Andrew M. Ayers



Fine-Print Focus

DON'T SIGN THAT JOB OFFER BLINDLY

In today's competitive job market, landing new employment is the least of your worries.

Depending on your chosen industry, you may be required to review and sign an employment contract before starting a new position. Ideally, this document will clearly outline what your new employer offers you to work for them and the responsibilities they expect you to fulfill.

While the concept is simple enough, a host of nuances and potential red flags in an employee contract may reveal that your new job is more (or less) than you expected. Considering that the average U.S. employee stays with a single employer for approximately four years before moving on, reviewing your employee contract carefully ensures the job of your dreams doesn't devolve into a logistical, financial, or professional nightmare. Here are three key questions to consider before agreeing to the contract terms presented to you.

Does the contract accurately describe your role?

In many cases, an online job description is the employer's wish list of duties that could fall under that role. Specific responsibilities related to a particular position may be refined during the interview and negotiation process, especially if the employer is in a transitional period of restructuring its workflow and employee roles. When reviewing your employee contract, confirm that your job title, duties, payment terms and methods, and length of service (if the position is temporary) are described accurately.

"No two employee contracts are exactly alike, so it's essential to diligently review any documentation you receive, even if you need to bring in a legal professional for an extra pair of eyes."



Never disregard a seemingly minor typo as a slight variation in a job title (e.g., "managerr" or "supervisor" versus "manager") could be enough to impact your anticipated compensation, workday obligations, and even your tax status. Even the most professional companies can make mistakes in drafting documentation, so never assume Human Resources has everything covered.

Do the perks make sense as presented?

In addition to confirming exactly what you'll do and be paid, you must ensure any benefits outlined in the contract align with your expectations or with anything you may have been told during interview(s) and negotiation(s). Review all insurance benefits, paid vacations, PTO/sick leave structures, retirement plans, and bonuses detailed in the contract before signing, and immediately raise any questions or concerns with the appropriate parties.

What is yours, and what is your employer's?

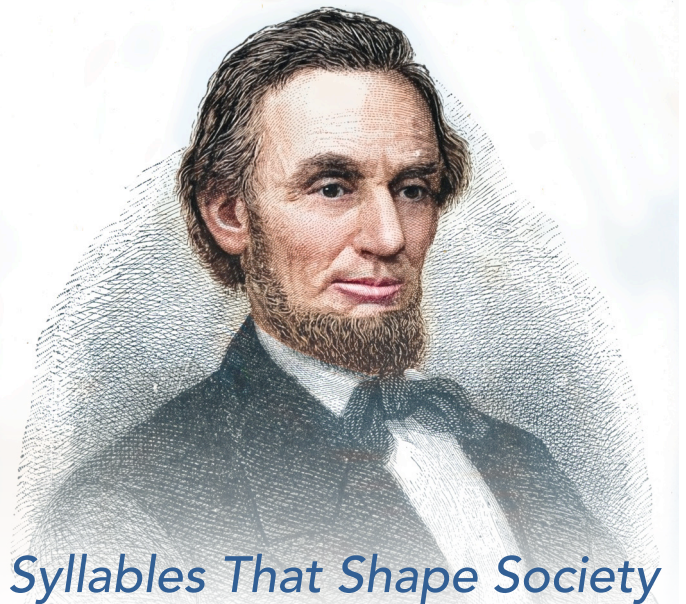
With remote work on the rise, your employer may be based in another state. Your employee contract should detail your remote status and any expectations for occasional "hybrid" work (e.g., working at the corporate office once a week) and work-related travel. Expense reimbursement is another factor to consider when reading your contract. Review any provisions regarding your responsibilities in using employer-supplied equipment (laptops, printers, scanners, etc.) required for your remote position.

Sometimes, your work may entail creating intellectual property the employer owns. For example, if you make digital media for a company, you likely won't be able to apply it to your personal use or bring it to a subsequent employer. The employee contract will likely include specific proprietary rights and intellectual property language. Before agreeing to an employer's contract terms, you should address any verification needs.

These questions are just the tip of the iceberg. No two employee contracts are exactly alike, so it's essential to diligently review any documentation you receive, even if you need to bring in a legal professional for an extra pair of eyes.

Good luck with your job search, and happy reading!

TAKE A **BREAK**



Syllables That Shape Society

The 'Saxon Clincher' Effect

The right selection of syllables can change the course of history.

As any English teacher or professional editor (or anyone who's ever confused "they're," "there," or "their") will tell you, navigating modern English is often chaotic and confounding. In a 2020 blog, Ward Farnsworth of the University of Texas School of Law attempted to explain how it got this way.

"English is a language built mostly out of two others. Much of it was created from the language of invaders who came to Britain around 450 AD from Anglia and Saxony (in what we'd now call northern Germany). About 600 years later, the French [Normans] invaded and brought their language with them, too, derived from Latin. The new French competed with Old English, and the eventual outcome was modern English, built out of both."

Farnsworth's observation isn't new. Various speeches by President Abraham Lincoln, largely considered one of the world's greatest orators, made excellent use of this mix of languages by understanding that Anglo-Saxon words tend to be direct and words of French origin tend to be a bit more flowery. Lincoln applied these characteristics to create what some linguistic circles call a "Saxon clincher," a straightforward conclusion to a more colorfully worded introduction. A Saxon clincher can be employed to gain attention with impactful opening words before driving the point home more simply.

According to Farnsworth, Lincoln's talent for perfecting this approach shines through in this passage from his "House Divided" speech in 1858:

Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Did you notice how the first half includes colorful words such as "opponents" and "extinction," and the final 14 words are simple with one syllable each? That's the Saxon clincher, and the pathway to a perfect speech, in a nutshell.

BAKED FETA, TOMATO, AND WHITE BEAN SKILLET

Ingredients

- 2 pints cherry tomatoes
- 2 (15-oz) cans no-salt-added cannellini beans, rinsed
- 4 medium cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 6 oz feta cheese, packed in brine, cut into 4 pieces
- 1 tbsp hot honey
- Basil leaves, for garnish
- 4 slices toasted whole-wheat country bread, optional, for serving

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 F.
2. In a large, oven-safe skillet, combine tomatoes, beans, garlic, Italian seasoning, and salt.
3. Drizzle with 5 tbsp of olive oil and stir gently.
4. Add feta pieces 2 inches apart in the mixture and drizzle with remaining olive oil.
5. Bake for 30–35 minutes, or until the tomatoes have burst.
6. Remove from oven and drizzle with hot honey. Garnish with basil leaves, and serve with toast if desired.

Inspired by [EatingWell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)

6800 France Ave., Ste. 190
Edina, MN 55435

Small Business & Personal Planning Attorney

See what my clients say about me on [MyGoogleReviews.com!](#)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 2 Brothers Keep the Spirit of Togetherness Alive

2 The Weight of Written Words

3 Baked Feta, Tomato, and White Bean Skillet
President Lincoln's Unique Speech Style

4 Terror Turns to Trial

SLIPS, SCREAMS, AND SETTLEMENTS

A 'Leatherface' Lawsuit Leaves a Mark

If you're a horror film fan, you know how common it is for a would-be victim to trip and fall long enough to allow the killer chasing them to catch up and carry out some nasty deed. While this scene is a classic cliché of the genre, it would strike genuine terror in anyone's heart if it played out in the real world, especially when you're a 57-year-old woman with her grandchild in tow.

In the late 1990s, Cleanthi Peters accompanied her 10-year-old granddaughter to a Hell's High haunted house attraction at Universal Studios in Florida. As their walk-through was about to end, an actor portraying the menacing character Leatherface from the "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" film franchise began chasing them while wielding a fake chainsaw. As the frightened pair began running away from the grotesque antagonist, they slipped on a wet spot on the floor, just like in the movies. Instead of breaking character to help them, the actor playing the pretend psychopath continued to menace the two by standing above them with his torturous tool still in his hands.

Claiming the incident left her and her granddaughter "extremely fearful and in mental distress and anguish," Peters later sued Universal Studios for emotional distress and other injuries. After numerous trials, the suit was decided in Peters' favor, resulting in a \$15,000 judgment against Universal Studios for failure to keep its haunted house safe for occupants. While this case occurred in Florida, legal experts have opined that the verdict may have been the same in other states, since an unsafe wet floor wouldn't be a reasonable expectation for anyone attending a haunted house attraction.

While Hell's High may have succeeded in frightening Peters and her granddaughter, the suit proves that horror-themed entertainment can sometimes be too scary, especially for the defendant's legal counsel, and Leatherface is best encountered from the comfort of a TV or movie theater screen.

