

**A Level Law**

**Lecturers**  
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**Activity 1 -** Types of sentence / factors considered when sentencing:

In A Level Law, we look at a wide range of substantive law, this refers to laws that can be enforced against individuals. The three substantive law topics we study are Criminal Law, Tort Law and Contract Law.

The study of law involves looking at cases, this means analysing the facts of the case and how the law was applied, studying the outcome of the trial and the determination of the sentence, and finally, the judgment of any appeal, if there was one.

Sentencing is a particularly interesting area of Law as determining an appropriate sentence is a challenging task that requires consideration of a number of factors. There are also many other sentences available to the courts than just sending individuals to prison.

Your task - list as many sentences as you can think of, in addition, write a list of factors that you think the courts will take into consideration when trying to determine the right sentence for a particular offender. If you get stuck, you can look at the Sentencing Council website. <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/>

**Activity 2 -** A case study

Many of you may have heard of the name Stephen Lawrence, Stephen was a young black teenager who lived in South London who was killed in a unmotivated racial attack whilst waiting for a bus. The hideous and unprovoked nature of his attack struck the interest of the nation, and the subsequent investigation was well publicised. A timeline of the case can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26465916>

Sadly, there were no immediate convictions for the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and it was not until January 2012 that two defendants were convicted for his murder.

As you may have read on the Sentencing Council website, two of the factors that are considered when determining the sentence of an offender are the aggravating and mitigating factors.

**Aggravating factors** are particulars of an offence that justify imposing a harsher sentence, for example if the offender targeted a vulnerable victim, or if the offender had a weapon.

**Mitigating factors** are particularly of an offence that justify imposing a more lenient sentence, for example, if the offender demonstrated clear remorse.

Read the sentencing comments of R v Dobson and Norris (2012), this is the case where two of the murderers of Stephen Lawrence were convicted.

Draw a table like below and see if you can identify and list the aggravating and mitigating factors that are referred to in the sentencing remarks.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aggravating factors | Mitigating factors |
|  |  |

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**Frequently asked questions**

**How is the subject assessed?**A Level Law is assessed via three two hour exams. Throughout the course, we thoroughly prepare you for the exams with skills development, exemplar answers and practice questions.

**Are there lots of cases/statutes to learn?**Law does involve the study of cases, but we practice these each week and they become an important part of our routine. For each topic you are given case sheets to support your learning.

**Do I need to do A Level Law to study in at university?**The short answer is no, it is not a requirement, however studying A Level Law will give you a really good idea of what it is like to study Law at university, and help inform your decision. You are also at an advantage if you go on to study Law at university, having studied it at A Level, as Criminal Law, Tort Law and Contract Law are all compulsory units in any qualifying Law degree.

**What trips / guest speakers are there?**In Law, there are a number of extra-curricular opportunities, in recent years we have had a solicitor and trainee solicitor as guest speakers, trips to Court, University of Law webinars and a residential to London to visit key legal institutions.

**What other subjects does A Level Law go with?**A Level Law is a versatile subject the compliments study of many other areas, Law students typically tend to study Law alongside subjects such as Politics, Sociology, Psychology, History or English.

**Recommended Reading**

Find legal news at sites such as:

* <https://www.theguardian.com/law>
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/Law?CMP=ILC-refresh>

University students often find these site useful for careers information and legal news:

* <https://www.legalcheek.com/> (easy to read)
* <https://www.thelawyer.com/> (very career-focused)
* <https://thesecretbarrister.com/>

Solicitors often read this:

* <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/>

Good books (in order of ascending difficulty to read):

* The Secret Barrister: Stories of the Law and How It's Broken by The Secret Barrister
* The Rule of Law Paperback by Rt Hon Lord Bingham
* The Trial by Franz Kafka

**Recommended Listening**

* ‘Law in Action’ on <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tgy1/episodes/player> (about legal news)
* ‘Serial’ on <https://serialpodcast.org/season-one> (about crime)
* ‘RightsUp’ on <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/rightsup-global-perspectives-human-rights-law> (about human rights