

Preface

The sixth edition of *Introduction to Law for Paralegals* represents a careful and comprehensive revision of the text. While the purpose of this book remains the same, to provide the beginning paralegal student with a clear and practical foundation in United States law, the scope of this edition has been significantly expanded and updated. The law evolves. Legal practice evolves. The education of paralegals must evolve as well. This edition reflects that reality.

From the earliest chapters, students are introduced not only to the structure of the legal system and the sources of law, but also to the modern environment in which law is practiced. Artificial intelligence (AI) now plays a meaningful role in nearly every area of legal work. Research platforms rely on predictive tools. Document review increasingly incorporates automated analysis. Litigation support systems use data-driven processes. Even routine drafting may involve AI-assisted software. For that reason, this edition does not treat artificial intelligence as a passing topic or a brief sidebar discussion. Its role, proper use, ethical implications, and limitations are addressed throughout the text.

In the early chapters, discussion focuses on the professional responsibilities that accompany technological competence. Students are encouraged to think critically about confidentiality, supervision, accuracy, and ethical boundaries when using AI tools. As the book progresses, these conversations continue in more practical contexts, including legal research, writing, electronic discovery, and case management. By the concluding chapters, students will be able to see how artificial intelligence is integrated into daily practice while still requiring sound legal judgment and professional oversight. The message of this book is consistent: Technology is a tool. It does not replace the expertise of the trained paralegal. A well-trained paralegal understands both its capabilities and its limits.

In addition to an expanded emphasis on modern practice, each chapter now contains multiple realistic scenarios. In earlier editions, scenarios served as helpful illustrations. In this edition, they are central teaching tools. Existing scenarios have been expanded and refined. New scenarios have been created where none existed before. Each chapter now contains at least three practical situations designed to place legal principles into context. Law is not learned in isolation. It is learned through application.

The case excerpts have been thoroughly updated. With only a couple of exceptions, prior cases have been replaced with more recent judicial decisions, most from the 2020s. The law that students study should reflect the law they will encounter in practice. In two chapters, a prior case was retained because of its continuing

instructional value, but it has been shortened and clarified through summary paragraphs to improve readability and focus. In every chapter, the case excerpt is followed by Questions About the Case that direct attention to the legal issues discussed in the text. Students are not merely asked to read cases. They are asked to analyze them.

Key terms and concepts have been expanded throughout the book. Definitions have been refined for clarity. The Glossary has been updated to reflect these additions. A paralegal's effectiveness depends in large part on their mastery of legal language. This edition provides that foundation.

In the Sixth Edition, the Chapter Summary appears immediately after the case excerpt and related questions. This new placement reinforces the connection between doctrine, analysis, and review.

Review Question sections have been expanded so each chapter concludes with 20 updated questions that reflect expanded content and current developments in the law and promote thoughtful comprehension.

The Skills You Need in the Real World feature has been thoroughly updated to reflect contemporary practice. In addition to traditional competencies such as drafting, organization, and research, students are introduced to digital workflows, electronic discovery, data management, and the responsible use of AI-assisted tools. These discussions emphasize that technology must always operate within the boundaries of ethical responsibility and professional supervision.

As in prior editions, the opening chapters introduce students to the sources of law, the court system, law office structure, and the initial steps involved in civil and criminal actions. Later chapters explore substantive areas of law while continuing to emphasize practical skill development. The concluding chapters guide students through legal research and writing, integrating foundational methodology with modern technological tools.

The central purpose of this book has not changed. It is designed to introduce students to the demanding and rewarding world of legal practice and to highlight the essential role played by the paralegal throughout the legal system. What distinguishes this sixth edition is its currency, its expanded instructional support, and its recognition that today's legal profession requires both analytical skill and technological competence. The law remains rooted in principles. Its practice, however, continues to evolve. This edition prepares students for both.

FEATURES

This book was designed with the reader in mind. The text presents the material through a variety of methods to take advantage of different student learning styles. There is a strong visual element to the text with features such as Issue at a Glance, which provides a brief summary of an important issue raised in the chapter. Each chapter also contains a section focused on skills paralegals can use in their day-to-day practice.

Features found in the text include:

■ Chapter Objectives

Each chapter begins with clearly stated learning objectives to guide readers in their studies.

■ Issue at a Glance

Each chapter includes small synopses of issues discussed in the chapter, positioned adjacent to the material under discussion, not only as a way of helping the reader synthesize important issues, but also as a visual marker for later study.

■ Definitions and Expanded Key Terms and Concepts

Legal terms are defined at the point of introduction. The list of key terms has been expanded to reflect both foundational principles and newly incorporated material, including terminology associated with emerging technology. The Glossary has been updated accordingly.

■ Expanded Scenarios

Each chapter includes multiple practical scenarios designed to illustrate how legal principles operate in real-world contexts and to encourage analytical thinking.

■ Updated Case Excerpts

Recent judicial decisions — primarily from the 2020s — have been summarized and integrated into each chapter. Each case is followed by targeted questions that connect the opinion to the chapter's central themes.

■ Skills You Need in the Real World

This feature emphasizes the competencies required of today's paralegal, including proficiency with digital tools, electronic research platforms, data management systems, and the responsible use of AI in legal practice.

■ Chapter Summary

Each chapter contains a concise summary of the major issues discussed. This feature helps readers focus on the important points raised in the chapter.

■ Discussion of Ethics

Ethics is a vital component of any legal text, but never more so than in an introductory text that will help lay the foundation for the reader's entire paralegal education and professional life. To emphasize the important role that ethics plays in law, each chapter contains a separate discussion of ethics in addition to the entire chapter devoted to this critical issue.

■ Review Questions

These review questions test the student's comprehension of the issues and provide rich material for classroom discussions.

■ Practice Questions for Test Review

The end-of-chapter exercises include sample essay, true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple-choice questions to challenge the reader and help cement the issues discussed.

Answers to all the end-of-chapter questions are provided in Appendix A.

■ Web Surfing

Each chapter concludes with relevant websites that help the reader to follow up with specific points raised in the chapter.

NON-GENDER-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

In recognition of the impact of gender-specific language, the author has adopted the following convention in the text: Each chapter uses “they” instead of “he,” “she,” or other pronouns.

PEDAGOGY

The following features are included in the text to take advantage of different student learning styles:

- Learning objectives stated at the beginning of each chapter
- Terms and legal vocabulary in bold are defined immediately for the student and listed in the Glossary for later reference
- Many different visual aids illustrate crucial points
- Scenarios that help the student make a personal connection with the material
- Lesson plans in the instructor’s manual that provide alternative presentations: For example, Lesson Plan A emphasizes practical applications, whereas Lesson Plan B emphasizes substantive law
- End-of-chapter questions, activities, and assignments that hone students’ understanding of topics covered
- End-of-chapter discussion of ethics topics

INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL

The author has developed an extensive instructor’s manual to accompany the text that provides a wealth of resources for the instructor. Among the features in the instructor’s manual are:

- **Suggested Syllabi** Several are provided for various versions of an Introduction to Law course, including alternate syllabi for instructors who emphasize theoretical over practical, or practical over theoretical.
- **Chapter Lecture Outline and Discussion** An annotated outline is provided for each chapter to provide additional discussion and classroom material for the instructor.
- **Additional Web Resources** The instructor’s manual contains more websites to provide other resources for classroom discussion and assignments.
- **Additional Assignments** Assignments are provided in the instructor’s manual along with chapter review questions and hypotheticals.

- **Test Bank** The test bank includes a variety of test questions, including essay (5 per chapter), short answer (10 per chapter), multiple-choice (25 per chapter), and true-false (10 per chapter).
- **PowerPoint Slides** The author has prepared a PowerPoint presentation for each chapter of the text.