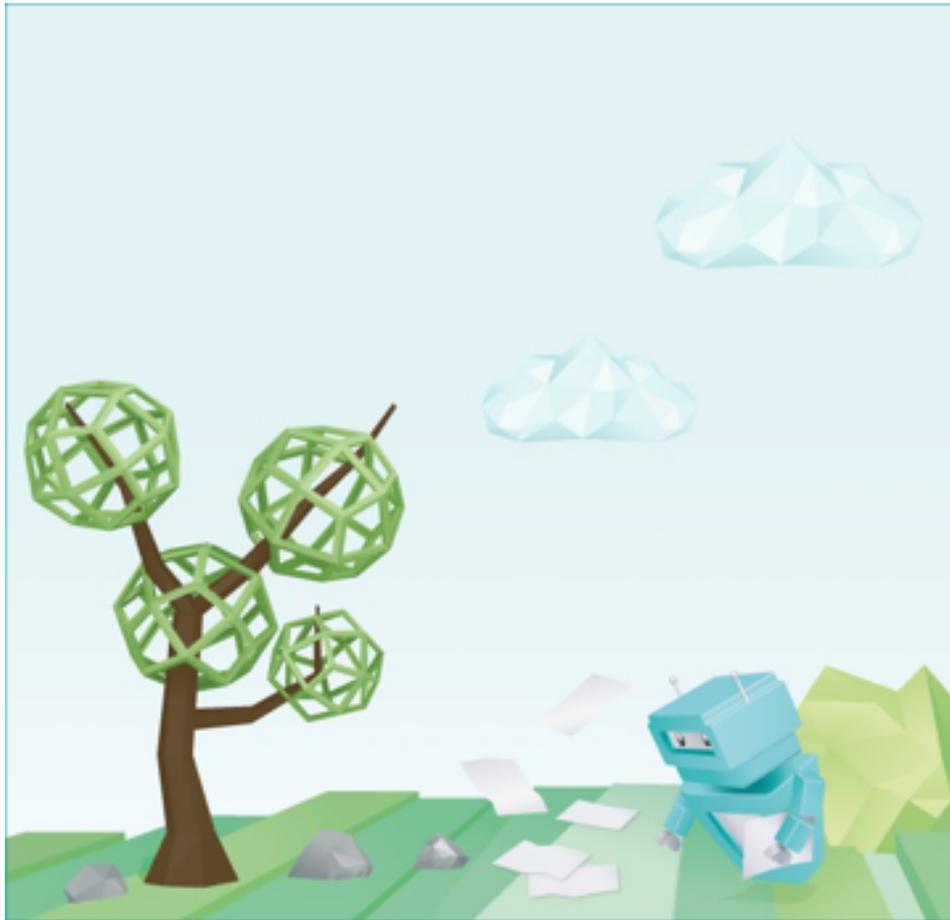




presents

Legal Studies

How to get a 45+ (without a tutor)



by **Jade L.**

Jade is a recent graduate who achieved one raw 50 study score, whilst receiving a 40+ in other subjects and an ATAR in the high 90s. She is now studying the Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) at Monash University.

Renowned for a crazy amount of writing, Legal Studies is without doubt a full-on subject. The length of 4-mark questions are insane compared to many other subjects. Having said this, Legal Studies is one of the most rewarding subjects! It is so interesting to learn about how the Victorian Justice System works and you will definitely come out of Legal feeling like you have gained real-world knowledge. In my opinion it's one of the most practical VCE subjects because no matter what workforce you go into after school, it is always important to know about the legal system and Parliament. Nonetheless, reiterating what I said above, it is a subject which bears a heavy workload which may seem very overwhelming. However, don't stress, I'm here to give you all my tips to help you ace your SACs and end-of-year exam!

Contents

How do I study for SACs?	3
How do I study for the Exam?	7
Layout of the Exam	9
How do I handle the exam?	12
Some Final Tips	14



How do I study for SACs?

Your SAC marks will make up 50% of your study score, which is undoubtedly a large portion. Your SACs are weighted equally to how you perform in your exam so make sure your working diligently throughout the year. Remember that the harder you study throughout the year, the less work you have to do at the end of the year!

► Class Time

I know during class time it is very easy to get distracted by the person sitting next to you or by noises outside the classroom, but it is very important to pay attention in class. If you listen carefully in class and take good notes from your teacher during class time, then you will be in fact saving time later on when you're at home studying. You may as well use your class time wisely, as opposed to spending hours trying to teach yourself the content at home.

-Ask Questions

No matter how stupid a question may be, ask it! The absolute worst is to walk into a SAC having unanswered questions and feeling unprepared. You may as well stay 5 minutes later after the lesson to ask your teacher your burning question, rather than leave it unanswered. It's such a simple, yet critical part of doing well in your SACs! Also, if you have questions that relate to the area of study but are a bit far-fetched still ask - it can only strengthen your understanding of the topic. Remember your teacher wants you to do



well so it is in their best interest to answer your questions.

► Note-taking

Personally, my teacher gave us a set of notes for each dot point and area of study. However, after I received these set of notes, I would summarise them to make my own set of a more-condensed version of my teacher's notes. I am not very good at memorising and unfortunately in Legal Studies there is a lot of content to remember. That's why for me, the less wordy my notes are, the better.

- Highlighting

After condensing my notes, I would also highlight the key terms and phrases in each section of my notes. Highlighting is often a very overlooked step but for me very crucial. I love colour-coding my notes to make sure certain words and phrases popped out at me. This helped me when I needed to go back to my notes and reference something (especially at the end of the year when I forgot certain terms or phrases). But always remember when highlighting to ONLY highlight the main terms and try not to go overboard.

- Mind Maps

After I'd condense my notes and highlight the key terms, I would create digital mind maps for each area of study. The thing I really like about mind maps is that you are really limited in space so you have to make sure everything you're writing is crucial and relevant. In my mind maps I would write in dot-point form (not full sentences) to ensure all the information was



easy to find. I then printed out my mind maps on A3 pieces of paper and stuck them on the walls of my room. Throughout the year I'd have more and more mind maps to constantly remind me of all the content. One piece of advice is to **have some fun with your notes**. Make them look aesthetic and have pride in your notes. When you make your notes look pretty, you will be more motivated to use them and make more!

► Quizzes

I am an avid user of Quizlet. After every area of study, I would create a set of flashcards. I have tried making hard copy flashcards in the past but I've always found myself cheating and looking at the back of the card for the answer. The reason why I like Quizlet is because it's made for you to do it by yourself so you are not reliant on someone testing you. For the 2 weeks leading up to a SAC, I would go over my flash cards every night before bed. A great alternative to Quizlet if you don't want to make your own flashcards is to do use the **Quizzes** tool or take a look at one of the websites/videos on StudyClix everyday 2 weeks leading up to your SAC. This will also help you retain content!

► Keeping up to date with the news

The news is practically a real-world set of notes! A lot of stories you hear on the news will directly relate to what you're learning in Legal. In Legal, knowledge is power. Most



questions are marked holistically and globally so the more knowledgeable you sound, the better! My teacher was a big advocate of this and often gave us handouts from newspapers or spoke to us about civil or criminal cases going on in Australia. However regardless if your teacher gives you real-world examples or not, I'd definitely follow a reputable news source on social media to keep yourself informed with what is going on in Victoria. When you're reading stories on the news, subconsciously you will start linking it to what you have learned in Legal and it will reinforce your knowledge on the area of study.

To make this less tedious... try and find cases in the news that either interest you or ones that are comical. I still remember stumbling across a case in America where someone raised a civil claim against McDonald's for not giving them a napkin! When you are answering questions, you will then have the ability to namedrop and reference current day cases which will really impress your teacher!

► **Practise SACs**

Doing as many practice SACs as possible is key to success in Legal! I usually used company paper's practice SACs so make sure I got a variety of questions. Some schools SACs are easier and others are harder so to make sure you cover your basis, do a large range of company papers. Another recommendation is to do the Quizzes on Studyclix as well to get even more of a variety of questions. I usually did 8 practice SACs in total and only 2 practice SACs before a SAC under timed conditions.



How do I study for the Exam?

- **WHEN?**

- **Throughout the year**

I believe studying for the exam goes beyond purely the September holidays up until the date of the exam. I like to start studying from the start of the year. After I would complete a SAC, every week up until the day of the exam I would sit down on a Sunday afternoon and attempt all my Legal Studies Quizlets I had made. This ensured I never forgot any material throughout the year. If Quizlet isn't really your thing, then once a week I would recommend completing a few quizzes on Studyclix on a weekly basis. In the September holidays, since I was familiar with all the content, I could go straight onto completing practice exams and did not need to worry about relearning content.

- **Mid-Year Holidays**

In the mid-year holidays my teacher gave me some unit 3 practice exams. Whilst these exams were only on one semester's worth of content, it was still extremely helpful! Whilst I retained most of the content through doing the weekly quizzes, still through doing these practice exams I noticed some gaps. It's great going into the second semester feeling confident on all the unit 3 content and will really help you out at the end of the year!



- WITH WHO?

- Study with you friends

When it came to the September holidays, whilst I was pretty confident that I had retained most of the content from the year, I still thought it was beneficial to do a light revision of the whole year's work before jumping straight into practice exams. So, a group of friends and I spent a couple hours on the first day of the September holidays and just talked through all the content. I'd really recommend studying with a friend or two because it will ensure you are all on the same page and it'll make studying more enjoyable. You can only do as well as your cohort so it's great to help friends because if your school as a whole does well it'll boost your mark.

- HOW?

- Practise Exams

September is obviously the time when you want to start practice exams. I started out by doing practice exams without notes. I would see how many questions I can answer without my notes. After I've gone through the whole exam, I would take a **red coloured pen** and using my notes, I would come back to all the questions I couldn't previously answer and write down my answers. Over time, I'd notice that less and less questions were written in red since I'd gradually reference my notes less and less. Legal is a subject where it is very easy to lose marks for stupid mistakes or sloppy responses. So, when marking I would be very harsh on myself. I'd only give myself a mark if my answer was perfect. In the end I did a total of 30 practice exams where the last 5 of them were under timed conditions.



Layout of the Exam

The exam is made up of Section A, the 10-marker and Section B.

Here's how I dealt with them for the exam.

Section A (excluding the 10-marker)

Section A is a total of 40 marks but excluding the 10-mark question, it is 30 marks.

Section A is pretty simple and usually quite straightforward since there are not many case studies. You can prepare yourself for Section A style questions by going over the definitions of terms and making sure your overall knowledge on the Legal Studies content is at a high level. If there is a scenario within the question, make sure you reference the source material in your answer. Even by simply writing for example, “Kai should use conciliation because...” as opposed to saying “conciliation is the most appropriate resolution method because...” it shows the examiners you have read the whole question.

The 10-Marker

10 markers are arguably the hardest part of the exam! Usually the questions are so broad, which can be quite overwhelming, since you have the ability to answer the question in so many different ways. My advice to you is underline the key terms in the question and in your head map out where you want to take it before writing anything on the page. Think of strengths and weaknesses for every point you make. To enhance your answer, you can namedrop a case study that relates to the point you are trying to



make (for example, if you are explaining codification, you may want to mention *Mabo v Queensland*). The beauty of a 10-mark question is that it is a great way for you to show off to the examiner all your knowledge which will hopefully boost your mark. I often went a little overboard with 10-mark questions where my answers were about 3 pages long.

Section B

Section B is worth 40 marks which is **half of the exam**. I remember my teacher constantly telling the class throughout the year “make sure you reference the case study in all Section B responses”. Honestly this advice is crucial to tackling Section B! No matter what, always reference the case study. If you can’t find a connection between the case study and the question, ask your teacher for help. If you do not reference the case study then you will lose marks. Even though I’d argue Section B is the easiest area to lose marks in, I’d say it is the easiest to study for. You can study by simply reading a newspaper article that relates to the content and making up your own questions to it and relating your answers back to the case study.

Getting Practice Exam Questions Wrong?

When I’d get a practice exam question wrong, I would write up the question and the correct answer on a Google Doc. Through writing up the correct response I would learn properly where I went wrong. I found this way more useful than simply reading the correct response in the answer booklet. Then before I’d start my next practice



exam, I'd look at my Google Doc again and read over my mistakes and corrections to ensure I didn't repeat my mistakes.

The Time of the Exam?

For the past couple of years, the Legal exam has been in the afternoon. I don't know about you, but I work best in the morning which is great when I need to sit my English exam (which is always in the morning) but not so good when it comes to Legal. This is why I tried to do a lot of my practice exams in the afternoon. I planned my days out so I'd do an English practice exam in the morning and a couple of Legal ones in the afternoon. This ensured that my brain was trained to work at its optimal level in the afternoon so I could perform well on the exam.



How do I handle the exam?

Time Management

To maximise time, during reading time I would read through Section B. I would start by reading the questions and then looking reading the case study. By reading the questions first, you know what to look for in the case study so you are not reading the case aimlessly. It is very important to read the case studies properly and I found that if I left the case studies till after reading time, then I would just skim them and would miss crucial information. By reading the case studies first, you are ensuring you allocate proper time to read them and retain the content. Then, if I had time, I would work my way through reading Section A.

In writing time, I'd aim to spend...

- ▶ 30 minutes on Section A (excluding the 10 marker)
- ▶ 30 minutes on the 10 marker
- ▶ 45 minutes on Section B
- ▶ The remaining 15 minutes to proofread your exam and enhance any answers

However, I was not strict with myself in terms of timing, depending on the exam, sometimes I spent longer on Section B and less time on Section A - it doesn't really matter, as long as you complete the exam in 2 hours.



Order of the Exam

- **Everyone's different** - and my way may not work for everyone - but how I like to tackle the exam is by first doing Section B, then doing Section A and leaving the 10-marker till the end.
- I like to do Section B first because I like to read the case studies in reading time, so by writing down my answers for Section B first, I don't forget the case studies.
- I also would recommend leaving the 10 mark question till the end because it is very easy to go off on a tangent and write basically everything you know in that area of study, so by doing this, you are ensuring you don't go overboard with your answer because you're more limited on time.
- However, I know some of my friends like to do all the questions that seem easiest to them first (regardless of whether they are in sections a or b) to gain some confidence at the start of the exam.

You need to find what works best for you. By doing a range of practice exams you will realise what order is the best for you.



Some Final Tips

- Start Early

Your exam prep starts at the beginning of the year! Don't leave it all to the end of the year or you will be stressed. You may as well create a little more work for yourself throughout the year, rather than cram at the very end. I had so many friends who only got done 5 practice exams because they spent so long relearning the content from the entire year. All it takes is once a week to do a Quizlet or a quiz on Studyclix to ensure you retain the content for the exam.

- Keep Everything

All the handouts you get from your teacher throughout the year make sure to file away! Don't just chuck them out, even if they may seem irrelevant at the time. When it comes to exam time, I took out a lot of the handouts I had which I thought I'd never use. Create a folder for each area of study in Legal and file all your handouts accordingly. Keep all your practice SACs and practice exams so you are able to refer back to them.

- Note the Teacher's Corrections

Once you get your mark for your SACs and they return your physical paper, take notes of all your mistakes. I often found that the mistakes I was making were dumb, e.g. I lost a mark in a SAC in a question that asked for my opinion, I didn't write "I think..." or "I



believe...”. To stop myself from making these silly mistakes on future SACs and the exam, I would write down all the areas where I lost marks on the SACs and then regularly reference that list to ensure I never make the same mistakes. If you don’t understand why you lost a mark, ask your teacher!

- The Day Before the Exam...

The day before the exam, I didn’t do any practice exams. I didn’t want to stress myself out by doing them. If you’re anything like me, you will be stressed the day before the exam and possibly even more stressed than the day of the exam. This is why I just decided on the day before the exam, I would just read over my list of mistakes so it’s fresh in my memory and I’d read over the examiner’s report of the previous years. This way I’d know exactly what the examiners are looking for and I’d be hyperalert of all the mistakes I’ve made in the past or other students have made so I would not make the same mistakes in the exam.





Best of luck in the exam! You will be great. 😊

