

IPAC Method:

The IPAC or IRAC method is a way of formatting answers to case questions that ensure coherency and thoroughness. Follow this simple four step process to organize your answer in a way that demonstrates your knowledge of course concepts as well as your understanding of the case. This methodology can be compared to the way we answer a mathematical word problem. First, identify the formula that you will need, write out the formula, plug in the numbers and solve for the unknown. Once you have found your answer you would typically include a final statement answering the question in the parameters outlined in the word problem.

I issue P principle or rule A analysis C conclusion

Issue

Identify and state the legal question. In other words, what legal concept or issue is this fact pattern focusing on? Be precise, make sure to use names of the parties involved in the scenario and don't use concepts that are too general. Typically, you will find the legal issue based on certain keywords in the fact pattern. These words are the ones that remind you about a certain concept from the course.

EXAMPLE: Does consideration exist between X and Y?
It would not be enough to say: Does a contract exist between X and Y?

Principle/Rule

Define the legal principle or concept that you mentioned in your issue and state the relevant legal test (if there is one) along with any exceptions (if there are any). This is the knowledge part of the question where you demonstrate that you know all aspects of the legal rule.

EXAMPLE: Define the term "consideration" and state what is necessary for consideration to exist in a contractual situation.

Analysis

In your analysis you apply the facts of the case to the legal concept you have just defined. Each statement you have made in your principle is a conditional one that needs to be met in order for the rule to apply in the scenario. The analysis is answering whether or not the facts of the case have met those conditions

EXAMPLE: mention every fact in the case that is relevant to the definition and/or test you have just outlined in the principle or rule portion of your question.

Conclusion

The conclusion is the end result of the analysis you have just outlined in the previous section. This portion usually includes how you think a court would rule for the particular situation and is a statement of any assumptions you had to make. Sometimes, the fact pattern will be missing certain information that is stated in the test, this is the section where you make your "if A, then B, but if C, then D" statement. Make sure your conclusion is thorough and doesn't miss anything out.

EXAMPLE: Based on the facts of the case, consideration exists if X has provided Y with an item of value in exchange for their services. If X did not, there is no consideration.

LAW 122 Exam FAQ

Q: This is an open book exam, do I even need to study at all?

A: YES! You should always study for an open book exam because open book usually means you do not have enough time to be looking at concepts for the first time and you will not have enough time to understand them well enough to provide a sufficient answer.

Q: How do I study for an open book exam?

A: The best preparation for an open book exam is to create a summary of the course that includes all the concepts in a condensed, easy to read version, kind of like a crib sheet. There are various formats for crib sheets; some like point form notes, some prefer mind maps while others prefer charts and tables. Whatever way works for you is the best way as long as it is kept brief. Your summary should not be more than a maximum of 2 pages per chapter. Of course, just like with any other course it is also recommended that you come prepared to lectures, read the textbook, take notes, and follow along in class.

Q: I come to all my classes and feel comfortable with the content but my professor doesn't use the IPAC method and I am not sure how to answer questions. What should I do?

A: The best way to get clarification on answering questions is by asking your professor. Take a case from the textbook and solve it using the IPAC method. Next, visit your professor during office hours and ask for feedback on your solution. Also, ask your professor to walk you through a case using their preferred methodology and see how you can integrate IPAC into their method if that is easier for you to understand.

Q: The law is ambiguous and it feels like the cases can go either way, what do we do on an exam with a complicated question with various factors that point to different answers?

A: While sometimes complicated questions could have multiple answers, it is important to focus on your knowledge of legal concepts and your argumentation. As long as your arguments support your answers and you state the assumptions you made along the way, you should be at least getting part marks even if the marker would have argued the other way. If you feel that there are multiple legal rules that apply, state and define all of them to be safe.

Q: How do I manage my time on a LAW exam?

A: First, take the time to skim through all the questions before actually starting to answer them. Highlight any keywords that jump out at you from your first read. Once you have read all the questions, start with the ones you know the issue of and save the more confusing ones for later. Try to divide the total amount of time you have by the number of questions and restrict yourself to a certain number of minutes per question. Most likely the questions you know right away will take less time, which will leave more time for you to focus on the more complex cases afterwards.