



A Level Law – L6

Curriculum Intent

Law plays a vital role in maintaining order and justice in society. OCR A Level Law is a course designed to introduce students to the fundamental principles of the legal system in England and Wales. The course explores key areas of law, including criminal, civil, and tort law, while also providing insights into the legal processes and institutions that underpin society. Students are expected to develop critical thinking skills and a thorough understanding of legal concepts, which are assessed through structured exams. This introduction aims to offer a solid foundation for further legal studies or careers in law, justice, or related fields.

Academic Requirements & Skills

- **Skills:** Students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and professional writing skills.
- **Prerequisites:** No prior legal knowledge is required; however, a strong foundation in English Language (GCSE Grade 5 or above) OR Citizenship Studies (GCSE Grade 5 or above) is a requirement due to the heavy emphasis on written analysis.

"The study of law is useful in a variety of points of view. It qualifies a man to be useful to himself, to his neighbours, and to the public." – Thomas Jefferson

In Lower Sixth Students will learn:

The topics below are an indication of what is studied in the first year of the A Level. The order of which will be decided before the course commences by the course teachers:

- Introduction to the nature of law
- Parliamentary law making
- Delegated legislation
- Statutory interpretation
- Judicial precedent
- Law reform
- European Union law
- Civil courts and other forms of dispute resolution
- Criminal courts and lay people
- Legal personnel
- Access to justice
- Criminal law: rules and theory
- General elements of criminal liability
- Fatal offences against the person
- Non-fatal offences against the person
- Offences against property
- Mental capacity defences
- General defences
- Preliminary offences: Attempts

Knowledge, understanding & Skills

Key Subject Areas

- **The English Legal System:** Focuses on the structure of the courts (Magistrates', Crown, High Court), the role of judges, juries, and lawyers (solicitors and barristers), and how individuals access justice through funding and advice.
- **Criminal Law:** Covers the elements of liability (actus reus and mens rea), fatal offences (murder/manslaughter), non-fatal offences (assault, ABH, GBH), and property offences like theft and robbery.
- **Law of Tort:** Examines civil liability for negligence, occupiers' liability, vicarious liability (employer responsibility), and available remedies like damages or injunctions.
- **Law Making:** Analyses how laws are created by Parliament and the EU, how judges interpret statutes, and the influence of law reform agencies.
- **Nature of Law:** A philosophical component exploring the interaction of law with society, morality, and different theories of justice.

Core Legal Concepts

- **Act of Parliament:** A draft law (Bill) that has passed through all stages in Parliament and received Royal Assent to become part of the law of the land.
- **Ratio Decidendi:** Latin for "the reason for the decision." This is the legal principle or rule upon which a court's decision is based, which creates a binding precedent for lower courts.
- **Stare Decisis:** Latin for "to stand by things decided." The fundamental principle that precedent should determine legal decisions in cases with similar facts.
- **Statutory Interpretation:** The process by which judges interpret and apply legislation using various rules (e.g., literal, golden, or mischief rules).

Criminal Law

- **Actus Reus:** The "guilty act"—the physical element of a crime, which can be an act, an omission, or a state of affairs.
- **Mens Rea:** The "guilty mind"—the mental element of a crime, typically requiring intention or recklessness.
- **Assault:** An act causing the victim to apprehend the infliction of immediate, unlawful personal violence.
- **Battery:** The actual application of unlawful physical force to another person.
- **Subjective Recklessness:** A state of mind where the defendant is aware of a risk but deliberately proceeds to take it anyway.
- **Transferred Malice:** A legal doctrine where the mens rea for one offence is transferred to another, such as when a defendant intends to hit one person but hits another instead.

What does excellence look like?

Mastering the Assessment Objectives (AOs)

High-achieving responses meet the following "Level 4" descriptors:

AO1: Knowledge and Understanding

- **Excellence looks like:** Accurate, fully developed, and detailed explanations of legal rules and principles.
- **Key Indicator:** "Excellent citation" of fully relevant statutes (e.g., Theft Act 1968) and case law (e.g., *R v Ghosh*).

AO2: Application to Scenarios

- **Excellence looks like:** Flawless application of legal rules to complex, hypothetical problem questions.
- **Key Indicator:** Presenting a "clear and logically structured" legal argument using fully appropriate legal terminology throughout the response.

AO3: Analysis and Evaluation

- **Excellence looks like:** Wide-ranging and sustained focus on the specific question, where key points are "fully discussed and fully developed".
- **Key Indicator:** Reaching valid, well-supported conclusions that demonstrate a critical awareness of how law operates in society.

2. Sophisticated Legal Reasoning

Exemplary students differentiate themselves by moving beyond basic descriptions to provide deep rationale:

- **Nuanced Case Usage:** Using recent landmark decisions as a starting point for logic (e.g., using *Barclays* or *Morrisons* for vicarious liability tests) rather than just stating older cases.
- **The IRAC Method:** Top-tier answers often follow the **Issue, Rule, Application, Conclusion (IRAC)** structure to ensure responses remain focused and legally sound.
- **Synoptic Thinking:** Connecting different areas of the syllabus—such as linking "The Nature of Law" (Paper 3) to "Law Making" (Paper 2)—to show a comprehensive understanding of the legal system.

3. Examination Technique

Excellence in the exams requires strict discipline:

- **Precision:** Avoiding "hedging bets" by providing multiple conflicting answers; examiners prioritize the first response if it is not crossed out.
- **Time Management:** Allocating specific time blocks to match the mark weighting of each section (e.g., ensuring 20-mark sections receive sufficient development compared to medium-tariff questions).
- **Accuracy:** Maintaining a "well-developed line of reasoning" that remains substantiated by evidence even under timed

How can you enhance your learning at home?

READING:

[Letters to a Law Student](#): Nicholas McBride’s guide is widely recommended for introducing legal thinking and the reality of studying law.

[The Rule of Law](#): Tom Bingham’s accessible exploration of one of the most fundamental principles of the UK legal system.

[What About Law?](#): An introductory book by Catherine Barnard et al. that uses famous cases to explain core legal areas like contract, tort, and criminal law.

[Learning the Law](#): Glanville Williams’ classic text (now in its 17th edition) provides essential foundations on how to read cases and understand legal terminology.

[The Secret Barrister](#): An engaging, contemporary look at the practical failings and realities of the modern English legal system.

WEBSITES:

Official & Exam-Specific Sites

- [OCR Official Website](#): The primary source for [past papers](#), mark schemes, and examiner reports. It includes specific "Support Highlights" for A Level Law.
- [Teach Cambridge](#): A secure platform providing candidate exemplars with senior examiner commentary.

Revision & Study Support

- [The Law Bank](#): A dedicated platform for OCR Law students offering video lessons, live sessions, and study materials that break down complex legal concepts specifically for the OCR syllabus.
- [Tutor2u Law](#): Provides [Grade Booster workshops](#) for the exams, free livestreams, quizzes, and structured revision digital catch-up courses.
- [A-LevelLaw.com](#): Features [case law flashcards](#) and guides on exam technique specifically aimed at mastering the A Level Law curriculum.
- [TeachLaw.net](#): Offers downloadable revision guides, flashcards, and active recall packs updated for both **OCR and AQA specifications**.

How will we assess impact?

- Teacher questioning
- Essay writing
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- Revision quizzes
- PPEs

The qualification is assessed through three 2-hour written exams, each worth 33.3% of the total mark.

Paper	Component Title	Key Topics Covered
Paper 1	The Legal System & Criminal Law	Civil and criminal courts, legal professions, access to justice, and criminal liability (offences against the person/property).
Paper 2	Law Making & the Law of Tort	Parliamentary law-making, delegated legislation, statutory interpretation, judicial precedent, negligence, and nuisance.
Paper 3	Nature of Law & Option	The relationship between law, morality, and justice, plus a choice between Human Rights Law or Contract Law .

International Opportunities

International links:

Beyond specific statutes, international themes are woven into broader legal theory and the Nature of Law component.

The Rule of Law: An exploration of this fundamental principle often includes international perspectives on how law should operate to protect citizens.

Legal Personnel: Comparative studies may occasionally touch upon how the judiciary and legal professions in England differ from or align with international standards.

Summary of International Coverage

Topic area: Paper 2: Law Making
Impact and legacy of European Union Law.

Topic area: Nature of Law
Global legal contexts and the universal principle of the Rule of Law.

Many students will be able to make comparisons to legal systems in jurisdictions that are visited as part of the visits programme. Students will also be able to arrange their own work experience placement in a related area of work.



Related careers:

- Solicitor
- Barrister
- Chartered Legal Executive (CILEX)
- Solicitor Apprentice
- Paralegal
- Licensed Conveyancer
- Patent or Trade Mark Attorney
- Court Legal Advisor
- Police Officer
- Probation Officer
- Civil Service Policy Officer
- Compliance Officer
- Company Secretary
- Human Resources Specialist
- Insurance Underwriter
- Health and Safety Inspector
- Legal Journalist
- Mediator or Arbitrator

"It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do." – Edmund Burke