



Recommended Reading and Viewing List for New Law Students

The Law School Experience

Turow, Scott. One-L, (Warner 1997). One student's experience as a first-year law student at Harvard. Turow's account is more realistic than the popular movie, The Paper Chase.

Dieker, Jr., Lawrence. Letters from Law School: The Life of a Second-Year Law Student (Writer's Club 2000). What law school is like once you get past your first-year exams.

Law Study Guides. The following books will give you information and strategies for studying, briefing cases, time management, exams, and other aspects of law school.

Schwartz, Michael H. Expert Learning For Law Students. (Carolina Academic Press 2005).

Browne, Neil and Keeley, Stuart M. Asking The Right Questions: A Guide To Critical Thinking. 8th edition. (Prentice Hall 2006).

Deaver, Jeffery. The Complete Law School Companion : How to Excel at America's Most Demanding Post-Graduate Curriculum. (John Wiley & Sons, 1992).

Falcon, Atticus. Planet Law School : What You Need to Know (Before You Go)...but Didn't Know to Ask. (Fine Print 1998).

Miller, Robert H. Law School Confidential : The Complete Law School Survival Guide by Students, for Students. (Griffin Trade 2000).

Shapo, Helen S. and Shapo, Marshall S. Law School Without Fear : Strategies for Success. (Foundation Press 1998).

Hegland, Kenney. Introduction to the Study & Practice of Law in a Nutshell. (West 2000).

Llewellyn, Karl N. Bramble Bush: On Our Law and Its Study. (Oceana 1981). Based on lectures originally delivered by Professor Llewellyn to his first-year law students in 1929 at Columbia University School of Law. Informative, and highly intellectual.

Tort Litigation

Amar, Akhil R. America's Constitution: A Biography. (Random House Trade Paperbacks 2006)

Harr, Jonathan. A Civil Action. Vintage 1996). The story of the Woburn, Massachusetts, toxic tort case.

Stern, Gerald M. The Buffalo Creek Disaster : How the Survivors of One of the Worst Disasters in Coal-Mining History Brought Suit Against the Coal Company--And Won. (Random House 1977).

Civil Rights

Bass, Jack. Unlikely Heroes. (Alabama Press 1990). The story of courageous federal Judges enforcing civil rights in the '50's and '60's.

Kluger, Richard. Simple Justice : The History of Brown V. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality. (Random House 1977). Fascinating (though long) account, of the history of Brown v. Board of Education. Particularly noteworthy for its explanation of how strategy can be used to develop precedent over time.

Lewis, Anthony. Gideon's Trumpet. (Vintage 1989). The story of the landmark Supreme Court decision favoring a criminal defendant's right to appointed counsel.

Wills, Gary. Lincoln At Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America. (Simon & Schuster 1993).

Videos/Movies

The Verdict (1982)

A Civil Action (1998)

The Paper Chase (1973)

Twelve Angry Men (1957)

Inherit the Wind (1960)

Judgment at Nuremburg (1961)

To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)

Anatomy of a Murder (1959)

My Cousin Vinny (1992)

Websites

<http://www.ilrg.com/glasser.html>. One lawyer's advice to incoming first-year law students.

<http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/ftrials.htm>. Information about, and records from, some of the most famous trials in history

<http://stu.findlaw.com/prelaw/preparation.html>. Links to pre-law resources.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/>. From here, link to "Legislative Process: House" for information on how federal laws are made.

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/>. Link to "hypertexts" and at the search field, type "Cardozo." You will find a reproduction of important lectures delivered by Justice Benjamin Cardozo.

<http://www.johnmarshall.edu>. Link to "Campus Life," and then to "Selected Readings". There you will find "The Path of the Law," by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., an address delivered at Boston University School of Law in 1897.

Read a Supreme Court Case

The Amistad (1841). Go to <http://www.findlaw.com> and click on "US Sup Ct" (under Laws: Cases and Codes). Then click on Amistad. Amistad involved a revolt by enslaved Africans aboard the Cuban schooner and the subsequent property status of the abducted Africans.

PGA Tour, Inc. v. Martin (2001). Again, go to <http://www.findlaw.com> and click on "US Sup Ct" (under Laws: Cases and Codes). Go to "Opinion Summaries Archive" and search for "golf" at the bottom of the page. The first summary will link you to this opinion, which involves the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act to professional golf.

Looking for More...

When you have been accepted to law school you may begin to wonder what you can do to prepare yourself for your first year. The experience of many first year students at John Marshall Law School is that they were not ready for the amount of reading or the type of reading they were expected to do. If your previous life has not been marked by an interest in reading you will have some difficulties in law school.

But, what the heck, it's summer. Who wants to read law books? Or, you may think, who wants to read at all. That's not a thought that promises success in law school. Law is found in texts. Statutes, administrative regulations and appellate opinions are the main texts you will be concerned with. Of these, appellate opinions are the easiest reading, and the most interesting. But you won't find them easy reading. It requires more intense application than you are accustomed to since you must understand precisely what the writer intended to say, and some of the writers are only moderately clear.

So what about some preparation you can do in the summer that isn't terribly boring or painful. I recommend prose writing from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. These writers expected their readers to be attentive and not easily distracted. If you can read enough of this to meet its demands with some enjoyment, you will be better prepared for the reading requirements of your first year.

First of my suggestions, and most pleasant, is Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*, or *Emma*, or, if you must have a short one, *Persuasion*. But you must not just read for the story. In every sentence Ms. Austen is conveying her judgments on the characters and their actions. You need to understand the mind of the writer as well as what happens to Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam. All her writings can be accessed here: <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janewrit.html>

Second, try the beginning of Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. (<http://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/home.html>) Don't even think of reading the whole thing. The first volume should go from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine and that's the best part for the Romans as well as the reader.

Third, take up Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (<http://www.bartleby.com/24/3/>). Read as far as you can. Learn to remember the beginning of a long sentence all the way to its end when the meaning emerges.

When you need something short that you can read on line, try Samuel Johnson's essays originally published as *The Rambler*. You can find them here:

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Joh1Ram.html>

These long sentences will be more difficult than most judicial writing; however, if you attend carefully, they will also make sense more reliably.

Finally two works of the period intimately connected with understanding Americans and their government: Democracy in America by Alexis de Tocqueville

(http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html) and The Federalist

(<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>) by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay.

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