

Tips for Students from Students

PREPPING FOR CLASS

with Case Summaries on Lexis Advance Quicklaw

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One of my favourite features in Lexis Advance Quicklaw are case summaries. In addition to reading the headnotes, I read case summaries to stay up to date on all the cases assigned in my law courses.

Although case summaries do not replace reading a case, they are a helpful study aid. In general, a case summary gives me an idea of what the case is all about. I scan the keywords to determine whether a particular case summary matches the intention behind the readings in the syllabus. In the end, you should try your best to read the leading cases and abstracts of cases that your professor points to during the lecture.

I read with purpose. In other words, I try to identify the questions I need to answer after reading the case. When I know that the facts of the case are essential to meeting a particular legal test, I zoom in on the facts section of the summary and then go into the case itself to see if I need to extract specific dicta in support. On the flip side, when the value of the matter is in the formulation of the law (ratio), I will go to the law and analysis parts of the case after reading a case summary to extract the exact wording of the legal test, including the numbered paragraph in the decision.

A life hack: It is essential to check which reporter your textbook uses because paragraph numbers sometimes do not match if you use a different reporter.

Finally, I use case summaries to prepare for the exams. I usually create a tip sheet or a quick reference with the names of the cases, associated keywords, names of the legal tests and their wording and one or two lines from the case summaries on the facts on each particular case. Quickly reading through the case summaries helps me determine the thesis of the case and distill it into one or two sentences.

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