

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
OFFICE OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

IRAC Trouble-Shooting Tips

Having a hard time with IRAC when writing essay exams? Most law students seem to have the toughest time with the application section. Here are the most common problems and ways to correct them:

- *Problem:* The answer is conclusory without an analysis.
Solution: Do not state who wins and leave it at that. You must explain *why* he/she wins. Correct this by using the word “because” as often as possible in your answer.
- *Problem:* No specific facts are included in the answer.
Solution: Do not generalize. Use the specific facts given and apply the law to them. (This does not mean that you recite the facts already stated in the question, rather incorporate the relevant facts into your analysis). As you go through the fact pattern, check off the facts you use in the application. The reader should be able to reconstruct the problem from the facts in your answer.
- *Problem:* The facts and law are isolated, rather than integrated.
Solution: Structure your sentences using “This element is met or satisfied” and the word “because.” Remember you are expected to match law or elements of law to the facts. You should not have a single sentence of pure law or pure fact; the two must be connected.
- *Problem:* The arguments are one-sided.
Solution: Include the opposing view, then your rebuttal to that view. Use MOR – Main, Opposing and Rebuttal Argument.

Taken from Ruta K. Stropus and Charlotte D. Taylor, *Bridging the Gap Between College and Law School: Strategies for Success* (Carolina Academic Press 2001).