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The Lawyer's Legal English Coursebook - a New Tool for Legal English Teachers.

A long awaited publication for Legal English teachers and students has finally reached Poland. The Lawyer's English Language Coursebook published in October 2007 by Global Legal English Ltd., an organization which developed TOLESⁱ examination, is now on sale in Polish bookshops.

The Lawyer's Legal English Coursebook has been written by Catherine Mason and Rosemary Atkins who are experienced teachers of legal English but also have a legal background. In their book the authors address the needs of law students and requirements of law firms towards the students and aim at development of students' deeply practical skills.

The book fits into content based approach in English Language Teaching and through its ten chapters on core subjects of law teaches develops not only the language but also explains complicated legal concepts and terms in clear and easy to understand way. The book does not use complex language structure, mostly Present Simple and Past Simple tenses, and therefore the texts in the book are suitable also for lower level students.

Each chapter of the book is composed of part A for students preparing for TOLES Foundation examination and part B for students preparing for TOLES Higher examination. The areas of law covered in the coursebook include: legal profession, banking, contract law, employment law, law of tort, understanding contracts, business law, company law and modern letter writing. Some topics usually appearing in TOLES exam papers were ignored and these will include tax law, real property and intellectual property whose elements, however, may be found in chapter on understanding contracts.

The main focus of the book is on lexis development. Specialized vocabulary is presented in specialized content by a number of reading and writing activities which include: gap filling, matching (concepts, definitions, synonyms), true-false, questions and answers all being typical activities of TOLES examinations. Students will definitely appreciate a rich collection of vocabulary on various areas of law gathered in each chapter and summarized in alphabetical *vocabulary lists* at the end of each part.

Another very useful feature of the book are so called *preposition and collocation banks* which contain the most characteristic collocations and prepositions for legal English and appear in the book regularly after some parts of material.

At the end of each chapter B there is a revision section which offers three activities for reinforcement of the knowledge of collocations, vocabulary and prepositions. Moreover, at the end of each chapter A and B the book offers TOLES Exam Practice which for the Higher level also includes listening comprehension exercises. This part of each unit gives the students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with TOLES examination format and work out their own exam strategies.

The chapter on Modern Letter Writing is a very strong point of the coursebook. It meets the requirements of the TOLES examination but it can also be used in any business correspondence course, as it presents correct layout of modern business letters, offers a collection of standard phrases, expressions and collocations, teaches the register of modern professional writing and contrasts British English standards with American English ones.

The chapters on Understanding Contracts are probably the most tedious in the book, yet the most important from the point of view of the law firms. Ability to understand legalese, parts of contracts and their clauses is an absolute must for law students if they wish to find a good job with a law firm. Therefore, they will have to struggle through these parts of the book if they wish to acquire the skill of understanding contracts.

The Lawyer's Legal English Coursebook contains some authentic materials such as advertisements, court forms, fact sheets, newspapers articles, statutes or leaflets which will be enough for law students. However, professional lawyers will probably feel unsatisfied and would wish for more realia.

On the whole The Lawyer's Legal English Coursebook is a very decent book which can be used as a preparation course leading to TOLES exam. However, it is not suitable as a sole coursebook because both teacher and students would find it too monotonous. The book was meant as a foundation of essentials to the course and must be supplemented with more varied and stimulating material. It will constitute a perfect groundwork and revision for TOLES examination for all levels students.

If only the book were cheaper...

ⁱ TOLES means Test of Legal English Skills and has been developed to meet the demand from law firms, companies, legal institutions, lawyers and law students by Global Legal English. Further information on: <http://www.toles.org.uk/>