STRUCTURE OF THE NARRATIVE & BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE BASE

- » Please watch the lengthy video that accompanies this lesson. It provides a live demo on how to set up a knowledge base that will assist you through the entire process.
- » https://youtu.be/5SZ3Fm-ygyk

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- » Apply a six-part structure (Intro, Background, Influences, Lessons Learned, Steps to Reconciliation, Conclusion) with clear word-count targets and purposes.
- » Record and transcribe a granular "knowledge base" that AI can use to draft each section accurately.
- » Use a section-by-section workflow with AI (prompt → draft → edit) to maintain voice, authenticity, and legal awareness.
- » Align the narrative with the PSR process and mitigation goals (e.g., documenting factors that can affect RDAP eligibility).
- » Avoid common pitfalls (minimization, legal argument, vague claims) while writing for an "audience of one" — the judge.

Lesson Summary:

This lesson moves from theory to practice. You'll learn the exact framework of an effective sentencing narrative and how to build an AI-ready knowledge base to draft it, accurately and in your own voice.

1) Narrative structure that works. Whether you pleaded guilty or went to trial, your narrative should follow a predictable, judge-friendly flow using the following as guidelines:

- » Introduction (400—600 words): A sincere, first-person opening explaining who you are, why you're writing, and what you hope

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

1

the Court understands about you. Conversational, respectful, and focused on accountability—no legal argument.

» Background (1,200—1,700 words): Human context: family, education, work, health, recovery, community ties, a vivid scene that shows character. This section will help the judge see beyond the conviction. No excuses—just facts and insight.

» Influences Leading to the Crime (≈400—600 words): How someone like you ended up here: decisions, blind spots, pressures, missed safeguards. Make sure that you're not relitigating the case. That is your attorney's job. Your job with the narrative is to show that you own your decisions, and to build a case that will advance you as a candidate for leniency.

» Lessons Learned (≈400—600 words): What changed in your thinking and behavior—books, mentors, therapy, sobriety, programs—and why those changes will endure.

» Steps to Reconciliation (≈400—600 words): Concrete actions (restitution efforts, apologies, cooperation, compliance, recovery work, community service), with dates and proof when possible.

» Conclusion (≈200—400 words): A brief, forward-looking request for mercy grounded in accountability and a specific plan never to return to court.

Target a total of 3,000—4,000 words—substantial but tight. The goal is to humanize you and demonstrate credible change.

2) Build an AI-ready knowledge base. If you follow the instructions and prompts that I offered in the accompanying video, you will build a "knowledge base" to guide your comprehensive mitigation strategy. The first output should be your personal narrative. Respond in detail to the prompts below. The more detail you provide, the more effectively you can build an asset that will help you going forward.

» Record yourself responding, in detail, to the granular questionnaire below (identity, case snapshot, acceptance of responsibility or appellate-safe stance, background details, health/mental health/substance history, offense narrative, victims and repair, rehabilitation plan). Speak in full sentences, spell names, give dates, and state amounts with currency. Speak conversationally, with estimates if you do not know precise details.

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

2

3) Capture and transcribe efficiently. You can use any platform that results in a written transcript that will help you build your knowledge base. Ask AI to help, or consider using the following tools:

- » Phone voice memos (Apple/Android),
- » Google Meet (start a meeting alone → start recording and transcription/captions),
- » YouTube (unlisted) to auto-generate a transcript you can copy.

4) Draft with AI one section at a time. After you've built your knowledge base, you can start drafting your narrative. Use the prompt that we offer in the next lesson, and then paste your transcript that you recorded. Draft the narrative one section at a time. Work through that section, edit it. Then move to the next section, as you will find in the lessons to follow. I do not recommend you dumping the transcript and prompt into AI and asking it to generate the full narrative. Take your time and remember that AI Is a tool, but you are the master of your life. The accompanying videos to this course will give you more commentary and examples. By taking a staged approach, your narrative will capture your voice, reduce errors, and keep every paragraph aligned with your single audience—the judge.

5) Connect to the PSR and mitigation. Your narrative and knowledge base help you build a comprehensive mitigation strategy. It may influence the PSR and document factors that influence programming (e.g., RDAP requires documented substance-use history near arrest). No one should work harder than you toward getting the best outcome.

Key Takeaways

- » Follow the six-part structure with clear word ranges and purposes.
- » Build a thorough, accurate knowledge base—names, dates, amounts, and specific scenes.
- » Draft and revise one section at a time with AI to protect voice and precision.
- » Align the narrative with PSR realities and mitigation opportunities (e.g., RDAP).
- » Authenticity and accountability matter more than eloquence.

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

3

Self-Directed Exercise

1. Record (20—40 minutes): Using the granular questionnaire, record answers through "Personal Background" (include one vivid scene).

2. Transcribe: Create a text transcript (phone auto-transcription, Google Meet transcript, or YouTube auto-captions).

3. Draft the Introduction: Paste the transcript into your AI prompt and generate only the Introduction (400—600 words).

4. Revise: Edit for accuracy, tone, and clarity. Save each version as you edit with an appropriate name, such as "Narrative_01_ Introduction_v1_YYYY-MM-DD.docx."

5. Outline the Background: From your transcript, bullet 6—8 subtopics you'll cover in Background (family, education, work, community, health/recovery, scene, supports, goals).

Assessment Questions

1. List the six sections of the narrative in order and give the recommended word range for two of them.

2. Multiple choice: What is the primary purpose of the Background section?

   ◊   a) Re-argue the case

   ◊   b) Provide human context that helps the judge understand you

   ◊   c) Criticize the prosecutor

   ◊   d) Quote statutes and guidelines

3. Why should you generate the narrative with AI one section at a time instead of all at once?

4. True/False: If you don't know a date or amount while recording, you should estimate so AI has something to work with.

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

4

5. Brief answer: Name one way accurate PSR documentation can affect your time in custody and explain how your narrative/ knowledge base helps.

SENTENCING NARRATIVE KNOWLEDGE BASE — GRANULAR QUESTIONS

How to use:

Read each prompt out loud in a voice memo or recording so that you can capture a full transcript that you will use to build your personal knowledge base. Answer in full sentences. Spell names slowly, give dates when appropriate, and insert details, as shown in the accompanying videos.

A) Identity & Contact (basic letter block)

1. Full legal name (spell it exactly as it appears on court records).

2. Any other names/aliases used (spell each).

3. Date of birth (YYYY-MM-DD).

4. Age today.

5. Mailing address you want on the letter (street, city, state, ZIP).

6. Email address.

7. Best phone number (optional).

8. USMS/FBI/BOP register number (if known).

9. Immigration/citizenship status (if relevant to the record).

B) Case Snapshot

10. Judicial district (e.g., "Northern District of California").

11. Case caption and docket number (spell precisely).

12. Name of sentencing judge (spell).

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

5

13. Sentencing date (YYYY-MM-DD, if set).

14. Prosecutor's office and AUSA name (spell).

15. Defense counsel name(s) and firm/public defender office (spell).

16. Custody status now (e.g., on bond, home confinement, in custody).

17. Plea status (pled guilty/convicted at trial).

18. Offense(s) of conviction—list only counts of conviction or plea.

19. Statutory maximums and any mandatory minimums (only if you know from counsel).

20. Guidelines status if known (base offense level, enhancements, range—only if in your documents).

21. Restitution/forfeiture amounts known (state $ and basis, or "unknown").

22. Victim count or entities (name if public; otherwise describe).

23. Presentence Investigation Report (PSR) status (completed/not completed; date interview; any objections filed).

C) Acceptance of Responsibility (own words)

24. In one or two sentences, state clearly what you did wrong.

25. Why was it wrong—ethically and legally—in your own words?

26. How has your view of responsibility changed since the offense?

27. Missed safeguards you should have implemented (give 3—6 bullets, e.g.):

» Independent legal/compliance review before launch.

» Written SOPs with dual approval for payments.

» Regulator inquiry/licensing confirmation prior to operations.

» External audit of financial controls quarterly.

» Vendor/KYC verification workflow before onboarding.

» Incident-response escalation with board oversight.

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

6

D) Personal Background (human detail, no excuses)

28. Where were you born? Where did you grow up (cities, states, countries)?

29. Parents/guardians' names (spell), education levels, occupations.

30. Siblings—names (spell), ages, brief current status.

31. Early home life—values emphasized (education, faith, work ethic, service?).

32. Significant childhood responsibilities (caregiving, jobs, family duties).

33. Education history (schools, degrees, dates). Include certifications/licenses.

34. Academic performance and interests (strengths, notable mentors/teachers).

35. First jobs—age, roles, lessons learned.

36. Career timeline—key roles, employers, responsibilities, promotions, salary ranges (if comfortable).

37. Military service (branch, MOS/AFSC/Rating, rank, awards, discharge type).

38. Relationships: spouse/partner (name), date married/partners since (YYYY-MM-DD), children (names/ages), dependents (elderly/disabled).

39. Community ties—faith, recovery, volunteer groups (names, roles, frequency).

40. One short, vivid scene that humanizes you (e.g., helping a parent, teaching a child, volunteering). Describe sensory details (where, when, who, what you did, how you felt).

E) Health, Mental Health, and Substance Use (Understand RDAP)

41. Physical health conditions (diagnoses, treatment, medications).

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

7

42. Mental health history (diagnoses, therapy, medications, coping tools).

43. Substance use history (alcohol, drugs): onset age, peak use, consequences, abstinence dates, supports (AA/NA, counseling).

44. Recovery actions to date (meetings/week, sponsor, program completion).

45. How treatment/recovery changed your thinking and behavior.

F) Offense Narrative (clear, plain language)

46. In one sentence: what is this case about?

47. Describe the business/product/process briefly (avoid jargon; define terms once).

48. Your role and duties—what you actually did day-to-day.

49. Timeline of key events (dates + 1—2 lines each: idea → launch → growth → red flags → decisions → breakdown → investigation → charges).

50. Relevant rules/obligations (licensing, disclosures, investor communications, KYC/AML, tax, cybersecurity, etc.)—which applied and how you fell short.

51. Decision points you mishandled (name 3—5, with dates if possible).

52. Who was harmed or put at risk? (people, institutions, public trust— describe real impact if known).

53. Scene: a single moment that brought the consequences home (arrest morning, plea hearing, first night on home confinement). Where were you? Who was present? What did you feel, say, do?

G) Victims, Restitution, and Repair

54. Identify victims/groups (by role if names are private).

55. Financial loss amounts (if known and documented).

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

8

56. Steps taken toward restitution or remediation (payments made with dates, cooperation to locate funds, asset returns).

57. Non-financial repair (apologies conveyed, offers to assist audits, educational outreach to prevent recurrence).

58. What you've learned about the real impact on victims and public trust.

H) Rehabilitation & Positive Actions (with dates and proof)

59. Describe the steps you've taken to make things right. For example, talk about how you've complied with any court-ordered conditions, and document your progress on the profile you build on Prison Professors, or work through mitigation strategies.

Remember, the more detail you feed into your knowledge base, the stronger you will build a tool to help you work toward the best possible outcomes.

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION
Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

9

PRISON CHARITABLE CORPORATION

Prison Professors Charitable Corporation / PO Box 50996 / Irvine CA 92619
IRS 501c3 #85-2603315 / www.PrisonProfessors.org
Email: Impact@PrisonProfessors.org

11