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# How To Brief A Case (Quickstudy: Law)

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**AMERICA'S #1 LEGAL REFERENCE GUIDE**

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**HOW TO BRIEF A CASE**

**THE "SMART METHOD" OF BRIEFING CASES THAT SAVES TIME AND IMPROVES COMPREHENSION!**

**FOUR COLOR BRIEFING**

**RECOMMENDATION**  
BUY A 4-COLOR PEN FROM YOUR BOOKSTORE FOR USE IN THIS METHOD!

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Four Color Method was developed by Prof. Thompson D. March, who was a Professor of Law at the University of Denver, College of Law, for 30 years.
2. The Four Color method of book briefing will help you understand and remember a case far more quickly than the traditional method - once you have tried it a couple of times.
3. While the Traditional Method requires that you take time to write out every detail of a case, the Four Color Method requires that you under-
4. The methods require critical analysis.

**BENEFITS OF THE FOUR COLOR METHOD**

1. UNDERLINING SAVES TIME
2. GREATER ACCURACY
3. By underlining in your book, you are putting out what the judge actually said rather than your own interpretation of what the judge said.
4. After you have read several cases on the same topic, you will probably be far more cognizant of what the judge's opinion is at the beginning in understanding which of the judge's words were especially important.
5. By going back to the book in review, using the judge's own words, you will be able to make an accurate comparison between cases on your particular topic or a particular type of topic.

**REVIEW FOR EXAMS**

Review for exams will be faster and more accurate if you review directly from the cases you have colored in your book.

**USE OF FOUR COLOR METHOD**

1. **FIRST**
  - a. Read through the entire case, without underlining anything.
  - b. On your first reading, just make check marks in the margin beside things which you think are important.
  - c. By the time that you have read the case once quickly, you will understand the big picture - what the parties were fighting about, and who won.
  - d. You are ready to begin your legal analysis.
2. **SECOND**
  - a. Underline specific parts of the case in specific areas as explained in the following instructions.
  - b. **REMEMBER**
    - o To make the Four Color Method work, you must be extremely accurate and precise in your initial underlining.
    - o The time you spend deciding which color to use on a specific part of a case is actually a way of making yourself take time to distinguish the important parts of the case.

**SUMMARY OF FOUR COLOR METHOD**

**UNDERLINE IN **RED**** - What word when for what  
**BLACK** - The Black Letter Law which was applied  
**GREEN** - The facts which made the law apply  
**BLUE** - Anything else especially important in the case

**UNDERLINE IN **RED** WHO SUED WHOM FOR WHAT, AND WHO WON**

**LOCATION**

  1. **RED** is frequently found in the first or second paragraph of the case, and the last line.
  2. **UNDERLINE IN **RED** WHO SUED WHOM FOR WHAT, AND WHO WON**
  3. Just underline who the parties were, what they want, and who won how much - at every level of the case.
  4. **RED** is basically just to indicate who was playing the bill game, what the stakes were, whether plaintiff was getting damages, an injunction, or some other remedy; and, usually, the score of half games (who won, and by how much).
  5. When you are reading a case, and you are at a certain level in law school, you need to underline **or **RED**** who won at the trial court level; who won when the case was appealed to a higher level in the court system; and finally, who won in the various levels of case one was reading. When you come from a **RED** case to a **BLACK** case, you will have a clear picture of who won at each level - and who finally won the case.

**SECTIONS OF EACH CASE**

  1. In a long case, there will be several sections to the case, and you will be underlining the section and defendant whenever another defendant appears.
  2. If the court tells you who won for a particular section, be it **RED** - even if it occurs underlined in **RED** - even though it may be in the middle of the case.
  3. **RED IS IMPORTANT**
  4. In a long case, you will find, as you go through the case, that you will always be underlining, or that if one of the parties in the case is changed, or a defendant changes, the whole outcome of the case may be different. Listen to either the **RED**.
  5. After you have underlined **WHO SUED WHO FOR WHAT, AND WHO WON**, you are ready to go on to underlining the law applied in the case.

**UNDERLINE IN **BLACK** THE FEW SPECIFIC FACTS WHICH MAKE BLACK RULES OF LAW APPLY TO THIS CASE**

**KEY FACTS**

  1. Many of the facts described in a particular case are interesting, but of NO LEGAL SIGNIFICANCE.
  2. Usually there are only a few key facts on which the whole case turns - Underline these **KEY FACTS** in **GREEN**.
  3. When you are reading, the key facts - the **GREEN** facts - are the **KEY FACTS** which are most likely to affect the outcome of the case.
  4. **REDER BLACK, NOT BLACK**
  5. In reading the key facts, go back in the rules you have underlined in **BLACK** and figure out, for each rule, which specific facts were needed to make that specific rule of law apply.
  6. There will probably only be one or three specific facts which were necessary for each rule.
  7. If there were two or three facts which were **GREEN**, and there were only one **GREEN** fact, you have just underlined to match the **BLACK** for which it was necessary.
  8. For every **BLACK**, you should be able to underline the necessary **GREEN** - the facts - which must have been present at trial to prove the **BLACK** to be applied to this case.
  9. Whenever a particular fact is in a particular set of rules, the underlining facts **NEVER** have been present in the set of rules which you are going to an appellate court to argue. That is, the facts which you are going to argue in an appellate court will not be the facts which you are going to argue in the trial court.
  10. As an attorney, when you write an appellate brief, you will usually tell the court what the existing law is, by referring to the **BLACK** and **GREEN** cases, and the particular **BLACK** or **GREEN** which you are going to argue in the appellate court.



## **Synopsis**

Our chart shows you how to brief a case in a compact format that is simple to follow. Includes an actual brief that illustrates all the salient points.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Wow, Amazing amount of information regarding different Rules of Law, weather it be Federal or State. Specifics, seem to be really very accurate issues. Lots of examples of dealing with plaintiffs and defendants and with different courts. The color coding is really quite helpful. Love it!

I think I would recommend to beginners. I have never written a brief though I do work as a legal assistant. Reading this study guide has helped me understand the rules of writing a brief and how the color coordination is a great exercise to make is a smooth transition and keep a flow on your writing skills.

...this is a very useful system for presenting a position or illustrating an issue clearly and forcefully. The system uses colors to identify and separate items for clear, logical and persuasive writing. For non-legal use it takes a little bit of mental adapting but the method is very practical.

I have studied a lot of different fields and I never thought about color coding as an alternative to rewriting the material that is important.( color coding). The product has helped me study with more confidence.

As a paralegal, these notes come in handy. I like that it's not intense reading. Everything is at a glance. I don't do without them. I have the entire collection

Purchased to help with the paralegal program I'm doing. A great go to for an overview. Very happy with them!

obviously you won't get everything you need in a single page format, but this is a great tool to keep in your notebook to make sure that you are covering all points as you brief a case for class

I find the Quick study law guides to be a great value for the money. ...When you want to reference a fast reminder of the basics these condensed versions are handy...

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