

The Law & You

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Why Study Law?

- 1 Because Knowledge is Power
- 2 To Help Others
- 3 To Change Society
- 4 To get a Career or Job
- 5 To Challenge Yourself

Famous Lawyers

- Nelson Mandela
- Former Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Trudeau
- Marcia Clarke (OJ prosecutor)
- Louise Arbour, U. N. High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Fidel Castro, President of Cuba
- Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada
- Sir Walter Scott, author
- Pat Quinn, coach Toronto Maple Leafs
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Senator Hillary Clinton
- Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario

Famous Law TV Shows

Ally McBeal, Law & Order, The Practice, Family Law, Da Vinci's Inquest

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The Law is Out There...

As a result of too much TV, many Canadians believe that "Law" means Criminal Law—bad guys, judges, the right to remain silent, jail sentences, and lawyers yelling "Objection" every two minutes in fancy looking courtrooms.

Actually, law means much more than criminal cases. Almost every day, we are affected by the law in good ways and bad ways.

Lawyers usually specialize in one area of law or another. When you put all of these areas together, they cover a lot! All of the following questions involve law.

- ❖ *Should schools be able to make students wear uniforms?* (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)
- ❖ *Should cloning humans be legal?* (Property Law, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)
- ❖ *Should the government give back or pay for land it took away from Aboriginal peoples?* (Aboriginal Law, Constitution Law, Property Law)
- ❖ *Which religious holidays should be days off school and work?* (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Human Rights Law)

- ❖ *Should people who weren't born in Canada be sent back to the country they were born if they commit a crime?* (Criminal Law, Immigration Law, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms)
- ❖ *Should people be allowed to say racist things?*
- ❖ *Should banks be able to lay off employees while making billion dollar profits?*
- ❖ *Should pollution be a crime?*



EVERYONE Needs to Know the Law (not just lawyers)

Since the law is part of lots of different aspects of society, lots of people need to know about it, not just lawyers. Knowing about the law is important in lots of different jobs and careers.

Knowing about the law means you can be careful about not breaking it.

It also means that you know what laws cause problems and should be changed.

Here are some other careers that are closely involved with the law:



- ❖ Police officer
- ❖ Forensic scientist (DNA testing, crime scene reconstruction)
- ❖ Social Worker (for the Children's Aid, working with people recently released from prison, helping families get through a divorce, etc.)
- ❖ Paralegal (paralegals do legal work that doesn't require a qualified lawyer)
- ❖ Probation and Parole Officer
- ❖ Businessperson
- ❖ Court Officer, Court Clerk, Court Reporter
- ❖ Financial Consultant
- ❖ Sports Agent

For more information on the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, including stuff about Professors, courses, the library and admissions, try our website

www.law.utoronto.ca

Facts about Law School

- There are 16 law schools in Canada, hundreds in the U.S.A., many more around the world.
- In first year, everyone takes the same courses (worse than grade nine).
- After first year, you can start to specialize, and take courses in Sports & Entertainment Law, International Human Rights Law, Business Organizations, the Practice of Criminal Law, Law & Public Policy, Family Law, Labour Law, Medical Jurisprudence, and many, many more different areas.
- Law school learning is 'case-based'. That means, rather than using a text book, you use old cases to learn about the law. Students try (and try, and try) to figure out what principles judges were basing their decision on. In exams, you try to apply those principles to made-up situations.
- Law school is not only about studying. There are many interesting extra-curricular activities and clubs including: intra-mural sports, volunteer pro bono placements, student council, clubs specializing in one area of law (ie. the environmental law club), academic journals, student newspapers, and many, many more!

How To Become a Lawyer

- Before you can study law, you need an undergraduate degree. Some law schools only require that you complete 2 years of an undergraduate degree.
- You don't need any particular degree. There are law students with English degrees, engineering degrees, commerce degrees, psychology degrees, biology degrees, etc.
- Before you can apply to law school, you need to write a standardized test called the LSAT.
- You do not need to know anything about law to write the LSAT. The LSAT tests your reading comprehension, logical and analytical reasoning. Part of the test also involves writing a brief essay.
- When law schools consider your application, they look at a combination of your undergraduate and graduate marks, your LSAT score, and your extra-curricular activities. Each law school weighs these factors differently. This means that some law schools think marks are the most important, and others think the LSAT score is most important.
- A regular law degree takes 3 years. Then you graduate with a law degree. At the University of Toronto, our law degree is called a J.D.
- After you graduate from law school, you are not a lawyer yet. You still have to 'pass the bar'. In Ontario, this means working for about a year for a lawyer or judge, and writing a series of exams. This is called 'Articling'. After you finish this, you are called to the bar, and can practice law in Ontario.