3. Step one in the IRAC method: the issue

This chapter discusses the first step in the IRAC method of legal essay writing: namely, the identification of the major issue and the specific sub-issues that are in contention. It offers suggestions meant to help law students learn how to identify what question the examiners want them to answer, as well as how to write a two to three-sentence opening paragraph in approximately one minute. The chapter first considers the relationship of the IRAC method to legal practice before explaining in detail what an ‘issue’ is according to the IRAC methodology; why it is important to identify the issue explicitly in a legal essay or exam; and how to spot the major issues and the contentious sub-issues that arise out of a problem question. Examples of issue spotting are given. Writing tips are provided throughout the chapter.
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