

Briefing Cases--The IRAC Method

When briefing a case, your goal is to reduce the information from the case into a one-page case brief. When we discuss the case in class, you will immediately be able to discern the problem the court faced (the issue); the relevant law the court used (the rule); how the facts of the case applied to the rule (the application); and the outcome (the conclusion).

Follow the “IRAC” (Issue; Rule; Application; Conclusion) Method.

Facts:

For case briefs only (not exams), write a brief synopsis of the facts as the court found them to be.

Procedural History:

For case briefs only, write as much information as possible about the history of the case. What court authored the opinion? The Supreme court? Court of Appeal? What was the decision(s) below? Did the lower court issue the decision following a court trial, jury trial, or motion for summary judgment?

Issue:

Next, identify the issue(s). Usually, only one issue will be discussed, but sometimes there will be more. What is the fight over in the case?

For example, the main issue in *Roe v. Wade* was whether a state could constitutionally restrict a woman from procuring an abortion without violating the 14th Amendment.

Rule(s):

Next, list the relevant rule(s) of law that the court identifies. Each case will give a discussion of the relevant law.

Application:

This is probably the most important portion of the brief. The case will undoubtedly discuss how the facts interplay with the relevant rule(s) of law.

Conclusion:

What was the final outcome of the case? This should be a short statement.