

How to Draft Legislative Language

When proposing an amendment to an existing statute, the draft proposal must show every difference, except capitalization, between the existing version of the statute and the proposed amended version. The most commonly used specific rules are as follows:

1. Deleted matter must be italicized and enclosed in brackets. For example, if a drafter wishes to have the words "the initiating" removed from an existing statute, but seeks no additional changes, the proposal should appear as follows:

All filiation proceedings shall be commenced and tried in the county where either [*the initiating*] party or the child resides.

2. If deleting two or more successive subsections or paragraphs, *each* of them must be enclosed entirely in brackets and italicized.
3. All new matter in a proposed amended section must be set forth in boldface type. For example, if the drafter wishes to remove outdated legislative language and replace it with modern language, the proposal should appear as follows:

All filiation proceedings shall be commenced in the circuit court and shall for all purposes be deemed [*suits*] **actions** in equity. Unless otherwise specifically provided by statute, the proceedings shall be conducted pursuant to the Oregon Rules of Civil Procedure.

In this example, the drafter has proposed the removal and replacement of the word "suits" with the more modern term "actions."

4. Changes in punctuation must be indicated -- even if that is the *only* proposed change.

For additional rules and resources regarding the process of drafting legislative language, please refer to the official [*Bill Drafting Manual*](#), prepared by the Legislative Counsel Committee.