

A-LEVEL LAW

CESHIRE COLLEGE SOUTH & WEST



SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

Congratulations on gaining your place to study A-Level Law at Cheshire College South & West!

We very much look forward to welcoming you. Through studying A Level Law, you will learn about the legal system, law making, the nature of law, criminal law, the law of tort and human rights. You will develop a range of skills including the application of legal rules and principles to present an argument, analysis and evaluation of the law, and an understanding of legal issues and concepts. We follow the [AQA A-Level Law Course](#) (Option 3B).

A-Level Law is a fascinating but challenging subject. Therefore, it is important that you complete the following course preparation to gain prior knowledge and skills that will be useful throughout the next two years. Please collate your work for submission during your **first Law class in September**. Your responses may be written or typed but please ensure that all your work is **named and dated**.

Task One: Key Terminology & Legal Personnel

Watch: [The Distinction Between Criminal and Civil Law](#)

When studying Law, we will use different legal terms, and it is important to know and understand what these terms mean from the outset of our course.

Please **define** the following key legal terms:

Defendant	Law Commission	Damages	Statute	Summary Offence
Claimant	Prosecution	Common Law	Jury	Ratio Decidendi
Royal Assent	Vicarious Liability	Parliament	Crown Court	Obiter Dicta

Watch: [Solicitor or Barrister?](#)

Watch: [the Advocacy Training that Your Lecturer Went Through!](#)

Watch: [Legal Executive Apprenticeships](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- Why is the standard of proof lower in civil law compared to criminal law?
- How many 'dining sessions' must a Barrister complete at their 'Inn of Court' before being 'called to the Bar'?
- What are 'higher rights of audience'?
- Who regulates solicitors?

Task Two: Criminal Courts & Sentencing

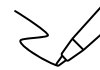
 Watch: [Introduction to Magistrates Courts](#)

 Watch: [Introduction to Crown Courts](#)

In passing sentence, the first thing that a Judge or Magistrate will consider is the purpose of their sentence. The different aims of sentencing can be found in Section 57 of the Sentencing Act 2020.

 Read: [Understanding the Sentencing Act 2020](#)

Please **match** the following to the five aims of sentencing found within the Act:



- A fixed term prison sentence proportionate to the crime e.g. life sentence for murder
- Drug and alcohol treatment or education requirements
- Compensation orders or unpaid work within society
- Long prison sentences, curfews or prohibited activity orders
- A long prison sentence or a large fine

Task Three: Legal Theory & the Morality of Law

 Watch: [Michael Sandel Harvard Lectures on Justice](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- How would you define 'law'?
- Why do we have legal rules and / or what is the purpose of our legal system?
- Can 'law' be distinguished from morality? If not, why? If so, how?
- What does 'justice' mean to you?
- In English law, we do not have a 'good Samaritan' rule in that there is no duty of care imposed upon a stranger to save a baby from drowning in a pond? Do you agree?
- If Steve intends to shoot Samaira but the bullet instead hits and kills Ricardo, do you believe that Steve should be guilty of the murder of Ricardo? Give reasons for your answer.

For further insight:  watch [The Moral Side of Murder](#)

Task Four: The Development of the Common Law

Every case that goes to court is recorded in the 'Law reports' which explain the facts of the case, the verdict and the legal principles the judge used to come to the decision. Some are quite lengthy, and judges, academics and Parliament use them to understand how the law is being applied.

Please **research** the following cases and prepare them in a **table with case name, year, key facts and principle of law**:

- 📖 Read [R v Ireland](#) (Silent Phone Calls)
- 📖 Read [R v White](#) (Poisonings)
- 📖 Read [Donoghue v Stevenson](#) (Snails in Ginger Beer)
- 📖 Read [Airedale NHS Trust v Bland](#) (The Lasting Effects of Hillsborough)
- 📖 Read [Re A](#) (Conjoined Twins)

Task Five: Law in the News

📺 Watch [The Rule of Law](#) and [The Judiciary & the Rule of Law](#)

📺 Watch [Lady Hale, Former President of the UK Supreme Court](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- How do we define the 'rule of law?'
- How might reduced access to justice and the courts affect the operation of the rule of law?
- What are 'litigants in person?'

📺 Watch: [The Role of the Supreme Court](#)

📖 Read: [The Practice Statement 1966](#)

📖 Read: [The Feminist Movement and R v R](#) and for further information watch: [R v R](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- What is meant by 'judicial precedent?'
- What are the risks of 'judge made law?'
- What is the effect of the Practice Statement 1966?
- What was the impact of the ruling in R v R [1991]?
- What is the role of the Law Commission?

📺 Watch: [To Kill a Burglar: The Tony Martin Story \(2006\)](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- Why did Tony Martin's plea of self-defence fail? Do you agree?
- Do you believe 'an Englishman's home should be his castle?'
- What is diminished responsibility?
- What impact does a plea of voluntary manslaughter have on sentencing?

📺 Watch: [Four jailed for at least 173 years for murder of Ashley Dale](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- What types of cases are tried in the Crown Court?
- What are aggravating and mitigating factors?

- What were two aggravating features in this case?
- What discount is granted for an early guilty plea?

 Watch: [Play-Fight Claim Dad jailed for murdering daughter](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- What is a minimum term?
- What is the role of the parole board?
- What is meant by the term 'being out on licence?'

 [Nursery worker jailed for 14 years over baby death](#)

Please **answer** the following questions:

- What is the difference between murder and manslaughter?
- What is meant by the term 'culpability?'
- What is the role of a judge in a criminal trial?
- What is the role of a jury?
- What is the difference between a 'unanimous and majority' verdict?

Task Six: Independent Research Project

Research a recent legal debates and / or news articles on a topic that interests you. The Law Commission's [Current Reform Projects](#) may prove insightful alongside the following websites:

[BBC News: Law](#)

[Legal Cheek](#)

[The Guardian: Law](#)

[Law Gazette](#)

[The Times: Law](#)

[Financial Times: Law](#)

Incorporating your findings, please write an **extended response in full prose of at least 800 words**:

- What are the legal issues involved?
- What are the areas of controversy?
- Why did you choose this debate / article and what sparked your interest?
- What is the area of law you are most looking forward to studying?
- What do you believe you may find most challenging about studying law?

Introductory Reading

You will find the start of the law course a lot easier if you do some introductory reading. There are many books that provide an introduction and useful tips. Do browse through the list and see which you find most interesting: you are certainly not expected to read them all! However, the following may help in introducing you to legal skills and how lawyers think:

 **Is Eating People Wrong? Great Legal Cases and How They Shaped the World: Allan Hutchinson**

 **The Rule of Law: Tom Bingham**

 **Letters to a Law Student: Nicholas McBride**

- 📖 Learning the Law: Glanville Williams
- 📖 What about Law: Barnard, O’Sullivan & Virgo
- 📖 Understanding Law: Adams & Brownsword

Of more topical interest:

- 📖 The Secret Barrister series
- 📖 Overruled: Sam Fowles
- 📖 Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do: Michael Sandel
- 📖 In Your Defence: Sarah Langford
- 📖 Jeremy Hutchinson’s Case Histories: Thomas Grant

And just for fun – some legal fiction:

- 📖 To Kill a Mockingbird: Harper Lee
- 📖 Bleak House: Charles Dickens

For those interested in mooting and the art of advocacy:

- 📖 The Devil’s Advocate: Ian Morley
- 📖 Advocacy in Court: Keith Evans
- 📖 Pupillage Inside Out: Sokol & McArdle (to dispel any myths about life at the Bar!)

You will also need a strong grasp of the workings of the British political system and should keep abreast of a good-quality broadsheet newspaper (*The Times, The Telegraph, The Guardian*) and listen to topical political programmes (*The Today Programme, Newsnight*). Taking a keen interest in the political issues of the day will aid your legal studies considerably. For example, having a deeper understanding of relations between politicians and judges, ‘hot’ human rights cases or reform of the House of Lords. The following are some suggestions for media that you may wish to dip into:

Podcasts

- 🎧 The Rest is Politics
- 🎧 Leading
- 🎧 UK Law Weekly
- 🎧 The Hearing
- 🎧 The Law Show
- 🎧 The Student Lawyer
- 🎧 The Legal Room UK
- 🎧 Law Pod UK
- 🎧 Rights Up
- 🎧 Legal Directions
- 🎧 University of Law

TV Shows

- 📺 Judge John Deed (BBC)
- 📺 Barristers: Fighting for Justice (C4)
- 📺 Silk (BBC)
- 📺 Parole (BBC)
- 📺 24 Hours in Police Custody (C4)
- 📺 Defending the Guilty (BBC)
- 📺 Kavanagh QC (ITV)
- 📺 Accused (BBC)
- 📺 Erin Brockovich (Netflix)
- 📺 Mr Bates v The Post Office (ITV)
- 📺 North Square (C4)

Textbooks and Revision Guides

Full and free online access to the AQA-recommended textbooks and revision guides is available through the college library. Hard copies are available for purchase: [A1 Textbook](#), [A2 Textbook](#) and [Revision Guide](#). Please ensure that any materials are AQA-specific. You will also receive free access to Flipped Law: a fantastic online resource, combining video explanations, practice scenario questions, interactive quizzes, and topic checklists to consolidate learning. For now, please familiarise yourself with a rough outline of the topics we will study: [Tutor2u AQA Student Handbook](#).

Legal writing is very different from the writing you will have encountered during your GCSE studies. Our introductory legal skills sessions will explain the distinctiveness of legal writing further but for now, you may wish to delve into the IRAC / CLEO methods or dip into 'How to Write Law Essays & Exams' by SI Strong.

Stationary

By way of materials, you will need three A4 ring binders / plastic wallets / dividers and paper for note taking in lessons alongside a range of coloured pens and highlighters.

Law in Action

Getting a feel for the law can help bring abstract concepts to life. You could visit your local Magistrates' and / or County Courts. Even the highest courts of the land (Royal Courts of Justice and the Supreme Court) are open to the public. Court sittings are between 10am to 12pm and then 2pm to 4pm. Please aim to arrive half an hour before and enquire with the court usher as to which are the best cases to go and watch: they will be more than happy to help.

Artificial Intelligence Tools

Finally, please note that the use of AI tools (including ChatGPT or similar platforms) to generate answers, essays, scenario responses, revision notes or course materials is **strongly discouraged**.

A-Level Law examinations assess your own knowledge, application, analysis and evaluation skills under timed exam conditions. Reliance on AI-generated responses often leads to superficial understanding, inaccurate legal content, poor application to scenarios, and generic evaluation which does not meet the requirements of the AQA mark scheme.

AI should **never** replace active revision, independent thinking, practice questions, flashcards, essay planning, or engagement with lesson materials. Undoubtedly, those who perform best in A-Level Law are those who actively practise recall, application and written exam technique themselves.

Thank you for all of your hard work and we look forward to welcoming you in September!

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your Lecturer in Law:

kirsten.ward@ccsw.ac.uk

