

# LEGAL COMPASS

Volume 4 • September 2020



## WORDS OF WISDOM

### TIME-TESTED ADVICE FOR EXCELLING IN LAW SCHOOL

*"Your law school probably has a mentorship program where you can connect with an upper-year student or even an alumnus. This is a great way to get relevant advice, tips, and resources that you may not have heard about from other sources."*

*"Don't neglect your mental and emotional well-being, no matter how hard you work."*

*"Use first year to figure out how you can excel at law school. Everyone will give you tips on the 'best' way to study for exams or complete assignments. But each student has different skills and strengths. It's important to find out what study skills work best for you."*



## NOTEWORTHY STUDY STRATEGIES

In preparing for your law school exams, organizing and testing your reference materials is of the utmost importance. What's worse than reading an exam question, having the right page open in your materials, but not being able to find the information on your page?

Highlighting is the simplest and most effective study strategy to help you quickly recognize important items or facts on a page. However, this powerful organization tool can easily become overused, leading to confusion and inefficiency while studying for or completing your exams. Adapted from Emond's [Comprehensive Guide to Law School in Canada](#) and [The Comprehensive Bar Exam Preparation Manual](#), these highlighting tips will help you pass your exams—so take note!

**Colour-Code of Conduct:** To help you avoid over-highlighting, develop a clear colour-coding strategy. For example, use green for formulas/calculations, blue for time

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**2** ONLINE RESOURCES FOR LAW STUDENTS



**3** FREE ONLINE LEGAL GLOSSARY



**4** INSPIRATION FOR LEGAL PRACTITIONERS



## NOTEWORTHY STUDY STRATEGIES

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periods/deadlines, pink for statute names, orange for exceptions, and purple for other important items. Rely on yellow to emphasize headings, allowing you to notice important sections when quickly scanning a page. Case names are unlikely to be tested on the exams, so do not worry about highlighting these.

**Test Yourself (and Your Notes):** There are typically few opportunities for assessment in law school, so your exam grades are critical to your success. Luckily, most of your exams will be conducted in an open-book format, meaning you'll have plenty of time to perfect the organization of your study notes. Make sure to test your highlighting structure and organization using mock exams to give yourself time to spot and correct inefficiencies prior to sitting down for the real exam. This will ensure that you become comfortable with your highlighting structure in a low-stress environment.

Use these study strategies to ensure success in law school and on your licensing exams. For additional study tips, visit [emondexamprep.ca](http://emondexamprep.ca) or explore [The Comprehensive Guide to Law School in Canada](#).

SOURCE: THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO LAW SCHOOL IN CANADA



## ONLINE RESOURCES FOR LAW STUDENTS

### EMOND RESOURCES

[emond.ca](http://emond.ca)

[emondexamprep.ca](http://emondexamprep.ca)

[emond.ca/digital-casebook-collection](http://emond.ca/digital-casebook-collection)

[emond.ca/lawstudentportal](http://emond.ca/lawstudentportal)

Law School Manual: [emond.ca/LSmanual](http://emond.ca/LSmanual)

Bar Exam Preparation Manual:  
[emond.ca/CBPmanual](http://emond.ca/CBPmanual)

### LEGAL NEWS AND GUIDANCE

[lawstudents.ca](http://lawstudents.ca)

Barrister/Solicitor Licensing Process:  
[bit.ly/2FzF01s](http://bit.ly/2FzF01s)

[canadianlawyeromag.com](http://canadianlawyeromag.com)

[precedentjd.com](http://precedentjd.com)

### GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

CanLII: [canlii.org/en](http://canlii.org/en)

e-Laws: [ontario.ca/laws](http://ontario.ca/laws)

Justice Department: [justice.gc.ca/eng](http://justice.gc.ca/eng)

## FREE LEGAL GLOSSARY

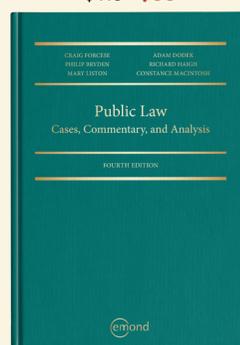
**Adversarial system:** A system of resolving disputes by holding a hearing in which the judge or adjudicator does not actively investigate but relies on opposing parties to present evidence and challenge each other's evidence; the adjudicator's decision is based on the evidence thus presented.

**Even-hand principle:** Principle according to which a trustee must not act in the best interests of one beneficiary to the prejudice of another beneficiary, even if that other beneficiary is unborn or unascertained.

**Garnishee:** Any person who owes money to the debtor; if the debtor is employed, then the employer is the garnishee, because the employer owes the debtor employment income; if the debtor has a bank account, then the bank is the garnishee, because the bank owes the debtor the money held in the bank account.

VISIT [EMOND.CA/RESOURCES/GLOSSARY-OF-LEGAL-TERMS](http://EMOND.CA/RESOURCES/GLOSSARY-OF-LEGAL-TERMS)

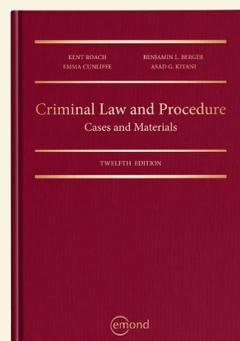
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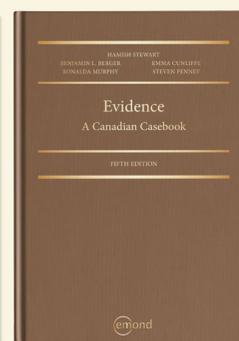
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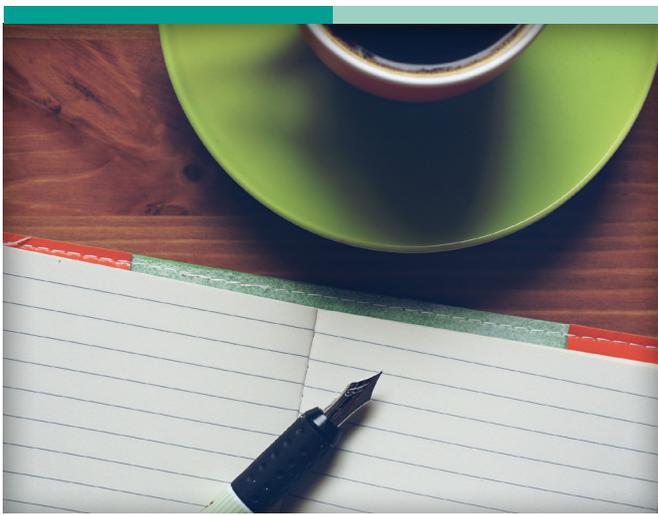
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## LEGAL WRITING SKILLS EVERY 1L STUDENT SHOULD KNOW

As a lawyer, communicating clearly is an essential tool and a professional obligation. Too often, law students get caught up in the language of law and feel the need to use legalese instead of communicating the legal concepts they learn in plain language. Here are three strategies to help you develop an accessible writing style.

**Incorporate Plain Language Principles:** The term “plain language” is often used interchangeably with “plain English,” meaning the writing is clear, accessible, and

focuses on increasing the audience’s understanding of complex information. “Not only does it focus on technical aspects of writing, such as sentence length, it also focuses on information organization, such as the use of headings, subheadings, and even the ratio of text to blank space on a page.” (McCarney, Kuras, Demers & Kierstead, 2019)

**Assess Your Strengths and Weaknesses:** Developing skill in plain language drafting requires an understanding of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence and paragraph organization. When entering law school, reflect upon your writing skills by reviewing and editing both your own work and the work of others, and seek out additional writing resources, such as Emond’s [The Comprehensive Guide to Legal Research, Writing & Analysis, 3rd Edition](#).

**Use an Active Voice:** In legal writing, professionals generally prefer an active voice. When a sentence is written in an active voice, the subject of the sentence is the person or object that performs the action. For example, “On Friday, Jones assaulted Smith.” uses an active voice. Alternatively, when a sentence uses a passive voice, the subject of the sentence is the person or object that is acted upon. For example, “On Friday, Smith was assaulted by Jones.” Reduce ambiguity and achieve more concise sentences by using an active voice.

Take advantage of these legal writing tips, and you’ll be writing legal documents that (minus all the legal jargon) anybody can understand!

SOURCE: THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO LEGAL RESEARCH, WRITING & ANALYSIS, 3RD EDITION

## TIPS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR POTENTIAL

- **Networking events, including virtual ones, are a great way to meet your peers.**
- **Get involved and join a club.**

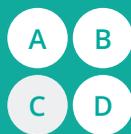
## BLOG SITES FOR YOUR PRACTICE

- **Under the Limit: Developments in Canadian Limitations Jurisprudence: [limitations.ca](http://limitations.ca)**
- **Employment & Human Rights Law in Canada: [bit.ly/2YEAIP1](http://bit.ly/2YEAIP1)**

## ONTARIO BAR EXAM PREPARATION

### REVIEW COURSES, PRACTICE EXAMS, AND ADVICE: [EMONDEXAMPREP.CA](http://EMONDEXAMPREP.CA)

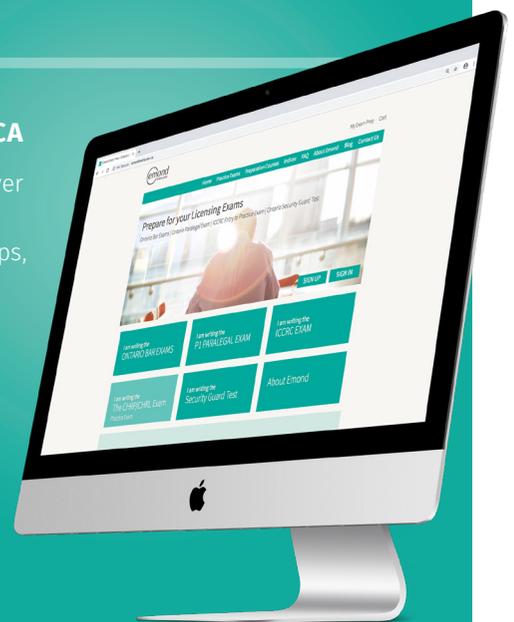
To prepare for the LSO barrister and solicitor licensing exams, you must study over 1,600 pages of material and answer substantive multiple-choice questions. With Emond Exam Prep and the [Exam Preparation Manual](#), you will learn strategies, tips, and exam requirements that will help you succeed.



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# READ, REVIEW, AND REPEAT: SUCCEED IN YOUR 1L LECTURES

When attending some of your first law school lectures, you might find yourself overwhelmed by the amount of preparation you'll have to do to keep afloat. Use these five tried-and-true success strategies to help guide you through any 1L lecture uncertainties.

## BEFORE YOUR LECTURE

### BUY THE BOOK (AND READ IT TOO)

Get started on a path to success by buying and reading your required texts and casebooks early. Completing your assigned readings prior to attending your lectures will provide you with the confidence it takes to answer questions and make your mark early in your law school career. It will also help you understand what the instructor is discussing so you get the benefit of the lecture. If you're looking to save on your textbooks, many publishers, including Emond Publishing, routinely offer online end-of-summer promotions on all required law school materials.

### MAKE SUMMARIES

While reading, take brief but relevant case-related notes. These will be critical in helping you follow along during the lecture. Don't forget, colour-code these notes so they're easy to reference later on.

## DURING YOUR LECTURE

### GO TO CLASS

While this one might seem obvious, you'd be surprised at how many undergraduate students have developed the habit of skipping their lectures. Go to class, take notes, and participate. Remember, you don't have to write down every word the professor says. Use your case summaries to help you determine which information is relevant and valuable.

## AFTER YOUR LECTURE

### FORM A STUDY GROUP

Discussing course materials and readings with your peers will help you strengthen your understanding of the content in addition to meeting and networking with other students. Just make sure that you choose peers that are as well-prepared, focused, and organized as you are! If you end up feeling your time might be better spent studying alone or with another group, don't feel ashamed in leaving.

### REVIEW (AND REPEAT)

At this point, you're very early on in your 1L career—take time to enjoy the view, but also work to develop positive study habits, such as consistently reviewing your previous notes and summaries throughout the year.

Still feeling a bit overwhelmed as you enter your first year of law school? Read through Emond's [Comprehensive Guide to Law School in Canada](#) for information including how to survive first year, tips for lectures and exams, and strategies for upper-year course selection.

### EMOND PUBLISHING

1 Eglinton Avenue East  
Suite 600  
Toronto, ON M4P 3A1

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## INSPIRATION

**"Success is only meaningful and enjoyable if it feels like your own."**

—Michelle Obama

**"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."**

—Oprah Winfrey

