



Sharpen your skills for law school.®

FACULTY GUIDE





Welcome to **JDEdge by AccessLex®**! We are eager to help you equip your students with valuable academic skills and practical knowledge for a solid start to their law school journey.

This course covers everything from reading and briefing cases to effective memorization techniques, and so much more.

In addition, we'll help your students develop non-academic skills such as a growth mindset, critical reflection, and financial planning – all of which are essential to student success in law school, particularly in the first year.

The course is divided into five modules, each with its own set of topics and activities. This guide provides summaries of each module. Additionally, all the lessons are hyperlinked so you can review all of the related materials.

With a mix of pre-recorded videos, independent work, and live classes, students can schedule the JDEdge modules on their own time. We expect that the entire course should take 20-25 hours to complete. We invite you to adapt JDEdge to your purposes, incorporating it as part of your pre-orientation programming or 1L curriculum, and assigning a selection or all of the lessons as needed.

Please reach out to [**StudentSuccess@accesslex.org**](mailto:StudentSuccess@accesslex.org) for help setting up your account or with any questions. We look forward to working with you and your students!



Module One: Introduction to Law School and Law School Learning

This module provides students with an introduction to law school and the legal system and recommends best practices for student success during their first year. It is designed for all students, particularly those beginning law school with little or no experience with the legal system or legal vernacular. Additionally, the module introduces students to the core concept of journaling, which is a critical step towards developing self-regulated learning habits. It requires students to self-reflect and develop a deeper understanding of the material covered throughout the course. **The first module takes approximately three hours to complete.**

The first few lessons introduce students to the basics of being a law student and help set expectations for their first year. These lessons emphasize taking time to synthesize legal diction and look up terms the students do not know so that they “speak the language” and can keep up with daily assignments. Students are encouraged to lean into the professionalism of law school by actively participating in class and being proactive in their preparation. Most importantly, the module reminds students that succeeding in law school is a journey, and they should reach out early for help when necessary and be prepared to ask questions.

Welcome to JDEdge

- This short video introduces the goals of JDEdge and the individual modules.

Getting Help at Your Law School

- This video helps students understand the roles of various law school departments. It includes advice about where to go for help with common issues law students may face.

Welcome to Law School

- This lesson sets the stage for the law school journey, and how students can begin setting themselves up for success, including a review of common legal terms.



Learning the Language of the Law

Standards of Proof

Preponderance of the Evidence: The party with the burden of proof must be more convincing than the other party — conceptually, by at least 51%.

Clear and Convincing: A higher standard than preponderance of the evidence, but lower than beyond a reasonable doubt.

Beyond a Reasonable Doubt: The highest standard, applied in criminal cases.

Parts of a Case

Precedent and Inherited Authority: The principle that a case needs to be decided in line with the previous cases on a similar point with similar facts.

Procedural Facts: The logistical steps that happened within the lifespan of the case itself, from the point of filing to the point of the court's decision.

Legally Relevant Facts: Facts that are important to the judge in making his or her decision. Legally relevant (or legally significant) facts, if changed, would alter the court's reasoning or change the court's holding.

Reasoning of the Court: The thought process of the court; the “how” and “why” the court reached its decision is referred to as the court's reasoning.

Holding/Ruling/Outcome: These terms are often used interchangeably to refer generally to the answer to the central question of the case (the issue).

Disposition: The specific outcome of the case for the current litigants (e.g., reversed and remanded for new trial on the merits).

Dicta: Any part of a court opinion that is unnecessary to the resolution of the dispute before the court is called dicta and it is not binding on later courts.

Dissent: A separate opinion issued when a justice disagrees with the majority opinion and presents his or her opinion on the issue at dispute.

Parts of a Case (continued)

Concurrence: A separate opinion issued by a justice who ultimately voted with the majority but disagreed with some or all of the reasons supporting the majority's legal conclusion.

Parties to a Case

At trial

Plaintiff (or Petitioner): The party who brings a civil suit in a court of law is the plaintiff. In a criminal suit, the government prosecutes and there is no plaintiff.

Defendant: The person sued in a civil proceeding or prosecuted in a criminal proceeding.

On appeal:

Appellant (or Petitioner): The party who appeals the case (usually the party who lost in the lower court).

Appellee (or Respondent): The party who must respond to appellant/petitioner's appeal (usually the party who won in the lower court).

Civil Cases

Summons: A notice indicating that the plaintiff has filed a lawsuit and the defendant is required to answer the complaint.

Complaint/Petition: A document filed by the plaintiff that initiates a lawsuit and sets forth facts and legal claims.

Answer: A response from the defendant to claims made in the complaint.

Motion to Dismiss/Demurrer: A request to the judge from the defendant to end the case because the complaint does not state a legal claim.

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A Primer on the Law

- This lesson includes a short introduction to the U.S. legal system that is particularly helpful for students who come to law school with little to no legal experience.

Overview of the Judicial System

- This video is particularly helpful for first-generation students and those having little to no experience with the legal system.

First Year Classes Overview Video

- This video discusses the most common courses students take during their first year.

Professionalism Expectations: What Your Professors Expect You to Know

- This video discusses the professionalism norms in law school and in the legal profession. The emphasis is on communication, respect, and accountability.

What Are You Hoping to Get Out of This Course?

- Early goal setting can help students become better learners by guiding their choices regarding how to prioritize their time and energy on learning objectives. This journal exercise is an opportunity for students to reflect upon these goals as they move through the course.

Don't Lose the Forest for the Trees: Transferring Knowledge and Skills Across Classes

- This video explains how to make connections across law school doctrines and skills to enhance efficiency and understanding.

Reflection: The Key to Unlocking Better Learning

- This video helps students understand how to make efficient use of their study time by practicing critical self-reflection. This helps improve skills, identify patterns in doctrine, and enhance memory retention. The emphasis is on how to be a self-regulated learner.

For Loved Ones

- This video is for law students to show their friends and family so they have a window into what law school will be like, and have some ideas for how to best support students during this journey.

Ask Us Anything: Get Advice from Law School Experts

- This live webinar provides students an opportunity to ask questions related to anything covered in the JEdge program.

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Time Calculation

How Much Time Do You Really Have in a Week?

Want to take a night off? Play a weekly pick-up game? Read a book for pleasure? Use this worksheet to calculate how many free hours you have to spend on activities unrelated to law school each week. Then jump over to the **blank weekly schedule** to allocate your planned hours across the course of the week and bask in all the free time on your schedule! (Take a look at the **sample weekly schedule** if you'd like to see an example of a week in the life of an average law student.) Once you've completed your own weekly schedule, keep it handy and track how much time it actually takes you to complete each task. You can use this information to create a more accurate schedule next week!

168 Hours in a Week

- Hours spent sleeping
- Hours spent in class
- Hours spent studying outside of class (rule of thumb: 3 x # of credits)
- Hours spent preparing and eating food
- Hours spent on personal hygiene
- Hours spent commuting
- Hours spent on required obligations outside of law school (child care, work, chores, etc.)
- Hours spent on other weekly tasks

= **Total Remaining Free Time***

***If this doesn't seem like enough, answer the following questions:**

- Can I shave any time off a task?
- Can I combine tasks to use my time more efficiently?
- Does Hermione's Time-Turner really exist and, if so, where can I find one?

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Module Two: Preparing for Class – Before, During, and After

In this module, students will learn how to optimize their class experience — preparing before, actively engaging during, and reviewing after class. Lessons in Module Two include case reading and briefing, the Socratic method, notetaking, rule synthesis, and study material creation.

This module also includes an opportunity to attend a live mock law school class to practice using the practical skills JDEdge helps develop. For self-assessment, students can submit a draft case brief and class notes to unlock model briefs and notes. **The second module takes approximately eight hours to complete.**

Preparing for Class

- The first step in active learning is being able to effectively prepare for class. This lesson includes a case briefing template and helps students understand how to prepare for doctrinal lectures.

Case Method: Case Reading and Briefing

- Students find case reading to be very different than any other reading they have previously done. This video helps students understand how to effectively read cases and discusses best practices for notetaking.

Case Briefing Walk-Through

- This video provides an overview on how to brief a case (*Garratt v. Dailey*).

Practice Case Brief

- After students review the Case Briefing Walk-Through video, this lesson provides an opportunity for students to submit their own case brief for *Garratt v. Dailey*. Students who submit their brief receive access to a sample brief for comparison and self-reflection.



Socratic Method: Engaging In Class

- In this video, students are introduced to the Socratic method and how best to prepare for a class where student conversation drives class discussion.

Notetaking: What Am I Supposed to Write Down?

- This video helps students narrow their focus when notetaking during class to ensure they capture the most pertinent information.

Navigating Classroom Discussions

- This lesson includes more information on the Socratic method, including the types of questions students are typically asked, tips for how to respond when called on, when to volunteer, and additional notetaking strategies. It also includes a handout with tips for how to navigate virtual classrooms.

Prepping for Mock Law School Class

- This exercise is a primer for the live mock class. Students will read and brief *Leichtman v. WLW Jacor Communications* and compare/contrast it to *Garratt v. Dailey*. Students also review the rules for battery.

Mock Law School Class (With Debrief of Experience)

- This is an opportunity for students to participate in a simulated law school Torts class and learn about the tort of battery. Students should come prepared to ask and answer questions. These sessions are recorded and are available on demand.

Take Notes in Class and Unlock Sample Notes

- This exercise invites students to submit their notes from the mock class and compare them with the JDEdge sample class notes.

How Effective Was Your Class Prep?

- Students are invited to reflect on the experience of attending their first law school class and asked how they will adjust their class prep plan going forward.

Skim the Torts Mini-Outline

- Students review a mini-outline on Torts to better understand how the legal rules and concepts fit together.

Rule Synthesis and Creating Study Materials

- In this video, students are introduced to the concept of rule synthesis, a necessary step in the active learning process where students will synthesize the rules learned today with previously learned rules to help prepare for future classes.

Class is Adjourned, Now What?

- This lesson includes practical information for students on how to process reading and class notes, including tips on study aids and a fillable study group agenda.

Outlining and Other Forms of Graphic Organization

- This lesson includes an outlining FAQs worksheet and tips on other forms of organization to help students create effective study materials.

Module Three: Preparing for Exams

In Module Three, the focus shifts from preparing for the classroom to preparing for exams. Students begin with an introduction to legal analysis and learn some fundamentals of analogical reasoning. The module also introduces students to IRAC as a tool for analytical organization and structure. Additionally, students are exposed to learning and memorization strategies to help emphasize long-term retention of doctrinal material. **The third module takes approximately 5.5 hours to complete.**

From the Case Method to the Exam Method: Legal Analysis and Analogizing/Distinguishing

- This video helps students understand how legal analysis involves their application of rules to a new set of facts, including the skill of identifying and comparing legally relevant facts from prior cases to those in a new fact pattern.

IRAC: Writing for Law School Exams

- This video introduces students to the basic structure of organizing legal analysis.

Metacognition: Figuring Out How to Study

- In this video, students are introduced to the concept of metacognition and offered tools for effective self-evaluation.

Methods of Memorization

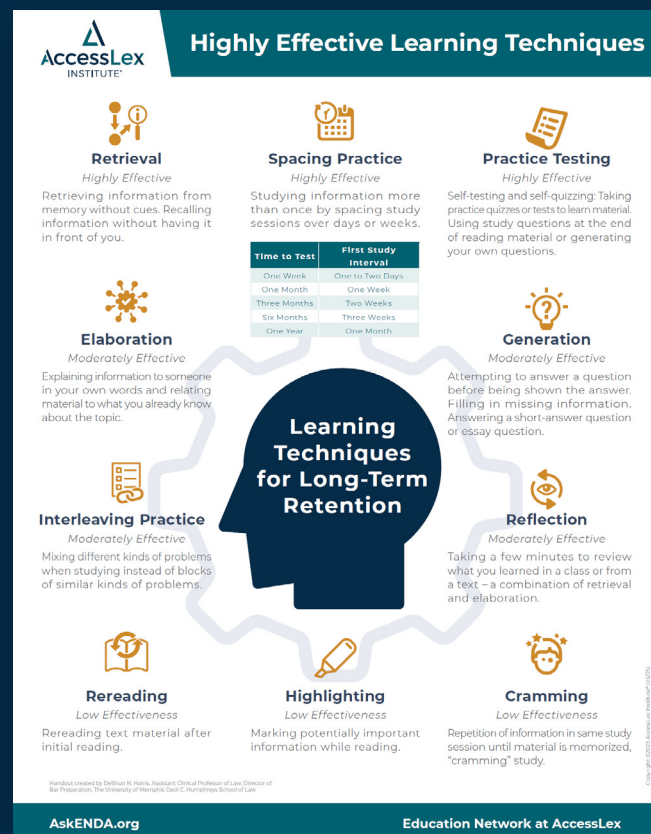
- This video discusses various methods, strategies, and tips to aid with memorization, retention, and recall.

Effective Study Techniques

- This lesson includes the Highly Effective Learning Techniques worksheet, which is a quick reference sheet to help brainstorm effective strategies for internalizing and memorizing doctrine.

What Memorization Techniques Have Worked Well in the Past?

- This journal entry invites students to reflect on memorization techniques they have used in the past and consider new techniques they may wish to incorporate during their law school experience.



Regardless of how students prefer to memorize and study, retrieval practice is the most effective method of retaining information. The second half of Module Three emphasizes the value of an effective outline, practice tests, and meaningful reflection. Finally, students are given an opportunity to test their skills through a practice test and guided review.

Practice, Practice, Practice

- This lesson provides guidance about how to get the most out of practice tests and effectively use self-assessment to improve performance.

Beyond the Essay: Other Types of Law School Exam Questions

- This lesson introduces students to law school multiple-choice questions and how best to approach them.

Prep for Practice Exam: Make Outline

- This lesson helps students prepare for their first practice exam.

Practice Exam

- This is an opportunity for students to challenge their skills and take a practice exam, which uses a hypothetical fact pattern to test the rule of battery.

Post-Exam Self-Assessment

- This video includes tips to help with self-assessment, including the value of retrieval practice and the importance of effective and accurate self-evaluation.

Self-Assessment of Practice Exam

- Students are provided with a self-assessment worksheet to review their practice exam alongside the model answer.

Review of Practice Exam

- This video reviews the practice exam, allowing students to better understand how a successful essay response might be structured.

How Well Did Your Materials and Prep Set You Up for the Exam?

- This journal entry reminds students that the goal of the practice exam was to test drive their study process and exam strategies. Students will consider their approach and potential adjustments based on their performance.



Module Four: Preparing for Law Practice

Taking a step back from the classroom and exam preparation, Module Four emphasizes the essential skills required for developing a professional identity as students enter law practice, including the role of lawyers, time management, stress management, professional expectations, and securing their first legal job. **The fourth module takes approximately four hours to complete.**

The Role of Lawyers

- This video introduces the role of lawyers and their impact on society. It emphasizes the different skillsets necessary to succeed as an attorney.

Managing the Stress of Law School

- This lesson provides students with tips to help manage their stress and get the most out of their law school experience.

Time Management

- This video discusses time management skills – one of the most essential skills necessary to succeed in law school.

Making the Most of Your Time

- This lesson provides students with an opportunity to complete a time calculation worksheet and sample schedule. It allows students to think practically about their time and helps manage the obligations of law school.

5 Tips for Landing Your First Law Job

- In this video students are given practical tips about how to prepare themselves for the legal job market and secure their first job after law school. The video discusses how to manage social media presence, and provides tools for networking and developing a reputation in the legal community starting at orientation.

Mindset Matters

- This video explains the importance of a growth mindset during law school and highlights that students who implement a growth mindset ultimately outperform their fixed-mindset peers.

What Stress-Reduction Techniques Have Worked Well in the Past?

- Developing a wellness plan is just as important as developing a study plan because studying is ineffective if the mind is not in a good place to process the information. This journal entry asks students to reflect on past techniques used to reduce stress and develop a plan for stress management during law school.

Write a Note to Yourself, Pretending That You are Writing to Your Best Friend, About How This Course Has Gone So Far

- This exercise asks students to reflect about what they have learned with JDEdge and how they will apply new skills to their first year of law school.

Remembering Your Why: Law School is Hard, Remember Why You're Here

- Law school can be difficult and demanding, which can lead students to question why they've embarked on this journey. This video offers practical tips to help students stay focused and remind them why they chose to pursue law school.

Remembering Your Why: Document It

- Building off the previous video, this exercise invites students to take some time to document why they decided to attend law school. This can be writing a letter, making a video, or creating a vision board. The goal is to create a resource that students can refer to during moments of doubt or when they feel overwhelmed.

Create a Professional Development Plan

- This lesson reminds students of the importance of professional development goals during law school. Students are asked to consider two to three professional development goals they want to accomplish and identify steps they can take during the first semester towards achieving those goals.



Module Five: Preparing for Licensure

In the final module, students will learn about what lies ahead after law school - the road to licensure, including the character and fitness process and the bar exam. **The fifth module takes approximately 2.5 hours to complete.**



Overview of the Road to Licensure

- This lesson gives students an overview of the requirements to become a licensed attorney, and will tell them where to get jurisdiction-specific information.

Character and Fitness Evaluation

- Learning about this licensure requirement now can save students a lot of time and headaches down the road. This lesson gets students thinking about what the character and fitness process will look like, and what they may need to disclose to the law school now so that their file matches what they will disclose to the bar.

Introduction to the NextGen Bar Exam

- Most jurisdictions in the United States utilize the NextGen Bar Exam. This lesson tells students what to expect with a brief introduction to the exam!

Funding Your Bar Exam Experience

- The bar exam is years away, but early planning for how to fund the costs of bar study will maximize success and reduce stress.

Welcome to MAX

- This lesson introduces students to MAX by AccessLex®, a personal finance program for law school students.

Financial Planning for Law Students

- This webinar shares practical information about financial planning during law school.

Top 3 JDEdge Takeaways

- In the final journal entry, students are asked to reflect on what they have learned throughout the JDEdge program.

Additional Resources

The Additional Resources section of the JEdge program includes **optional** lessons and information for students looking to learn more about the legal system and processes. They include a mix of topics related to the five core modules and go into more detail on some key concepts. **This takes approximately two hours to complete.**

Sources of Authority

- This video explains the various sources of legal authority.

Stages of Civil Litigation

- This video discusses the steps of a civil lawsuit.

Introduction to the Criminal Legal System

- This video offers an overview of criminal cases, including the basic steps of criminal prosecution.

Separation of Powers

- What does the phrase separation of powers mean? This video will tell you and will provide you with some basic information on the powers of the branches of government.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

- We'll take you step-by-step through how a bill becomes a law.

How to Read a Statute

- You will read a lot of statutes in law school. Here are some practical tips that are particularly helpful as you take courses such as Civil Procedure and Criminal.

Top 5 Legal Writing Pitfalls

- Legal writing is different from writing in other contexts, and students often struggle to adjust to it. This lesson discusses the importance of considering their audience, avoiding wordiness, utilizing proper sentence structure, including thesis statements and topic sentences, and avoiding overuse of the passive voice.

Legal Writing Tips: Word Choice and Sentence Structure

- This video dives more deeply into sentences structure, discussing run-on sentences, how to use pronouns, the proper use of articles, ensuring tense consistency, and using transition words.

Punctuation

- There are many punctuation marks to choose from in the English language, and using the wrong one can make a document look sloppy and unprofessional. This lesson talks students through the appropriate use of periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, semicolons, colons, hyphens, dashes (both Em and En!), parenthesis, apostrophes, and quotation marks.

After JEdge, students can keep the learning going with MAX and earn scholarship drawing entries for learning about how to manage their own finances!





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