

## Essay: “Describe what you managed to learn in the first week of laws classes”

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### Introduction

Despite not actually learning any law as such, I have learnt a lot in my first week of laws classes. It has been informative, interesting and helpful. Much of what I’ve learnt has been taught in order to help improve my own skills and techniques, (the Buzan Method, for example) but I’ve also learnt the discipline procedures of the Laws Department and what is expected of students like myself. Here I aim to describe what I have managed to learn in my first week of laws classes.

### Read and Précis

It has been made clear to us that law is a wide and complex subject. The amount of information that students need to take on board is considerable. This is where the technique of Read and Précis is used. Should a student try to note down *all* the information, he or she would have an unnecessarily large amount of notes. A much more effective technique would be to write Précis notes. These are concentrated notes, which cut to the key points of what is being read. For example, a page of textbook can be shortened to a couple of paragraphs, yet still contain the relevant and important information. The idea is equally applicable to slideshow presentations, class discussions and lectures.

The theory of Read and Précis can also be used before a lesson, in order to help you understand the lesson better. Upon arrival in the lesson, your notes will keep you up to date with what is happening in class and will provide a base for you to elaborate on. Ideally, the Précis notes will have been taken from a combination of textbooks, the college intranet and possibly other sources.

Précis notes have more than one effect. Firstly, it saves time for the class. The teacher does not have to explain the nature of the idea and can immediately get on to the more important part of the lesson. Secondly, it makes class more enjoyable and more satisfying for the student. They can keep up with class discussion and gain more from the lesson, having already grasped the basics. Finally, they save time for the student. When it comes to revision, they will have (hopefully) a neat and tidy file full of Précis notes and handouts. As a result, they will not have to waste valuable revision time on deciphering endless reams of notes or - even worse – not having any notes at all. It is, after all, simple to read up on notes and text once they are there, which brings me neatly to my next subject.

### The Buzan Method

The Buzan method can be used for both writing and reading Précis notes. It helps most of all for those who find reading for long periods of time – and I would include myself in that bracket – absorb information. It may even help with revising from your notes, but hopefully Read and Précis notes from in and before class will already have helped you there. The idea is that you read in small bursts before summarising and making notes on what you have read. This links perfectly with the Précis idea and you can format your freshly made summary notes from your bursts of reading.

So how exactly does the Buzan method work? A student will read for 15-20 minutes before writing a brief summary on what they have read.