Parentheses are used to add additional information, which is of lesser importance, to sentences. Because in legal writing conciseness is highly valued, most often the less important information is edited out. This does not mean, however, that parentheses never appear in legal writing. They are most frequently used in the following ways:

1. **To Enclose Short Explanations of Cases**

   Washington courts have held the emergency doctrine inapplicable when only a sudden increase in degree of an already existing condition has placed the actor in a position of peril. *Mills v. Park*, 409 P.2d 646 (Wash. 1966) (declining to apply the emergency doctrine where the defendant’s vision in a snowstorm was further obscured by a snowplow throwing snow on defendant’s car).

2. **To Refer Readers to Attached or Appended Documents**

   Before signing the agreement, Jones crossed out the language “at time of closing” in paragraph 12 and inserted the language “pro ratio as received by sellers” in paragraph 24. *(See appendix 1.)*

   **note**: When a parenthetical reference is set up as a separate sentence, the period goes inside the closing parentheses. When the parenthetical reference is inserted within a sentence, place any punctuation required for the sentence outside the closing parenthesis.

   Before signing the agreement, Jones crossed out the language “at time of closing” (paragraph 12, appendix 1), and Smith inserted the language “pro ratio as received by sellers” (paragraph 24, appendix 1).

3. **To Enclose Numerals That Introduce the Individual Items in a List**

   To decide whether the same claim for relief is involved in both cases, a court must determine (1) whether the same primary right is involved in both cases and (2) whether the evidence needed to support the second action would have sustained the first action.

4. **To Announce Changes to a Quotation That Cannot Be Shown by Ellipses or Brackets**

   The court held that “an instruction, *when requested*, defining intent is required when intent is an element of the crime charged.” *Id.* (emphasis added).

5. **To Introduce Abbreviations after a Full Name Is Given**

   International Business Machines (IBM) has declared bankruptcy.

Adapted from: *The Legal Writing Handbook*—Oates, Enquist, & Kunsch
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