



Course Start

Course Start is independent learning you need to complete as a fundamental part of your introduction to the course. It should take you approximately 5 hours to complete.

Course Name	Law A Level
How this Course Start fits into the first term of the course	You will start the course studying the differences between civil and criminal law
How will my Course Start learning be used in lessons?	You will use your learning from these tasks to complete the first part of the course. You will also learn new legal terminology as well as engage with the practice of legal research.
Course Start learning objectives	• To understand the difference between UK civil and criminal law • To appreciate how the Civil Court system works • To understand basic legal phrases and the court structure • To start to apply your knowledge of criminal and civil cases to legal problems
Study Skills	• Identify sources of law • Note taking • Legal research



Expectations for: A Level Law

Our specification is: [OCR A Level Law H418](#)

What this course involves...

Students complete 3 exams in the summer of their second year:

- The Legal System and Criminal Law (H48/01)
- Law Making and the Law of Tort (H48/02)
- The Nature of Law and Human Rights Law (H48/03)

Each exam carries equal weighting and requires students to answer a series of short and long questions along with two scenario questions and an evaluation essay of a particular law, offence or defence.

The Legal System and Criminal Law (H48/01)

Topics covered include... Judges and Lay People; the Civil and Criminal Court System; Alternative types of Dispute Resolution

Offences studied include... Murder; Manslaughter; Property Offences and Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person

Law Making and the Law of Tort (H48/02)

Topics covered include... Judicial Precedent; Parliamentary Law Making; Statutory Interpretation; EU Law

Tort Laws include ... Negligence; Occupiers' Liability; Nuisance and Vicarious Liability

The Nature of Law and Human Rights Law (H48/03)

Students approach this paper in Year 2 and must study topics such as Law and Morality, Law and Justice as well as explore issues surrounding Police Powers and the influence of the European Court of Human Rights

Welcome to A Level Law!

Ben, Jo, Summer and Kathryn can't wait to meet you all! We hope you have a great Summer and all receive those awesome GCSE results you've been working so hard to achieve!

The work we've set here is to give you a head start with the content of our A Level Course.

Good Luck, there are 4 Activities to complete before your first law lesson...

Activity 1

Look up the legal definition of the following terms; make sure that you use a UK dictionary/website and NOT American!

Acquittal	
Advocate	
Bail	
Claimant	
Conviction	
Damages	
Indictable Offence	
Inns of Court	
Jurisdiction	

Activity 2

Read this newspaper article from the Guardian and answer the questions at the end.

Judge throws out case against UK climate activist who held sign on jurors' rights

Trudi Warner was accused of contempt for holding placard reminding jurors of right to acquit based on conscience

Sandra Laville - Mon 22 Apr 2024

A high court judge has thrown out an attempt by the government's most senior law officer to prosecute a woman for holding a placard on jury rights outside a climate trial.

Mr Justice Saini said there was no basis for a prosecution of Trudi Warner, 69, for criminal contempt for [holding a placard](#) outside the trial of climate activists that informed jurors of their right to acquit a defendant based on their conscience.

The judge accused government lawyers of "mischaracterising" the evidence when they said Warner had acted in an intimidating and abusive manner, confronting potential jurors outside the court and following them, in a deliberate attempt to interfere with the administration of justice.

Warner, a retired social worker, was being pursued for contempt of court after a lone protest last year outside inner London crown court in which she held up a placard highlighting the right of jurors to acquit defendants on their conscience. She protested at the start of a trial of Insulate Britain protesters for a peaceful roadblock. But the attorney general decided to pursue Warner for contempt of court, and the solicitor general was in the high court last week to seek permission to charge her.

In Monday's ruling, Saini threw out the government lawyers' application. He said: "The solicitor general's case does not disclose a reasonable basis for committal ... the conduct did not amount to an act of contempt.

"I refuse the solicitor general permission to proceed and I dismiss the claim."

He challenged the solicitor general's allegation that Warner had confronted, instructed, encouraged or incited potential jurors to ignore the judge's directions when they came to their verdict. Saini said Warner had not harassed, impeded or even spoken to any of those entering inner London crown court last year, and criticised the government lawyers.

"It is fanciful to suggest that Ms Warner's behaviour falls into the category of contempt," he said. "The category is limited to threatening, intimidatory, abusive conduct or other forms of harassment.

"I reject the arguments made in the claimant's ... argument that Ms Warner confronted jurors ... these submissions significantly mischaracterise the evidence."

Warner's sign was in reference to a 1670 landmark case which cemented the independence of juries, known as "Bushel's case", in which a jury refused to find defendants guilty despite having been repeatedly instructed to do so by the judge.

Warner's placard read: "Jurors, you have an absolute right to acquit a defendant according to your conscience."

Warner, who waited for a year to find out if she would be prosecuted for contempt of court, said outside court she was feeling "very relieved".

"I feel it is job done," she said. "What I was doing was drawing attention to the terrible repression of conscientious protectors, and in particular climate protesters, by the state.

"If what I did will empower other defendants to use the power to acquit by juries, this will have been the fight of my life."

In his ruling, the judge said there was a well-established principle in law of jury equity; this was a de facto power to acquit a defendant regardless of directions from the judge. He said the principle in law had been tested in the highest courts in England and Wales, and existed in other countries such as Canada, New Zealand and the US.



Warner holding her placard outside court in April last year. Photograph: Emily Pennink/PA

Warner stood outside inner London crown court last March for 30 minutes holding the placard as members of the public, lawyers and potential jurors filed into court. She held the sign on the first day of a trial for public nuisance of members of the climate campaign group Insulate Britain.

The judge in that trial, Silas Reid, referred her action to the attorney general to consider contempt of court.

Last week, the solicitor general argued in the high court that Warner should be prosecuted for contempt for holding the sign.

Aidan Eardley KC told the court a prosecution was needed "to maintain public confidence" in the independence of the jury system and that if Warner went unpunished, similar acts were "likely to propagate". He claimed Warner had confronted jurors outside court and her actions were an interference with the administration of justice.

Saini said in his ruling on Monday Warner had made no attempt to compel those going into the court.

"What is striking to me is how little Ms Warner tries to engage with people, to get their attention, or to persuade them of anything. She was ... in essence, a human billboard."

Questions

1. What is another name for the Inner London crown Court?
2. Define the following terms: - contempt of court; prosecuted; attorney general; KC; public nuisance.
3. In your own words define the term, 'jury equity'.
4. Evaluate the principle of jury equity... in other words consider 3 ways in which it is a good thing as well as 3 criticisms of this concept and come to your own conclusion as to whether or not jury equity is an important aspect of the criminal justice system.
5. Research the [Colston Statue case](#) from Bristol which came out of the BLM protests in January 2022... In your opinion were the jurors right to find the defendants not guilty despite clear evidence that they had in fact caused unlawful criminal damage?

Activity 3

Find and research 2 legal cases...

One from [The Guardian](#) and one from either [The Argus](#) or [The Metro](#).

Again make sure that the cases are from English or Welsh courts and not American or Scottish.

Fill in the table below with the details of the cases...

Here is a worked example - be careful, it describes a serious criminal offence!...

Teenager Paris Mayo sentenced to at least 12 years for murder of newborn son

Mayo was 15 when she killed son she gave birth to at her home in Herefordshire to hide pregnancy from her family

[Steven Morris](#) - Mon 26 Jun 2023

A woman has been detained for a minimum of 12 years for murdering her newborn baby when she was 15 to prevent her family discovering she had been pregnant.

Paris Mayo, now 19, gave birth to her son, Stanley, alone and in silence in the living room of her home in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, while her parents and brother slept upstairs.

She then assaulted the baby so violently that he suffered fractures to his skull and brain damage, and when he later showed signs of life Mayo stuffed cotton wool balls into his mouth to suffocate him before putting his body into a bin bag.

Mayo claimed she did not know she was pregnant until minutes before her child was born and denied murder, claiming Stanley hit his head when he "fell out" of her as she gave birth standing up.

She said that when she finally realised she was pregnant, she did not call for help despite suffering terrible labour pain because she was worried her mother would be disappointed and her father angry.

The prosecution argued she must have known she was pregnant and planned to kill the child to prevent her family finding out. A jury found Mayo [guilty of murder](#) after a five-week trial at Worcester crown court.

Describing it as a "sad and troubling case", the trial judge, Mr Justice Garnham, said Stanley suffered "serious and appalling injuries" at the hands of someone he should have been able to trust: his mother.

The judge said Mayo was immature and insecure when she became pregnant aged 14. She had begun to have sex when she was 13 to try to make boys like her and had unprotected sex with her child's father because he did not like wearing condoms.

The judge said Mayo "steadfastly maintained" she was not pregnant despite changes to her body and the "overwhelming likelihood" she felt her child moving inside her. He said he accepted this was not a "campaign of deceit" but a reality she feared she and her family would not be able to handle. "You simply didn't want to acknowledge the truth. You refused to face what was becoming obvious," he told her.

Garnham said it was “astonishing” that Mayo did not cry out when she gave birth because she did not want to disturb her parents sleeping upstairs. He accepted her experience must have been frightening, traumatic, painful and overwhelming.

The judge said as soon as her child was born she decided she could not allow him to live. He could not say for sure how she had initially attacked him but believed she may have crushed his head beneath her foot.

Mayo’s child remained alive for at least an hour, the judge said, but then: “You decided you had to finish Stanley off,” and stuffed cotton wool balls down his throat. “Killing your baby son was a truly dreadful thing to do,” he said.

The judge accepted Mayo had not planned it for a long time but said on the evening of the murder she knew what was happening.

“You knew you were pregnant and about to give birth about an hour before you did so. You could have asked your mother for help or rung the emergency services. I am driven to the conclusion you had decided you would have to kill your baby.”

The judge said aggravating factors included the baby’s vulnerability and Mayo’s abuse of trust as his mother. He said the mitigating features included the lack of support for her, and he flagged up the reaction the case would attract in the press and social media and the reception she would get both in detention and when she was released. “This will be a life sentence to you in every sense,” he said.

Bernard Richmond KC, for Mayo, told the court Mayo refused to face up to her pregnancy until she went into labour. “Then the full impact of what was happening hit her like a tsunami. She was in pain, she was frightened.”

The barrister claimed the notion that her parents were available to help was “misplaced”. Her father was very ill and before getting sick was difficult and could be cruel. Her mother had moved back in with him to nurse him and was under huge pressure. “She [Mayo] did not feel able to call her parents,” Richmond said.

He said neither her parents, nor her teachers at school had noticed what was going on. “In the midst of this, there was a 15-year-old girl who was vulnerable, who was abused, who was not supported.”

Type of paper	The Guardian
Headline	Teenager Paris Mayo sentenced to at least 12 years for murder of unborn son
Defendant	Paris Mayo
Criminal or civil case	Criminal
Facts and legal principle	Murder conviction for stuffing cotton wool balls into newly born baby’s mouth
Court	Worcester Crown Court
Sentence or damages	12 years

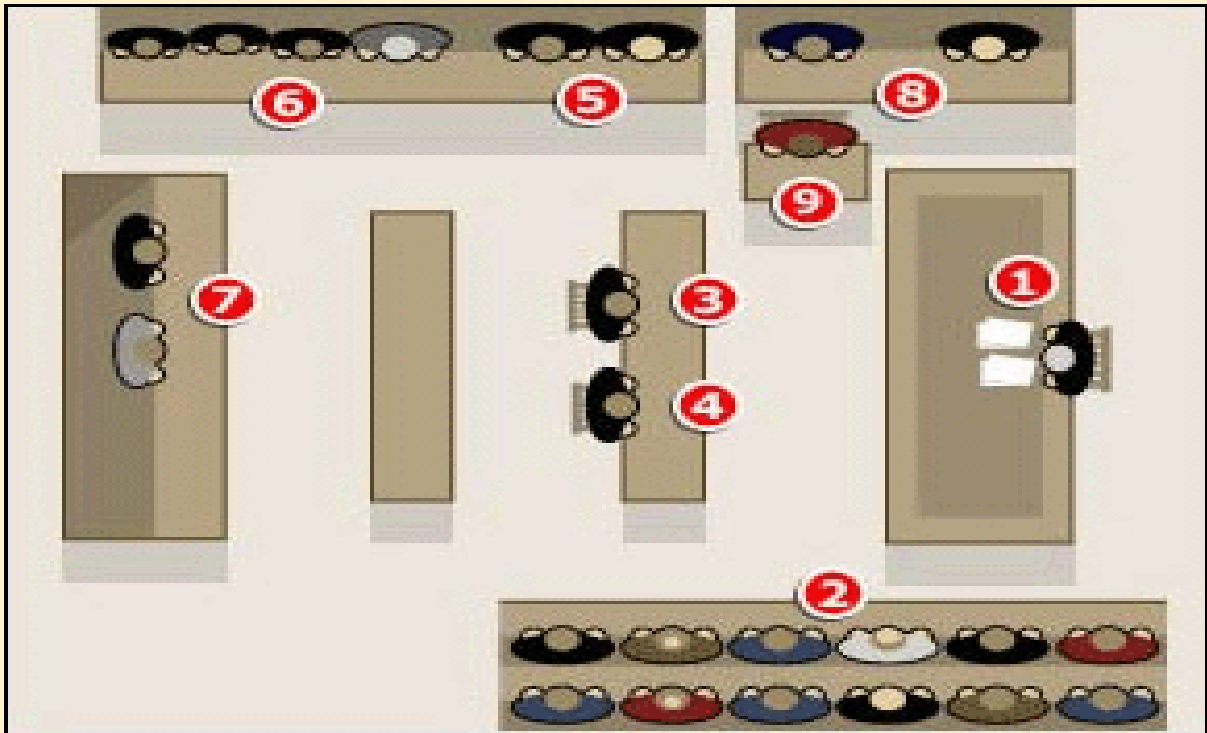
Now it's your turn!

Using your 2 newspaper articles complete the following table:

Type of paper	National	Local
Headline		
Defendant		
Criminal or civil case		
Facts and legal principle		
Court		
Sentence or damages		

Activity 4

Match the participants from the list below with the Crown Court diagram



	Number
Press	
Defence Barrister	
Judge	
Jury	
Defendant	
Usher	
Prosecution Barrister	
Witness	
Public	

Remember to bring your answers to the first Law lesson in September.

For now, take care and best wishes.