Deciding to attend law school is a big decision for any person. A law school education is different from
getting an undergraduate degree or even another graduate degree. This list of resources for first year
law students can help with the transition to law school. The resources listed below include books,
articles, websites, and/or blogs. A common thread in the books is a focus on the traditional first year
core courses: torts, contracts, property, civil procedure, criminal law, constitutional law, legal writing,
and legal research. In addition, the books will also focus on basic legal skills, such as, time
management, outlining, briefing a case, legal analysis, reading, note taking, legal writing, studying, and
exam preparation. This list is not exhaustive, but it is a starting point. Additional resources can be
located through the SIU Law Library catalog. All books on the list are available for checkout from the
SIU Law Library.

General

IAN GALLACHER, COMING TO LAW SCHOOL: HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS (2010).
Call Number: KF 283 .G35 2010

The author introduces the reader to some basic skills needed for survival in law school
and the relationship between the two. It includes an overview of the U.S. court system,
hierarchy of authority, and the legislative and executive branches.

MICHAEL ARIENS, LAW SCHOOL: GETTING IN, GETTING OUT, GETTING ON (2010).
Call Number: KF 283 .A75 2010

This guide covers from the LSAT to the bar examination. In the introduction, the author
starts to break down the different law school rankings: how to interpret the information
and how to use that data in determining where to go to law school. Even before taking
the LSAT, LAW SCHOOL: GETTING IN, GETTING OUT, GETTING ON goes through topics that every
person considering law school need, to think about in depth, such as finances, careers,
prestige, and what to do with your life. The book then moves on to taking the LSAT and
other parts of the application process. Ariens goes on to cover briefly what a student
can expect in the three years of law school, including an overview of activities and
organizations. Finally, LAW SCHOOL: GETTING IN, GETTING OUT, GETTING ON covers the bar exam,
including its history, commercial prep courses, time management, and the application
for admittance to the bar.

R. STEPHANIE GOOD, LAW SCHOOL 101: HOW TO SUCCEED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL AND BEYOND (2009).
Call Number: KF 283 .G66 2009

In LAW SCHOOL 101: HOW TO SUCCEED IN YOUR FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL AND BEYOND, the author
wanted a book that will help a law student adjust to the new environment, providing
information throughout school and transitioning from a student to an attorney. The book
covers all of the things first year students need to know; however, it does not go into
detail about core courses or provide sample exam questions and model answers. Instead, LAW SCHOOL 101 gives a brief overview of the core courses and exam strategies, but focuses more on the decision to go back to school and the considerations involved.

**Ursula Furi-Perry, Law School Revealed: Secrets, Opportunities, and Success! (2009).**

Call Number: KF 283 .F87 2009

*LAW SCHOOL REVEALED* takes the student from choosing the right school, to the first year, finding a career and the bar exam. The author provides detailed information on things like balance in law school, a consideration of dual degrees, and career options. There is a focus on skills students should master before entering law school, as well as ones they need to master while there. The chapters contain tidbits of wisdom throughout.

**Gary Munneke, How to Succeed in Law School (2001).**

Call Number: KF 283 .M86 2001

Professor Munneke opens this book asking that readers identify success and how they think of success. It then moves on to cover choosing the law school that fits your needs and a discussion of what to expect in law school—classes, schedules, classmates, culture, etc. Other areas covered include what to expect in class, what you should be doing after class, exams, legal research, and technology. There are chapters dedicated to diverse student populations, the problems faced by many students and solutions to those problems, the second and third years, and student organizations and activities.

**Exams**

**Amy L. Jarmon, Exam Review Begins Now, 40 Student Lawyer, Jan. 2012 at 17.**

*First Year Law Students \ Exam review begins now.pdf*

In this article, the author suggests that grades could improve if students use the system they use for studying for exams throughout the semester, instead of waiting until exam time. By implementing exam study habits into a regular routine that they complete through the semester, students may see some improvement in their grades, and they will have a better understanding of the law when it comes to exams.

**Barry Friedman & John C.P. Goldberg, Open Book: Succeeding on Exams From the First Day of Law School (2011).**

Call Number: KF 283 .F75 2011

This book focuses on taking law school exams and contains resources and information critical to first year students. The authors believe that helping students do better on law school exams directly correlates to them also becoming better students. *Open Book* provides online resources and discusses the first year of law school and keeping things in perspective. There is a blog associated, [www.openbooklawblog.wordpress.com](http://www.openbooklawblog.wordpress.com), but it doesn’t seem to be updated. It has some useful information about exam taking.
Call Number: KF 283 .N67 2011

The author uses Zen principles to discuss law school success. There are discussions on knowing yourself and your universe, staying focused, and finding balance. The majority of this book is about taking law school exams and properly answering exam questions. More focus is given to figuring out how you learn, the type of writer you are, what type of exam taker you are, making sure you know the subject matter of your exams, how the questions are constructed, and what to look for on exams.

RICHARD MICHAEL FISCHL & JEREMY PAUL, GETTING TO MAYBE: HOW TO EXCEL ON LAW SCHOOL EXAMS (1999).
Call Number: KF 283 .F47 1999

For those familiar with the “Wizard of Oz,” this book is the law student’s very own “yellow brick road,” complete with a pair of “ruby slippers,” i.e. test-taking tips. GETTING TO MAYBE covers issue spotting, legal analysis, and how to apply the rule of law to your facts, all in the context of exam taking and preparation. It provides tips for taking exams, mistakes to avoid, and sample questions and answers from all of the first year courses. While focused on first year law students, this book is not about expectations for your first year, but rather is on the exam process.

Class Preparation

BILL HENSLEE, HOW TO SURVIVE THE FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, 2010.
FIRST_YEAR_LAW_STUDENTS\HOW_TO_SURVIVE_THE_FIRST_YEAR_OF_LAW_SCHOOL.pdf

This is a short guide from the ABA on the things you need to know or learn in your first year. It is an overview of subjects like the Socratic Method of teaching, orientation, study groups, outlining and mental and physical health. The article is a great overview of things to expect in law school, with good tips for first year students.

ANDREW MCCURG, 1L OF A RIDE: A WELL-TRAVELED PROFESSOR’S ROADMAP TO SUCCESS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL (2009).
Call Number: KF 287 .M38 2009

This book starts out with the premise of law school as your destination, with the book as your “roadmap to success.” The author focuses on what you need to know and learn in your first year of law school, with a special emphasis on your first semester. Unlike some of the books on how to succeed in law school, this book also helps with not just the reality of the work, but also taking into consideration the emotional well-being of the student. McClurg goes even further in covering classroom etiquette, choosing your seat, getting the most out of orientation, class participation, and law professors. The appendices are ones that will be extremely helpful, because they include law school aids, sample essay questions and model answers, including a question on issue spotting.
Call Number: KF 283 .B87 2008

The purposes of LAW SCHOOL SUCCESS: A GUIDE TO STUDYING LAW AND TAKING LAW SCHOOL EXAMS are to answer students’ questions about law school and help students get the most out of law school. LAW SCHOOL SUCCESS defines terms, explains concepts, covers the core courses, explains the purpose and benefits of the law library, provides a list of electronic resources, and discusses technology. It goes on to give advice for getting the most out of class, activities to do outside of the classroom, activities for the first year, and thinking about school after the first year. This book is written in the concise nutshell format and covers a lot of information important to first year students in a clear and concise manner.

SHANA CONNELL NOYES & HENRY S. NOYES, ACING YOUR FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL: THE TEN STEPS TO SUCCESS YOU WON’T LEARN IN CLASS (1999).
Call Number: KF 283 .N69 1999

ACING YOUR FIRST YEAR pays particular attention to the Socratic method of teaching. It focuses on helping the new law student learn what they need to know to succeed in law school and effectively handle the Socratic method of teaching. The authors have a chapter on learning from the Socratic class discussion, what happens in class and how the student should handle getting called on, note taking, study groups and when classmates get called on. ACING YOUR FIRST YEAR OF LAW SCHOOL also has a chapter dedicated to navigating and using the BLUEBOOK.

Learning Strategies & Styles

AMY L. JARMON, EVALUATING YOUR STUDY HABITS, 41 STUDENT LAWYER, JAN. 2013 AT 16.
First Year Law Students\Evaluating your study habits.pdf

This article gives advice on how to improve your study habits and reviewing them to make sure they fit your needs, tips for evaluating your study habits, and making a determination about what works and what does not.

Call Number: KF 272 .M55 2013

This book is focused on helping the reader develop a strategy for doing well in law school. The author does not focus on the specifics of law school courses or topics but rather on the rules that govern every aspect of law school and job searching. It shows the reader how to tailor the rules in order to excel in law school. EXCELling IN LAW SCHOOL provides good practical advice. It is written with the idea of helping students excel in law school so they can find good jobs regardless of their law school or its ranking. The author is an attorney who attended two different law schools, each at opposite ends of the rankings provided by U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT.

*First Year Law Students \ Differences in Legal Education and Differences in Study Strategies.pdf*

Jarmon discusses how law school differs from other undergraduate and graduate programs and how students have to make adjustments in their study strategies to deal with these differences. The article discusses the time a student needs to dedicate to studying and the professionals available in law schools to assist students with adjusting their study strategies.


Call Number: KF 283 .C47 2012

“The purpose of this book is to provide research-based learning strategies for law students who are either just beginning law school or for those who are in law school but find that they are struggling and need a new approach.” (p. xiii) The author shows the reader how to plan strategically for getting through the wealth of information and subjects involved in law school. In addition, students are given tools to assess their learning styles and information on handling anxiety and depression while in law school. This book is focused on learning the basics and also on determining how you learn to help you become successful in law school.


*First Year Law Students \ Studying with other students.pdf*

This article discusses the value of forming and/or joining a study group. Good practical advice is given for choosing group members, division of work, scheduling, and how to approach study groups. The author goes so far as to have the student consider if studying with a really good friend is right for them.


*First Year Law Students \ How to organize information effectively.pdf*

Building on the article, “How to absorb information to make it more memorable” (39 Student Lawyer, Feb. 2011 at 22.), the author continues using the various learning preferences to discuss the best tips for organizing information. There is also a discussion on the problems students with different learning preferences face and how to turn these problems and/or obstacles into an advantage.
Jarmon provides information about learning styles and preferences, including how to determine your learning preferences. The article also discusses the different types of learning preferences and the tips and technics students can use in each learning preference to retain information.


This book is similar to One L of a Year: How to Maximize Your Success in Law School. However, this one is focused specifically on those students who have learning disabilities, ADD, ADHD, Asperger’s syndrome, or those who process information differently from others. In writing this book, the author looked at information on how students with different learning disabilities and styles learn in law school and what techniques they use to become successful. There are tools on assessing learning styles and on getting disability accommodations.

Dennis Tonsing, 1000 Days to the Bar: But the Practice of Law Begins Now (2d ed. 2010).

The author breaks the practice of law and success in law school down into seven components: 1. read and brief every case; 2. actively attend every class and take notes; 3. transform your notes; 4. prepare court summaries; 5. prepare flow charts; 6. internalize; 7. practice answering essay exam questions in writing (rehearse). Throughout the book the author encourages the student to master certain tasks in school that will translate well to practice.


The author covers learning disabilities and the accommodations provided by law schools for persons with disabilities. She then goes on to discuss how to discover if you have a disability, what steps to take if you need accommodations, and how to succeed academically as well as professionally as an attorney with a learning disability. There are real life examples of attorneys who have learning disabilities and successful law practices.
Life & Law School

**Amy L. Jarmon, Time to Recharge and Renew, 41 Student Lawyer n.9, May 2013 at 16.**

First Year Law Students\Time to recharge and renew.pdf

Law school and life balance is discussed in this article. However, the author has focused more on rediscovering self and the things you liked to do before attending law school. This article is more about students regaining their perspective.

**Amy L. Jarmon, Balancing Law School with Life, 41 Student Lawyer, March 2013 at 18.**

First Year Law Students\Balancing Law School with Life.pdf

This article discusses tips for balancing law school with regular life and how doing so can be productive to the law student. The author gives tips on time saving, outlook, judgment, and use of resources.

**G.M. Filisko, Succeeding in Both Family and Law, 40 Student Lawyer, March 2012 at 30.**

First Year Law Students\Succeeding in Both Family and Law School.pdf

Steps and advice for balancing law school and family are provided in this article. The author talked with students, attorneys and professors to get their advice on handling both. Scheduling your time effectively is mentioned as a key tool in finding balance while in law school, particularly scheduling personal time.

**Herbert N. Ramy, Succeeding in Law School (2nd ed. 2010).**

Call Number: KF 283 .R36 2010

Ramy provides in depth coverage of what to expect in law school. He covers the basics but also provides information on the emotional well-being of the student. SUCCEEDING IN LAW SCHOOL also discusses resumes, writing samples and job interviews. Ramy teaches students how to approach classes, pitfalls to avoid, and legal analysis.

**Kelsey May, Samantha Roberts & Elizabeth Shelton, What the L? 25 Things We Wish We’d Known Before Going to Law School (2010).**

Call Number: KF 283 .M35 2010

WHAT THE L? discusses law school from the perspective of three students. The book gives practical advice while also covering topics important to first year students: money, classmates, professors, outlining, grades, second and third years, finding work, and more. The authors are giving advice learned from their own law school experiences. Included in the appendices are a glossary of legal terms defined by the authors, an issue map, an outline, and a sample exam answer.

Call Number: KF 283 .S77 2001

The purpose of this book is to “bridge the gap” between a student’s expectations of law school and the reality. In addition to covering the skills you need to bring with you to law school and the Socratic method of teaching, this book also includes information for dealing with life while in law school and resources for finding help if you need it.

Reading & Legal Analysis

PAUL BERGMAN, PATRICK GOODMAN & THOMAS HOLM, CRACKING THE CASE METHOD: LEGAL ANALYSIS FOR LAW SCHOOL SUCCESS (2012).

Call Number: KF 283 .B47 2012

CRACKING THE CASE METHOD is written for all law students, with a slight emphasis placed on first year students. The book introduces students to the case method of instruction and legal analysis as a process to be learned from this instruction. This book is concise but packed with a lot of tools that students can use. First year students will be interested in some of the special topics, such as the sources of law, the organization of material in casebooks and how it pertains to learning issue spotting and analysis of legal issues.

TRACEY E. GEORGE & SUZANNA SHERRY, WHAT EVERY LAW STUDENT REALLY NEEDS TO KNOW: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF LAW (2009).

Call number: KF 283 .G46 2009

The authors focus on what every law student needs to know and expect from their first year of law school. This book provides the basics by going through the law and the American legal system and then provides a legal toolbox that contains information on reading, legal analysis, and other legal concepts, such as precedent, standards of review, and rules vs. standards. It also covers how to prepare for class and what to do outside of the classroom. The authors only give a very short discussion on exams. This book is a good tool for showing a student how to prepare for class and what to expect from class. A student looking for a more in-depth knowledge of preparing for law school and examinations should also look at another resource on this list. This book gives the nuts and bolts without a lot of discussion.

MARK E. WOJCIK, ADD AN E TO YOUR IRAC, 35 STUDENT LAWYER, NOV. 2006 AT 26.

First Year Law Students \ Add an e to your IRAC.pdf

For the student looking for a discussion on IREAC, this article is a good starting point. The article provides examples and shows students how to do a proper legal analysis. This is a good author for those unfamiliar with using IRAC or IREAC. Students should also use other materials on this list to go more in depth on IRAC and IREAC.
McKinney provides tips for reading effectively while in law school. The article shows students how to take cues from whatever they are reading: casebooks, statutes, cases, regulations, and other publications. In addition, the reader is shown how to take cues from the people around them, like professors and other students, and incorporating that information into effectively reading legal material.

“The purpose of this book is to teach you what the experts already know: how to read law-related material as efficiently, effectively, and powerfully as possible.” (p. xiv) The author has divided the book into three sections. The first section lays the foundation and covers information from the first year of law school and types of material students will be reading. The author starts to introduce strategies for the materials, and she includes exercises in each chapter so that the student is able to start developing reading skills. The second section of the book focuses on reading information in casebooks. This section covers purpose, developing your own strategies, incorporating your knowledge with reading, monitoring, and evaluating. Section three of READING LIKE A LAWYER covers readings beyond casebooks and the classroom. It shows students how to read when they are out of school and in practice. There is a focus on statutes and opinions as they are released by the court and others not published in casebooks.

This nutshell is divided into five sections: legal analysis made simple, study skills, litigation, legal writing and advocacy, and finishing school and beginning a career. In addition to discussing what to expect in law school and the skills law students must master, the author provides examples, exercises, problems and legal dilemmas for the reader that help reinforce the ideas put forth. Hoping that the reader/law student will read the book from cover to cover, but knowing the reality that some will be unable to or unlikely to finish it, the author provides a crib sheet in the preface that tells the reader exactly where to focus and provides an overview of the information covered by each section.

The information comes from the authors’ experiences as law professors and from their observations of law students. LAW SCHOOL WITHOUT FEAR does not go into great detail but gets right to the point on each topic and lets the reader know exactly what they need to know. The organization of and the information covered in this book are different from other books written for first year law students. For instance, in the chapter on interpreting
language, the authors also include a section on interpreting statutes that is broken down into various components, including statutory construction. LAW SCHOOL WITHOUT FEAR was not written as a tome covering every aspect of law covered in the first year, rather it was written to provide the new law student with an overview of first year core courses, techniques for completing some of the work, and concepts of law that every first year student needs.

**Time Management**

**Cara J. DeVelder, Time Management for the Successful Lawyer (and Law Student), 40 Student Lawyer, Oct. 2011 at 14.**

**First Year Law Students\Time Management Skills - Law Student.pdf**

For the student having problems adjusting to the time commitment that law school requires, this article has a great discussion on the habits to nurture and ones to avoid and how to get organized and why.


**Call Number: KF 283 .R37 2010**

The authors have organized the book like a timeline and provide information on what happens in each event. Included are sections on case briefing, not just what they are and how to write one, but also how to use case briefs. There is a chapter covering classroom etiquette, including a section on whether you should be “IM”ing your classmates during class, working with your classmates, leaving class, and social networking. The authors use their experiences to help law students without glossing over the information.

**Ann L. Iijima, The Law Student’s Pocket Mentor: From Surviving to Thriving (2007).**

**Call Number: KF 283 .I35 2007.**

This book takes the reader from preparing for law school through finding a job; includes tools to complete tasks, such as creating a schedule incorporating time management principles. The author doesn’t tell you how to do it, but shows you how with examples, exercises, and downloadable from the book’s website. There are sections for nontraditional students and sections on finding work during each year of law school and once law school is completed.

**Blogs/Websites**

**Lawyerist (http://lawyerist.com/):** a blog focused on the practice of law with articles/blog posts about law practice management and marketing, ethics, lawyering skills, and law school. They provide good practical information and great tips about technology and other resources related to the practice of law. This blog has great posts about succeeding in and coping with law school.
ABA Law Student Division (http://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_students.html): a website from the American Bar Association devoted to the law student division. There are resources for careers, Student Lawyer magazine, activities for conferences, legal education news, information about student representatives, and membership benefits and information.

The Girls Guide to Law School (http://thegirlsguidetolawschool.com/): a blog about law school and how to get the best experience out of law school. There are resources for transitioning into law school, guides for interviewing, and resources for surviving law school. This is a good blog with plenty of useful information for students from a law school graduate. The author uses her experiences to help others achieve their dreams of going to and getting through law school and finding a job.

Above the Law – Law Schools (http://abovethelaw.com/law-schools/): a blog dedicated to keeping attorneys and others in the legal field informed about the happenings in the profession, including various law suits and cases and new technology. There is a law school section that is focused on keeping law students informed about current updates in the law, events at different schools, firms, and/or corporations. The posts are written with humor and biting wit.

Law School Toolbox (http://lawschooltoolbox.com/): a blog for law school students that takes the mystery out of law school. There are great resources available for students including guides on exam prep, outlining, and posts on the first year. The blog and other resources are free. There is a membership component available for persons who want personal advice; one-on-one tutoring is also available for a price.

The Student Appeal (http://thestudentappeal.com/): an online legal journal publishing articles and other information written by law students and others in the legal community. There are great articles and blog posts providing some advice and guidance about law school.

Law School Academic Success Project (www.lawschoolasp.org): an online website dedicated to helping academic support professionals in law schools. It also has a great section for law students that provides learning modules on outlining, learning styles, and reading. In addition there is information on diversity in law school and the profession. Resources include websites, blogs, and lists of books and articles.

Time Management for Lawyers (www.timemanagementforlawyers.com): the website for Spencer Consulting, a consulting firm that provides stress and time management seminars for lawyers. The website has free articles on time management, the use of different resources, and planning materials.