

GCE

LAW: Law Reform

SUGGESTED IDEAS FOR TEACHING/LEARNING



Teacher /Lecturer:	
Unit:	Unit One: The Nature of law and the Welsh and English Legal Systems
Ref. to specification:	Law Making
Suggested time allocation:	3 – 8 hours

Course:	AS Level Law
Topic:	Law reform
Session:	

Aims & Objectives: At the end of these sessions the student will be able to:

- **Explain** the ways in which Parliament can change the law
- **Explain** judicial influences in changing the law
- **Identify** the various pressure groups for reform
- **Explain** the role of agencies of law reform
- **Evaluate** the role and performance of law reform bodies
- **Discuss** the problems with law reform agencies

Main Teaching and Learning Activities

Teacher/Lecturer Activities:

- Introduce topic & objectives, IWB, PowerPoint or whiteboard. Learners should be encouraged to keep a newspaper file of stories that they have seen about law reform / pressure groups etc
- Organize class in to small groups or pairs and ask them – **Questions** - Legal systems cannot stand still & must adapt, there are a range of ways of bringing change: *What ways can you think of that bring about change?* – facilitate group discussions, students to feedback their opinions to the class- Discuss changes made by Parliament, judges, pressure groups, law reform agencies. When looking at judicial changes discuss the case of **R v R (1991)**, and ask the students: **Question** -Should the courts / judges be making such important changes to the law as seen in R v R?
- Explain how Parliament changes the law – repeal, making new laws, consolidation & codification; give examples of this e.g. Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- In groups ask the students to come up with a list pressure groups and ask them how would individuals / groups bring about changes in the law, what would they need to do? Feedback answers to class, and facilitate a class discussion
- Explain the role of formal law reform agencies, the Law Commission; the Criminal Law Revision Committee; Royal Commissions and Public Inquires. With each ask the students to identify areas that have been changed by these various law reform methods / bodies, and in particular discuss the various public inquires that have been held, e.g. Hillsborough, BSE, railway accidents etc
- Discuss and evaluate with the class, through either direct questioning or class discussion whether the law reform agencies have been successful; in doing so highlight the problem with the law reform agencies /public inquiries

Student Activities:

- Group work - Identify ways to bring about change to laws / legal systems
- Group discussion of R v R (1991), and the role of judges in changing the law.
- Group work – compile a list of pressure groups and discuss their role in bringing about change
- Class discussion on identified cases that have been subject to a public inquiry
- Group work - identify the advantages and disadvantages of law reform agencies
- **Optional exercises**
- What do you think of campaigns by various newspapers to name and shame paedophiles? Discuss your opinions & research, with the class
- Visit the Law Commission website and chose an area of law that you are studying or will study, find a report that has been prepared in this field and summarise 3 of its recommendations
- Visit the Home Office website and read the Macpherson report into the death of Stephen Lawrence - discuss whether you think this inquiry has been effective in reforming the English legal system

Suggested links / resources:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Cases / Newspaper articles
- Flip chart paper (optional)
- www.justice.gov.uk
- www.lawcom.gov.uk
- www.gov.uk

Assessment of Learning

During the lesson	Group exercises, these show how much the students have understood law reform. Q & A, participation levels
Subsequent to lesson	Homework question, research activities as above

TOPIC:

Questions:		Expected answers:
1.	What ways can you think of to bring about a change in the law / legal system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliament • Judges • Pressure groups / people power • Official agencies • Media campaigns • Protests • Petitions
2.	Having discussed the facts of R v R (1991), do you think that judges should make such important changes to the law?	Answer will depend on students own opinions, but could include a discussion of the fact that judges are not elected, that there is only one or a small number of them changing the law as opposed to 650 MPs etc
3.	What pressure groups can you think of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenpeace • CND • Fathers for Justice • Charities
4.	Do you think these pressure groups are successful in bringing about changes in the law?	Answer will depend on students own opinions and knowledge – encourage student to carry out research into pressure groups
5.	There have been many public inquiries, can you think of any?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillsborough football stadium disaster • Sinking of Herald of Free Enterprise • Stephen Lawrence • Railway accidents • Test tube babies • BSE crisis • Conviction of Harold Shipman • Inquiry into suicide of Dr David Kelly • Stephen Lawrence
6.	Are law reform agencies successful in bringing about change?	Answer will depend on students level of research and class discussion
7.	What are the disadvantages of official law reform agencies?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little power • No obligation on Governments to follow recommendations and

		<p>proposals may be drastically altered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little influence over how proposals are put into practice • Agencies tend to compromise too much • Waste of expertise – once disbanded they play no further role in the law-making process • No single Government ministry for law reform
8.	What do you think of campaigns by various newspapers to name and shame paedophiles?	<p>Answer will depend on students own opinions but could include a discussion of : privacy issues; papers getting facts wrong; vigilante attacks on innocent people; for - public has a right to know; save lives etc</p>