

INTRODUCTION

Who is this book for?

English for Law. An Introduction to Legal English is a textbook intended for Spanish speaking students of Law, with at least an intermediate level of English, who are interested in a working knowledge of legal English and the mechanics of legal work.

The book provides a background to the study of basic linguistic elements and explores some of the leading features of the Anglo-American legal system (its institutions, the provision of legal services, the analysis of the main branches of substantive law: civil, criminal law, etc.)

The four main aims of the book are to help students:

- a. to obtain the necessary background in special legal English for their professional development,
- b. to increase their effectiveness in reading, writing and speaking in the subject area,
- c. to extend their active vocabulary in law, and
- d. to transfer this knowledge of the language to their own study or work situation.

The book is suitable for both classroom use and self-study.

How is the book organised?

The book consists of ten thematically organised units designed to be both relevant and motivating.

Each unit follows a clear progression from simple to complex topics. The opening unit provides general information on law. Unit 2 examines the origins and nature of the English legal system in contrast to the continental system. Unit 3 focuses attention on issues associated with the profession and practice of law and the provision of legal services. Unit 4 deals with courts and the judicial system in the United Kingdom and the United States. Unit 5 gives a general description of crime and punishment. Unit 6 is devoted to common crimes. Unit 7 surveys one of the main areas of substantive law: criminal law. Unit 8 examines civil law, civil procedure and the existence of special courts (tribunals and arbitration) outside the ordinary system. Unit 9 gives a broad overview of contract law. The concluding Unit 10 explores labour law.

Although each topic is dealt with under separate units, the natural overlap between topics promotes learning by recycling vocabulary, concepts and contexts, contributing to produce an overview of the English legal system.

Each of the units, designed to provide material for approximately 60 hours, contains the following sections:

- a. an integrated reading passage (*Text 1*), which gives an overview of a particular topic. This is followed by a variety of reading comprehension exercises (*Working with the Text*) which check the detailed understanding of the passage and encourage students to think more deeply about the subject matter;
- b. a grammar review section (*Language Reference*) which focuses on the development of the language and gives practice in different areas of grammar and usage;
- c. a section on vocabulary (*Enrich Your Vocabulary*) which concentrates on the development of the students' word power and helps to see how words are used in legal settings;
- d. a second text (*Text 2*) which completes and reinforces the information presented in *Text 1*;
- e. a section on lexis (*Focus on Lexis*) which highlights to the maximum that kind of vocabulary which students need for the understanding of legal texts and helps to increase the students' range of active and passive vocabulary;
- f. a section on pronunciation (*Pronunciation*) which consolidates and increases the students' knowledge of pronunciation; and
- g. a discussion and writing section (*Discussion*) where learners are given the opportunity to discuss ideas in the texts and defend their own point of view concerning different aspects of the topic, and are equally required to write discursively on given subjects related to what they have just read.

The wide variety of exercises and activities featured in the book (word-formation, filling blanks, true and false questions, matching, sentence completion, finding synonyms, etc.) have been designed to provide appropriate practice and revision so as to develop students' strategies and skills as well as their knowledge and awareness of the language.

The book contains 5 *Review Sections* which test the material taught after every two units. Each of these sections provides an opportunity to consolidate previous knowledge and skills before moving onto more advanced subjects and structures in following units.

At the back of the book there is an *Answer Key*, particularly valuable to students studying on their own, and a comprehensive *Glossary* which provides guidance and definition of some of the most common legal terms used widely in the subject area.