

Introduction to International Legal English

A course for classroom or self-study use

Student's Book

Amy Krois-Lindner,
Matt Firth
and
TransLegal



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Introduction

Who is *IILE* for?

Introduction to International Legal English (IILE) is an intermediate-level course for learners who need to be able to use English for the study of the law and in the legal profession. The book has been written with the specific needs of pre-International Legal English Certificate-level students in mind, and is suitable for students who intend to progress to an ILEC preparation course. It can also be used effectively in legal English courses of all kinds. *IILE* is suitable for both self-study and classroom use.

Which kind of legal English does it deal with?

Since the vast majority of practising lawyers in the world deal with commercial law, *IILE* focuses on the use of English for this purpose. Within the field of commercial law, a number of important topics (such as real property law, contract law, company law, to name a few), as well as subjects commonly taught at law faculties (such as comparative law), have been selected as the legal subject matter of the units.

The legal concepts introduced in this book are those found in the legal systems of the UK and the USA, but 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 common to 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.

How is *IILE* organised?

Introduction to International Legal English consists of ten units, each of which deals with a different area of the law.

Each of Units 1–10 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. Each unit is divided into two parts: *The study of law* and *Law in practice*, which include various types of authentic text material of the kind commonly encountered by law students and 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.

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.

At the end of 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.

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.

What are the aims of the course?

- To improve your ability to write common legal text types in English, such as letters or memorandums.
- To improve your ability to read and understand legal texts, such as law journal articles, commercial legislation and legal correspondence.
- To increase your comprehension of spoken English when it is used to speak about legal topics in lectures, 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 the study of law and the practice of law, such as client interviews or discussions with colleagues and fellow students.
- 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.

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 law students and lawyers have to produce or engage in, read or listen to, such as legal articles, letters, 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.

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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.

Using IILE 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.

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 most 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. 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 discussions 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 IILE!

Extra resources

The following books and websites can help you improve your legal English even more:

- *International Legal English*, Amy Krois-Lindner and TransLegal (Cambridge University Press). A legal English course for upper-intermediate/advanced learners
- *Professional English in Use: Law*, Gillian D. Brown and Sally Rice (Cambridge University Press). A legal English vocabulary reference and practice
- *PLEAD (Program for Legal English Academic Development)*. An academic programme developed to help law faculties and language schools provide legal English training to university law students and legal professionals throughout the world. Developed by TransLegal in cooperation with the Boston University School of Law, the Boston University Center for English Language and Orientation Programs, and Cambridge University Press (www.translegal.com/plead.php)
- www.translegal.com. Language-learning resources for legal English
- Cambridge International Legal English Certificate (ILEC). A Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) examination produced and assessed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations in collaboration with TransLegal. ILEC is the world's first internationally recognised test of legal English (www.legalenglishtest.org).
- LexMail™ (<http://www.translegal.com/samplelexmail.php>). A website that helps you build your legal English vocabulary through a new word every week with:
 - a definition
 - a sound file for pronunciation help
 - examples of use in context
 - related terms
 - common mistakes.

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