

A Level Law Transition Work 2026



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Welcome to all you who are thinking of taking up A Level Law in September.

It is an advantage to start A Level Law with some background knowledge.

- This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A-level in Law in September.
- You need to complete **ALL** of the activities ready for the first week of the new academic year.
- Do not rush it. I advise that you complete different parts of the transition pack throughout the remainder of the summer term and over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.
- **The A Level in Law is a challenging yet interesting qualification.** It will develop your reasoning skills, problem solving skills and vastly expand your knowledge of the English legal system.
- Please bring your completed booklet to your first Law lesson.

Mrs M Wilkowska-Davies (Teacher of Law)

A-Level law - TASK ONE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using the internet, research the following key terms and fill out the table below. Some of the terms have already been covered in the taster lesson.

TERM	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
Actus reus	
Beyond reasonable doubt	
Bill	
Claimant	
Defendant	
Fine	
Grievous bodily harm	
Indictment	
Liable	
Mens rea	
Obiter Dicta	
On the balance of probabilities	
Per incuriam	
Prosecution	
Ratio decidendi	
Stare Decisis	
Ultra Vires	
Victim	

A-Level Law - differences between criminal and civil law

TASK TWO

1. Read about the characteristics of civil and criminal law and then sort the words/statements about each area of law in the correct column.

Criminal law is part of public law because it resolves disputes between the **State and an individual**. The State decides what type of behaviour is prohibited (forbidden). Criminal law is needed to keep public order and the citizens and their property protected.

There are many differences between civil and criminal law. Civil and criminal cases start in different courts. The language used is different and you must always use correct language when referring to a case. The outcomes of civil and criminal cases are different. These are the decisions that the judges or juries make. There are different consequences that may apply to the defendants depending on whether the case was civil or criminal.

1. **Different courts.** Civil cases will be heard in the **High Court and the County Court**. Civil cases may relate to disputes arising out of contract, family disputes about money or property between separating or divorcing couples, personal injury claims. Some cases can be dealt with in the Magistrates' court (orders for protection against violence, maintenance orders, proceedings concerning the welfare of children under the Children Act 1989). Criminal cases will usually be heard in the **Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court**. Criminal cases relate to individuals who committed an offence, which is a behaviour, prohibited by the State (e.g. murder, rape, criminal damage).
2. **Name of parties to the proceedings.** In criminal cases the proceedings are generally brought in the **name of the Crown** by the **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)**. If Mr Brown steals someone's motorbike the case is likely to be brought by the Crown against him. The name of the case will be R v Brown. 'R' stands for 'Rex' or 'Regina' which in Latin means King or Queen. The letter 'v' means 'versus' which in Latin means 'against'.

A person (Mr Brown) against whom the criminal case is brought is called a **defendant**. To address the case correctly one should say 'the Crown against Brown' and in short **R v Brown**.

In civil cases a person bringing a claim is called **the claimant**. So if Mr White buys a car from Mr Smith's garage and it proves to have a faulty engine Mr White (the claimant) can take a civil action against Mr Smith who will be **the defendant**. The case will be headed **White v Smith**.

3. **Terminology.** In criminal cases the defendant is found **guilty** or **not guilty (convicted or acquitted)**. Either the **jury or the magistrates** will decide the verdict of guilty or not guilty. The defendant who is found guilty of a criminal offence will be punished with a custodial (prison or young offenders institution) or non-custodial sentence such as community sentence or fine.

In civil cases, if a **judge** finds a defendant **liable**, the defendant will usually have to pay **damages** (*sometimes referred to as compensation by non-lawyers*) which is a monetary award to the claimant. In some specific cases the award can be non-monetary, e.g. **an injunction** ordering a person to do or not to do something (e.g. to cut the branches overhanging into a claimant's garden).

4. **The standard of proof means how strong the evidence needs to be in order to find the defendant liable in criminal or civil law.** The **burden of proof** identifies **WHO** has to prove the case in court. The standard of proof in criminal cases is very high. **The prosecution (Crown Prosecution Service) has the burden of proof** and the standard is **'beyond reasonable doubt'** which means that the jury or magistrates must be 100% or almost 100% sure D committed the crime.

In civil cases the burden of proof is on the claimant. A lower standard applies to civil cases in that they have to be proved '*on the balance of probability*'. This means that the judge believes that there is over 50% likelihood that the defendant caused damage that the claimant complains of. The judge will ask whether it is more likely than not that the defendant caused the damage.

The same act may give rise to a criminal and civil case. For example a defendant convicted of a driving offence may face a civil case if he injured a person or caused damage to property. A criminal conviction can be used in the civil case thus making it easier to prove it.

Magistrates Court, Crown Prosecution Service, liable, verdict, sentence, guilty or not guilty, magistrates, Crown Court, High Court, judgement, claimant, defendant, beyond reasonable doubt, one the balance of probability, damages, custodial sentence, fine, injunction, community sentence, judge, jury, the Crown

Now sort the above terms

Criminal law terms	Civil law terms

2. List three types of criminal offences.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. List three areas of civil law.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A-LEVEL LAW – RESEARCH TASK - - TASK THREE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using the internet research the **classifications of offences**. In order to assist you when answering these questions – you can use the website below.

o <http://www.e-lawresources.co.uk/>

QUESTIONS:

Q1. What are the three classifications of offences?

1. _____,
2. _____,
3. _____,

Q2. What is a summary offence?

Q3. Where are summary offences heard? Which court hears these cases?

Q4. Give two examples of summary offences.

1. _____

2. _____



Q5. What is a triable either way offence?

Q6. Which court hears these offences?

Q7. Give two examples of triable either way offences.

1. _____
2. _____

Q8. What is an indictable offence?

Q9. Which court hears indictable offences?

Q10. Give two examples of indictable offences.

1. _____.
2. _____.

A-LEVEL LAW – RESEARCH TASK - TASK FOUR

Using the link below and what you have learnt in the taster lesson complete this task. You must write in **FULL SENTENCES** when answering the questions;

Go onto this link: <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/sentencing-basics/>.

1. What is a sentence?

2. When is a sentence imposed?

3. Who decides a sentence?

4. What kind of information are they looking for? What are aggravating and mitigating factors?

SENTENCING AIMS:

When a magistrate or judge gives a sentence they will be thinking about what they want the sentence to do – do they want to protect the public? Do they want to punish the offender? Etc. These are known as the aims of sentencing. What are the 5 main aims of sentencing?

Answer the following questions regarding the aims of sentencing.

Aim 1: Punish the offender

What examples of sentences could you provide to demonstrate this?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Aim 2: Reduce crime

Why is this important?

Aim 3: Reform and rehabilitate offenders

How can an offender be reformed or rehabilitated?

Aim 4: Protect the public

Provide two ways in which a judge or magistrate can protect the public from an offender?

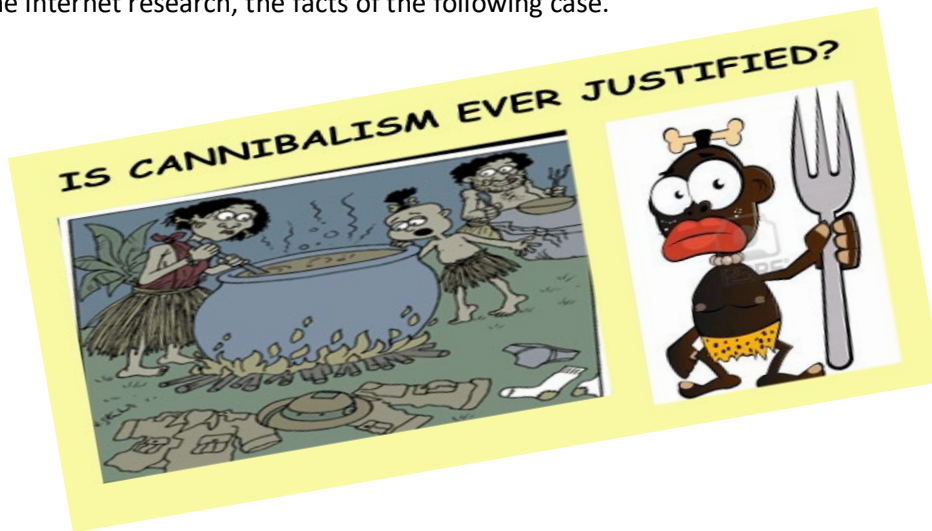
Aim 5: Make the offender give something back. This is called reparation

How can a judge make an offender give back?

A-LEVEL LAW – RESEARCH TASK - TASK FIVE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using the internet research, the facts of the following case.



R v Dudley & Stephens (1884)

Facts (what happened?):

Outcome (what was the verdict and sentence?)

1. Is this a criminal or civil case?
2. Identify the most important facts in this case.



3. What defence did the defendants raise?
4. What was the verdict?
5. If you were a member of the jury in this case would you have found them guilty or not guilty?
6. What legal rule comes from this case?
7. What would you have done in their situation and why?

Thinking point:

In law the '**sanctity of human life**' is paramount; no one's life is more important than another life. In this case which is the '**lesser of two evils**': eating the cabin boy **or** the crew starve to death?

A-LEVEL LAW – RESEARCH TASK - TASK SIX

Read the following scenarios and decide whether they involve criminal law/civil law or both

1. James has an argument with John and punches him in the face and breaks his nose.



2. Sarah plays her music very loud into the night. Her neighbours want to get her to stop.

3. Simon buys a DVD player from a shop. When he plugs it in he receives an electric shock.



4. Victoria takes a bottle of wine from the supermarket and does not pay for it.

5. Natalie is late for work. She drives over the speed limit and knocks a cyclist off their bike.



A Level Law – Thinking Task Seven

Consider the following real legal cases:



1. The Defendant has stabbed a victim, and the victim is operated upon, and the wound is stitched up, the victim is making an excellent recovery. However, just before being released, the victim gets an infection and is given antibiotic. The victim is allergic to the antibiotic and dies. Do you think the Defendant should be prosecuted for the death, give your reasons why? Or do you think the Hospital/Doctors should be prosecuted?



2. An 18-year-old Jehovah's witness is stabbed, taken to hospital, refuses a blood transfusion and dies as a result. She refused the transfusion for religious reasons. Should the Defendant still be prosecuted for her death?



3. A girl jumps from a moving car because she felt the driver may have attacked her. She suffered injuries. Should the Defendant be charged with causing her injuries?

4. Would your answer be the same, as 3 above, if a male had jumped from a moving vehicle believing he was about to be robbed?

PROGRAMMES AND FILMS TO WATCH

Documentaries on BBC iPlayer to watch:

Catching Britain's killers – the crimes that changed us

Murder 24/7

Murder trial – the disappearance of Margaret Flemming

Jack the Ripper – the case reopened

Life and Death Row

Murder case

The Man who Used HIV as a weapon

Unsolved

Hometown A killing

Stacey Dooley Investigates – shot by my neighbour

On the Ground – County lines and the children they exploit

Teenage Knife wars

Silk

The Split

24 hours in police custody

This Life

Films

Killed by my boyfriend

Killed by my father

Erin Brockovich

Legally blonde

Provoked

To kill a Mockingbird

The Verdict

In the Name of the Father

One Flew over the Cuckoo's nest

Vera Drake

Monster

Gone Girl

Netflix

The Trial

The Ted Bundy Tapes

How to get away with Murder

Criminal

Inside the Criminal Mind

The Investigator

Evil Genius

The Confession Tapes

I am a killer

Cold Case Files

Interview with a serial killer