IRAC

**The IRAC Method**The IRAC method is an instructional tool that can aid students in the comprehension and evaluation of information so that they can make informed value decisions. It is an acronym for Issue, Rule, Analysis, and Conclusion. Although this is a legal model used to evaluate hypothetical situations in law cases, it is by no means limited to the study of the law. Useful for case studies presented in varied mediums such as narratives, videos/films, or recordings, the IRAC method may be applied to other activities such as defining a term or demonstrating a concept, principle, relationship, analogy, or contrasting idea. Often the instructional focus is on the end result of case study discussion rather than on how to "walk through" a method or approach to be used by the students in the case analysis.

By using the IRAC method, social studies teachers can help their students acquire a process for analyzing a case study. This building block method, which starts with smaller chunks of material, develops understanding relationships. It enhances the immediate application of learning by translating theory into practice to help students enlarge their vocabulary and attain new concepts. The method demonstrates to students that the correct analysis of a case gives them an evaluation and verification tool to assist them in making meaningful value judgments.

[**Acquisition of a Process to Analyze Case Studies**](http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.apollolibrary.com/ehost/detail?sid=59dc3bf9-b7cf-4e57-91a3-d2d1a961e7e1%40sessionmgr113&vid=1&hid=103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#toc)

A case study is a realistic application or demonstration of a theory or principle. The student is required to relate textbook material to a concrete situation and then make a practical judgment. Students can relate to case studies because they understand that they could possibly find themselves in similar situations.

After reading, viewing, or hearing a case, students use the IRAC method to recognize the facts that raise the issues. They then apply the elements of the rule or definition to the facts to verify or disprove the issues in the conclusion.

Students' analytical skills are developed through a systematic mastery of complex problem solving in a rational manner. Students become more aware of their own abilities and limitations and are given the opportunity to practice in a positive environment.

Another variation of this method includes informing students about the entire case-i.e., issues, rules, analysis, and conclusions-and then soliciting their input. In another method, the teacher presents two cases with all of the aforementioned elements and does not tell the students which is the correct one. The teacher then has them choose. The danger in using either of these methods is that the student is slighted. The teacher has done too much work for the students, who are not required to discover the issue, review the rule, and analyze the facts to determine the correct conclusion (Lee 19X3).

[**An Example of the IRAC Method**](http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.apollolibrary.com/ehost/detail?sid=59dc3bf9-b7cf-4e57-91a3-d2d1a961e7e1%40sessionmgr113&vid=1&hid=103&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#toc)

Case: John told Sara that his sports car would travel 150 mph on the freeway. John was anxious to impress Sara, so he crossed the double yellow lines to pass the car in front of him. A car was coming from the opposite direction and was forced off the road; the other driver sustained head injuries when his car overturned.

Issue: Has negligence been demonstrated?

Rule: Negligence requires that a duty was owed, that the duty was breached, and that the breach was the actual and proximate cause of damage.

Analysis: As a driver on the public freeway, John owed a duty of due care not to pass a car when double yellow lines divide the road. John had a duty not to expose this foreseeable plaintiff to an unreasonable risk of harm. John failed to act as a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances when he passed a car. John breached his duty of care when he violated a statute not to cross the double yellow lines. John is the actual cause of the other driver's injury; but for John, the accident would not have occurred. It was foreseeable that another car would be coming from the opposite direction. John is the proximate cause of the driver's personal and property damage because there is a connection between John's action and the result.

Conclusion: John is liable for negligence because he violated a statute.

Instead of plunging into the case analysis, the student takes the elements of negligence, applies them to the facts, and builds a relationship so that a conclusion can be reached. The five elements are essential if negligence is to be proved. The student is responsible for verifying each element in the facts that corresponds with the rule. The conclusion will be correct if this method is used.