

International Legal English

A course for classroom or self-study use

Amy Krois-Lindner
and
TransLegal[®]



Introduction

Who is *ILE* for?

International Legal English (ILE) is an upper-intermediate to advanced level course for learners who need to be able to use English in the legal profession. The course is intended for law students and practising lawyers alike. The book has been written to prepare candidates for the new International Legal English Certificate (ILEC) examination developed by Cambridge ESOL and TransLegal, but it can also be used effectively in legal English courses of all kinds. *ILE* is suitable for both self-study and classroom use.

What kind of legal English does it deal with?

Since the vast majority of practising lawyers in the world deal with commercial law, *ILE* focuses on the use of English for this purpose. Within the field of commercial law, a number of important topics (such as company law, contract law, intellectual property, real property law, employment law and sale of goods, to name a few) have been selected as the legal subject matter of the units. Particular emphasis is placed on the areas of company law and contracts – with three units dedicated to each – as the majority of commercial lawyers practise in these areas.

The authors of *ILE* are well aware that most students using the book need to be able to provide advice regarding their own legal system in English as opposed to mastering US or UK legal concepts. Thus, while the legal concepts introduced in this book are those found in the legal systems of the UK and the USA, it also includes texts about legal matters in other countries and legal systems. It is important to emphasise that nearly all of the legal concepts covered are found in legal systems and jurisdictions the world over. Since many of the tasks encourage you to compare aspects of the law in your own jurisdiction with those presented in the book, an international perspective is fostered.

Law vs. language

It is important to bear in mind that, since *ILE* is intended to help law students and lawyers learn English in a legal context and to prepare for the ILEC exam, the authors were required at times to take certain liberties in editing the legal texts used in the book. The authentic texts used in the book were written for legal purposes, not language instruction and, as such, sometimes required editing to make them appropriate for teaching the necessary language skills. Therefore, *ILE* should only be used for the purpose of learning legal English and should not be relied upon for legal advice or assistance in the practice of law.

How is *ILE* organised?

ILE consists of 15 units.

Unit 1 gives you an introduction to basic legal concepts in English, with a focus on general aspects of the legal system as well as specific matters connected with a career in the law.

Units 2–15 deal with a different area of commercial law.

Each unit begins with a reading text which provides you with an overview of the topic area in question. These overview texts

introduce crucial legal concepts while presenting a variety of relevant vocabulary in the topic area. The main concepts covered in this text appear in bold, meaning that they appear in the glossary at the back of the book. In the main body of each unit, there are various types of authentic text material of the kind commonly encountered by practising lawyers in their work. These texts, both written and spoken, are accompanied by a wide range of tasks, all designed to build the core skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

At the end of each unit, there is a link to an online task which is intended to improve your online legal English research skills. Each of the 15 tasks presents an authentic language problem that a commercial lawyer may encounter while at work. You are then shown a research strategy, using the Internet, that leads you to a solution to the problem.

The final part of each unit is the Language Focus section, which contains exercises on the vocabulary and language topics covered in the unit. This section offers an opportunity to consolidate the language work done in the unit.

Interspersed at intervals through the book, there are three legal case studies based on actual cases, featuring text material of the kind lawyers need to consult when preparing a case. The purpose of these case studies is to provide an opportunity to apply the language skills developed in the main units to authentic communicative tasks.

Following the main units, there is an Exam Focus section which explains what kind of tasks appear in the ILEC exam. (See **How does the course help you to prepare for ILEC?**, below.)

At the back of the book, you will find the Audio transcripts of all the listening exercises, as well as the Answer key to the exercises. There is also an extensive glossary of all the legal terms which appear in bold in the units and an index to help you find your way around the book.

What are the aims of the course?

- To improve your ability to write common legal text types in English, such as letters or memoranda.
- To improve your ability to read and understand legal texts, such as legal periodicals, commercial legislation, legal correspondence and other commercial law documents.
- To increase your comprehension of spoken English when it is used to speak about legal topics in meetings, presentations, interviews, discussions, etc.
- To strengthen your speaking skills and to enable you to engage more effectively in a range of speaking situations typical of legal practice, such as client interviews, discussions with colleagues and contract negotiations.
- To familiarise you with the kinds of tasks you will encounter on the ILEC examination and improve your performance on these tasks.
- To introduce you to some of the language-related aspects of the work of a commercial lawyer.

How does the course achieve these aims?

To achieve these aims, the course focuses on several aspects of legal English at the same time. These aspects include 1) the analysis and production of authentic legal texts, 2) language functions common to legal texts, and 3) vocabulary learning that goes beyond mere terminology acquisition, and which takes larger chunks of language into account.

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The written and spoken texts in each unit have been chosen to represent a wide range of text types in use in legal contexts. These include texts which lawyers have to produce, read or listen to, such as letters of advice, proposals, client interviews or presentations. In each unit, the typical structure of a text type is analysed and the text type broken down into its constituent parts. You are encouraged to identify these parts, and to recognise the language functions typically used in each of these parts of a text. (The term 'language function' refers to phrases which express a specific meaning in a text, for example, the language function of 'suggesting' can be expressed with phrases like *I'd recommend ...* or *Why don't you ... ?*) The result is a kind of template of a common legal text type. Equipped with this template and with useful language functions, you are then given the opportunity to produce such a text, either by writing a letter or email, by taking part in a role-play interview, or by discussing a legal issue, for example.

While a selection of legal terminology in each legal topic area is presented in every unit, mastering legal English requires more than simply improving your knowledge of specialised vocabulary. For this reason, every unit includes exercises that focus on larger chunks of language, common phrases and word combinations that are not specialised legal terms, but which are necessary for successful communication.

What is the ILEC exam?

The International Legal English Certificate Examination (ILEC) is the world's first and only internationally recognised test of legal English. ILEC has been developed to test the ability of lawyers to use English for professional purposes. It is a test of language, and not a test of legal knowledge. The examination is a product of the collaboration of TransLegal, Europe's leading firm of lawyer-linguists, and Cambridge ESOL, producer of the world's leading certificates in English.

The ILEC examination is primarily intended for law students and young lawyers at the beginning of their legal careers. It provides legal employers with an accurate means of assessing the legal English skills of job applicants, while offering law students and young lawyers a means of proving their legal English skills to prospective employers. The ILEC certificate is recognised by leading law firms, university law faculties, language centres, lawyer associations and government employers.

For more information about the ILEC exam, visit www.legalenglishtest.org

For more information about TransLegal, visit www.translegal.com

How does the course help you to prepare for ILEC?

ILE offers thorough and systematic preparation for the ILEC exam. The topic areas in commercial law featured in the units are all topic areas to be found on the ILEC exam. Thus you are given the opportunity to become familiar with important subject-specific vocabulary. As the texts in the book represent the kinds of texts that are found in the exam, you will be well prepared to deal with the texts in the actual exam.

Furthermore, since some of the exercises in the book are modelled on the tasks found on the ILEC exam, you can become familiar with these tasks. Beyond this, all of the exercises in the book are intended to strengthen the fundamental language skills you need to succeed in the exam.

The Exam Focus section of the book is specifically intended to prepare you for the exam. This section covers each of the four main parts of the ILEC examination – Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking – and introduces the individual exam tasks in detail. An example of each task is provided, along with

a complete explanation of what the candidate is expected to do, what skills the task in question is designed to test, as well as what the candidate should bear in mind while working on each task. These tips are intended to help you avoid common pitfalls and improve your performance in the exam.

Finally, the book includes an ILEC practice test. This sample paper offers you the opportunity to test your Legal English skills and to prepare for the exam by simulating the test experience.

How can *ILE* be used for self-study?

If you are using the book for self-study, how you proceed through the book will depend on your goals and the amount of time and effort you wish to devote to the study of legal English.

If you wish to improve your command of legal English for general work or study-related purposes and are willing to devote several weeks of concentrated study to the task, it is recommended that you proceed through the book from beginning to end.

However, if you are planning to take the ILEC examination and would like to improve your legal English more quickly, you should work through the Exam Focus section first in order to get an idea of the requirements of the exam. You can then consult the contents pages at the beginning of the book to locate the topics, tasks and skills you need to work on.

Whatever your goals might be, bear in mind that the glossary and the answer key are provided to help make your self-study easier. In particular, note that sample answers for all of the writing tasks are provided.

Naturally, the speaking tasks will be more difficult to carry out when you are working through the course on your own. However, when given the task of preparing a presentation, it is a good idea to prepare and to hold the presentation. You may be able to find an audience to listen to you and offer constructive criticism. If possible, record yourself giving the presentation and listen back to it, noting areas for improvement. Discussion activities and role-plays pose an even greater challenge when you are working on the course on your own. However, you should not miss them out altogether. Look at the discussion activity and decide what you would say in this discussion. Say your ideas aloud. Then try to think what an opposing view might be and say this aloud as well. Pay close attention when listening to the discussions on the CD to how people offer opinions, agree and disagree. Practise these phrases aloud. Of course, the ideal solution is to ask a friend or colleague to discuss these questions with you.

Above all, enjoy using *ILE*!

About the authors

TransLegal®

www.translegal.com

TransLegal is Europe's leading firm of lawyer-linguists, providing the legal community with:

- online legal English courses;
- online legal language resources;
- live legal English courses and seminars;
- translations of legal and commercial documents;
- legal language consultancy services.

TransLegal has collaborated with Cambridge ESOL, a division of the University of Cambridge, in the development of the Cambridge ILEC examination, the world's only internationally recognised test of legal English.

For more information about TransLegal and for online legal language resources, visit www.translegal.com

Amy Krois-Lindner

Amy Krois-Lindner has taught language competence at the University of Vienna for over ten years. She teaches Business English and academic writing and is also a teacher-trainer. In addition, she has played a role in the development of a departmental ESP module with certification and has been involved in the curriculum development of several ESP courses at the Vienna University of Applied Technology.

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This book is dedicated to our parents, June and George Lindner, who inspired us with their love of the English language.



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