This chapter discusses the origins and structure of modern land law, tracing the development of two kinds of estates and interests: at common law and in equity. It discusses the meaning of estates in land, and legal and equitable rights; examines the differences between the two; and explains why it matters whether a right in land is legal or equitable. The different effects of legal and equitable interests on purchasers of land are noted, because common law acts in rem and equity in personam. This gave rise to the doctrine of notice. The reforms introduced by the 1925 Property Acts are explained, including reduction of legal estates in land to two: the fee simple absolute in possession (freehold) and term of years absolute (leasehold)—Law of Property Act 1925, s. 1(1). Registration of land charges partially reformed the doctrine of notice, and overreaching was introduced. The Land Registration Act 1925 introduced compulsory registration of title; there are now two systems: registered and unregistered land.
2. The structure of land law

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