

To the Teacher

This text represents a collaborative effort to put together an introduction to the basic concepts of law in the U.S. legal system, while at the same time providing communicative activities that allow students to put that newly acquired knowledge to use. Law is a profession that requires critical reading skills, the ability to write well, the ability to synthesize sources resulting from research, and the ability to speak clearly and concisely. In this respect, a legal English course is no different from any upper-intermediate to advanced English course that requires those same skills.

The text is not intended as a comprehensive introduction to U.S. law because that would be an impossible task to ask of one book. It does, however, address major areas of the law, giving students real cases and statutes to work with so that they can become familiar with both legal syntax and legal vocabulary. We have tried to choose topics and cases that will be of interest to the students and be of use in the workplace.

You do not have to be an attorney to use this book, even though at first glance you might think so. If you have been assigned a legal English course, you need to think of it as you would any other ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course. Approach the course with an interest in the subject matter, and use your students as resources. Your approach to the class may be different from that taken by an attorney/ESP instructor, but the final goal is the same. Your students should be able to communicate about legal matters in English by the time they finish the book.

Although the book is primarily intended for upper-intermediate to advanced students of English, with some adaptation a teacher of intermediate-level students should be able to make use of it. A good basic knowledge of general English on the part of the students is assumed, but there is no assumption that the students have any command of legal terminology or even a basic understanding of the U.S. legal system. Legal terminology is in boldface in the chapters. Brief definitions often follow in brackets. A knowledge of the basics of the legal system in their own country is extremely helpful, for then the student has a schema for some of the concepts that this book introduces.

Organization

The chapters are ordered so that students are given important basic information about the U.S. legal system first, then move into specific areas of the law (criminal law, civil procedure, torts, etc.). The chapters can be reordered if the instructor so

desires. However, Chapter 8, The Negotiation, requires students to use all the skills that they have learned in the text.

In this second edition, we have changed the format of the chapters. We now include three levels for each chapter with references to Part 2 for skills that are useful in all chapters. We believe that this format gives you, the instructor, more flexibility to tailor the course to the needs of your students.

The three sections of each chapter are:

- I. **Discovering Connections:** A schema activator—an activity designed to stimulate the students' thoughts about the chapter content.
- II. **Legal Discussion, Legal Listening, Legal Listening and Writing, or Legal Listening and Speaking:** A practical application of legal language—designed to put into practice some of the language used in a particular chapter.
- III. **Legal Thumbnail:** This section is designed to provide some basic legal information, since this is, after all, a content-specific text. The information, however, is not intended to represent anything more than general knowledge, for as is pointed out repeatedly in the text, a statute may or may not exist in a jurisdiction, and if the statute does exist, it is most probably subject to different interpretations within different jurisdictions. The Legal Thumbnail also presents legal vocabulary. Law has its own language, and it is vital that one understands the precise meaning of a legal term since decisions in the United States may hinge on just such a point.

If you are an attorney, you will notice what might appear to be glaring holes in the law; but the purposes of the book are to provide a *basic* legal overview for students *and* to exercise language use. This is not intended to simulate even a **legal nutshell** [abbreviated overview of the law written by law professors for American law students], but it is intended to provide a framework for practicing use of legal language.

We have added Parts 2 and 3 for you to use as needed with your students because we believe this gives you more flexibility to adapt the text to the needs of your particular students.

Part 2, Further Language Development, includes:

1. Writing Activities
2. Reading Activities
3. Oral Communication Activities
4. Grammar Activities
5. Culture Activities

Part 3 includes Student Resources.

We have provided references throughout the text to appendixes that we have found useful at particular points in the book. However, as the instructor, you will know what is best for your particular group of students, so the final decision regarding what to include and where belongs to you.

This book is meant to help you engage students in collaborative activities and create an active classroom environment. Students actively engaged in the process of learning are students who succeed in the classroom. We wish you luck and hope that you enjoy using the text.