

IRAC Method

Legal cases are usually examined using the following critical legal thinking method. First, the *facts* of the case must be investigated and understood. Next, the *legal issue* that is to be answered must be identified and succinctly stated. Then the *law* that is to be applied to the case must be identified, read, and understood. Once the facts, law, and legal issue have been stated, critical thinking must be used in applying the law to the facts of the case. This requires that the decision maker—whether a judge, juror, or student—*analyze*, examine, evaluate, interpret, and apply the law to the facts of the case. Last, the critical legal thinker must reach a *conclusion* and state his or her judgment. In the study of law, this process is often referred to as the **IRAC method** (IRAC is an acronym that stands for **issue, rule, application, and conclusion**), as outlined in the following:

IRAC method

A method used to examine a law case. *IRAC* is an acronym that stands for *issue, rule, application, and conclusion*.

I = What is the legal *issue* in the case?

R = What is the *rule* (law) of the case?

A = What is the court's *analysis* and rationale?

C = What was the *conclusion* or outcome of the case?

This text—whether in its print or electronic version—offer students ample opportunities to develop and apply critical legal thinking. The text contains real-world cases in which actual disputing parties have become embroiled. The law cases are real, the parties are real, and the decisions reached by juries and judges are real. Some cases are easier to decide than others, but all provide a unique set of facts that require critical legal thinking to solve.