

Year 12 A level Law Summer Independent Learning (SIL) 2026

Task 1 – Actus Reus and Mens Rea

In order to be guilty of a criminal offence, the defendant must commit the **actus reus** and **mens rea**

Actus Reus (AR) – Physical element (doing something or failing to something)

Mens Rea (MR) – Mental element (guilty intention)

Using the above two terms (AR and MR) define what you think they are for each crime below:

Crime	Actus Reus (AR)	Mens Rea (MR)
Murder		
Theft		
S18 GBH		
Attempted Robbery		

Task 2 – Omissions

Although most people are guilty for physically doing a crime, sometimes people can be guilty of a criminal offence where they fail to act e.g. failing to stop at traffic lights. This is known as being liable by omission. (LBO)

Use the following links to research the area of omissions and detail the case examples (next page) that you will use in exam questions: You can also use your own internet research.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOM7vNPYW-s>

<https://www.teachlaw.net/post/omissions>



Area of Omissions	Explanation (what does this duty mean?)	Case examples – <u>Research and give brief facts of the case below</u>
Contractual Duty		R v Adomako (1994)
Public Duties	999 services -	
Acceptance of Care		Stone and Dobinson (1977)
Duty Via Relationship		Gibbins and Proctor (1918)
Creation of a danger		Miller (1983)
Omission under Statute (Parliament)		Road Traffic Act (1988) – Give examples of when you will be Liable by Omission under this Act:
Good Samaritan rule	What is this? -	We don't have this in the UK so you can technically walk past someone in danger and not be liable by omission e.g. child drowning in a lake.
Doctors terminating care	Doctors can terminate care and not be liable by omission as long as it is in the best interests of the patient.	E.g. Switching off a life support

Task 3 – Application of Omissions

Go through each scenario below and decide if they can be liable by omission or not and why, linking it to the relevant category/categories above. Make your notes around each scenario.

Morgan is an anaesthetist at Pinderfields hospital. One shift she is tired and whilst she is meant to be checking the oxygen levels of the patient, Cuthbert, she doesn't. He goes into cardiac arrest from lack of oxygen and dies. She is now charged with gross negligence manslaughter

Jack is in the habit of looking after his elderly auntie Edna. He is tired one morning and decides rather than going to help her he is going to go for a weekend away. When he comes back he sees that Edna has died from malnutrition. He is now charged with manslaughter.

Andy is out partying celebrating his university results. He gets back to his house at 4am and decides he is hungry. He cooks chips but falls asleep with the hob on. The chip pan catches fire and sets the house on fire. When he wakes up and notices he decides to leave the property instead of ringing 999. He is now charged with Arson.

Jade and Chloe are best friends. They were walking from Pontefract to Xscape when they saw someone drowning in Pontefract park lake. Because they were rushing to watch a film at Xscape they walked past. The victim died.

Task 4 – Causation

For many crimes the element of causation will apply. This is used to prove that the defendant caused the end outcome (e.g. murder – must prove the defendant caused death).

Use the following link to research the two part test for causation:

<http://www.e-lawresources.co.uk/Causation-in-criminal-liability.php>



1. Factual cause –

2. Legal cause –

Once the two part test above is proven the defendant will be guilty because causation will be established (chain of causation created). However, there are a number of ways you can try to break the chain of causation so that you are not fully responsible.



Complete the table below to show ways to break the chain so you could get a lesser charge / not guilty verdict.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCaxConAMRs>

Area that can break the	Explanation (what is this category about?)	Case examples
Eggshell conditions / thin skull rule		R v Blaue (1975)
Victims own act - Escape of the victim		R v Roberts (1971)
Self treatment and refusal of treatment	Refusal – Self-treatment -	
Third Party Acts	Normal 3 rd person - Medical negligence -	R v Jordan (1956)
Life support machines		
Other intervening events .e.g natural disasters	It is possible for a natural disaster to break the chain of causation if it is the substantial cause. Examples of natural disasters -	

Task 5 – Application of Causation

Complete the mini scenarios below to decide if the defendant will be guilty or if the chain of causation will be broken. Apply the following:

1. Factual cause
2. Legal cause
3. Any of the intervening acts that can break the chain of causation e.g. eggshell / escape etc.
4. Conclude (guilty or not)

Ben is having a shootout with the police and in order to protect himself, moves his friend in front of him. The police shoot and a bullet hits his friend straight through the chest, killing him instantly.

Tim has attacked Matthew and he has ended up on life support. At the hospital the doctors decide after using the required tests that Matthew is better off with his machine turned off so they do so.

Natasha and David are having a fight when Natasha stabs him in the back with a kitchen knife. When the ambulance arrives the crew drop him on the floor twice, and when he is in hospital they do not check his medical records and give him 4x antibiotics that he is allergic to. David has an allergic reaction and dies.

Task 6 – Attempts

The next area we will look at are attempted crimes. This is when someone tries to commit the offence but is caught beforehand and charged with an attempted crime e.g. attempted murder. It is governed under S1 of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981.

The Law on attempted crimes	What do you think this means?
Actus Reus – The defendant must do an act which is more than merely preparatory.	
Mens Rea – The defendant must have the intention for the end crime.	

Case examples for attempts. Research the cases below.

Name	Facts and Outcome (Were they guilty of an attempted crime?)
R v Shivpuri (1986)	
Whybrow (1951)	
R v White (1910)	

Read the following news article and make notes below



Please bring all activities to your first lesson. Thank you and we look forward to meeting you! 😊