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## THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING EXTENSIVE READING INTO THE PROCESS OF TEACHING LEGAL ENGLISH

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**Abstract.** The article emphasizes the benefits of intergrading reading legal thrillers into the process of teaching legal English. The author compares extensive reading with intensive one and focuses on the benefits of extensive reading in learning a foreign language and presents some recommendations for organizing the process of including reading legal thrillers into teaching Legal English.

**Key words:** legal English, a legal thriller, John Grisham, legal terminology, extensive reading, intensive reading.

### Introduction

Teaching legal English is one of the most challenging, demanding, time-consuming but at the same time very interesting and satisfying areas of ESP. It requires from an ESP practitioner constant development of his knowledge of legal processes, searching the ways of optimizing the instruction through which students can acquire mastery of using language for law. Using authentic materials in the form of articles devoted to legal issues, case briefs, statutes, court documents, videos of mock trials, or trials, lectures given by professors of

25-november 2025

Law or lawyers are among the myriad resources that can be used in the classroom as materials for developing students' reading, listening, speaking and writing skills and for expanding their vocabulary. A valuable addition to this list would be legal thrillers with the help of which students can substantially increase their vocabulary of legal terms as well as other words, improve their fluency, understand legal processes and receive enjoyment through stepping into the world of fiction.

### **Discussion**

Reading can be categorized as extensive and intensive reading and a lot of research has been conducted on this front. Extensive reading involves reading a large volume of texts for general understanding and pleasure (Takayaku, 2014) while intensive reading is a detailed, focused analysis of shorter texts for deep comprehension of language and content. It can be compared with extensive reading, which involves learners reading texts for enjoyment and to develop general reading skills. Some researchers are interested to investigate the effect of extensive reading approach toward students' vocabulary growth since they believe that extensive reading is an appropriate approach in expanding the students' vocabulary. While others are interested to investigate the effect of intensive reading approach towards students' vocabulary growth, as they believe intensive reading is an appropriate method (Taembo, 2023 p.173). This study will investigate the effect of extensive reading because our numerous classroom hours showed that students' language skills have improved as a result of reading extensively. Our positive attitude towards extensive reading can be backed by numerous studies. For example, Ferdila (2014) investigated the benefits of using extensive reading in teaching reading. Sudirman (2017) investigated the implementation of extensive reading to improve students' vocabulary. Naqia (2019) investigated the role of extensive reading in developing students' reading skill. Those studies have also shown that there is a significant growth of students' English

25-november 2025

competence after the exposure to extensive reading approach (Taembo, 2023). Bell (2001) posits that there is significant difference in students' reading comprehension after the exposure both of extensive and intensive reading approaches that is extensive reading is more effective than intensive reading to reading comprehension achievement. Those theories have also shown that extensive reading is one of the approaches in teaching reading with the main purpose of creating the enjoyable reading class in which, students are free to read for pleasure. In this case, Jeon and Day (2016) encompassed the effect of extensive reading on reading rate and vocabulary. Further, Rong et al. (2019) stated that students generally have positive attitude and perceptions toward extensive reading.

In his article "Extensive and Intensive Reading Approaches in Teaching English Reading" Taembo compares extensive reading and intensive reading in terms of the main focus of these approaches. He states that in the process of extensive reading students focus more on the content. They read to understand the content, to gain information for real world purposes and receive pleasure from reading. The students are encouraged to read largely and based on their preference. Taembo compares it with intensive reading the main focus of which is on grammatical forms, discourse markers, words and their meanings. The students try look up the meaning of unfamiliar words in the dictionary or guess it from the context. Hence, intensive reading focuses on getting students to concentrate on exact meaning. According to Taembo (2023), both extensive and intensive reading can increase word meaning knowledge and produce gain in topical and word knowledge.

According to Babayan (2019) extensive reading has certain features, that intensive reading lacks. Extensive reading significantly changes the language learning mode of the learner, enabling him/her to submerge into the language domain effortlessly and navigate in it as the learner finds fit.

25-november 2025

Extensive reading in the process of teaching legal English can be carried out by reading such resources as court documents, articles, statutes, textbooks, books, legal thrillers and etc. We would like to draw attention to reading legal thrillers and recommend the ways it can be integrated into teaching Legal English. Legal thrillers can be a valuable resource that contribute to the increase of legal vocabulary of students, expand their knowledge of legal processes, develop their fluency and keep them interested and engaged throughout the reading process.

One of the most renowned writers of legal thrillers is an American writer John Grisham, whose works have become widely read and translated in the last decades. He is the author of thirty-seven fiction bestsellers. The most popular of his works are “A Time to Kill”, “The Pelican Brief”, “The Client”, “The Firm”, “The Rainmaker”. Many of Grisham’s novels have movie adaptations as well which proves the popularity of them. His legal thrillers help the readers gain valuable insight into the world of law, American legal system, how law works and how it affects people. Each novel gives the reader an opportunity to dive into different areas of law. For example, reading Grisham’s bestseller “A Time to Kill”, a reader can clearly gain knowledge about a step-by-step process from the time a criminal is caught and put in jail until the jury renders a verdict. The novel examines how the lawyers and prosecutors work throughout the trial, how jury is selected, what it is to be a jury, who are expert witnesses, how people can affect the trial and many other law-related issues. While reading these books students come across a myriad of terms related to the above-mentioned processes which will help them learn new terms, recognize the ones they have already known and memorize them better as the context will assist them in this process.

There has been some research on integrating reading Grisham’s novels into teaching legal English. The researchers Ageeva and Lapekina (2023) discussed the benefits of including reading “The Firm”, a legal thriller by Grisham into the syllabus of the EFL/ESP

25-november 2025

elective course. According to Ageeva and Lapekina (2023) legal concepts and principles along with much of the vocabulary already known to the students from the content of the EFL/ESP required course receive a vivid interpretation in the book, rendering it an appropriate educational material for law students learning a foreign language. The researchers believe that when used as authentic educational material closely connected to students' professional interests, the content of the book will provide the students with the opportunity to experience reading as a valuable cross-cultural activity, and develop their foreign language skills in a professional context. Polyakova (2024) concludes that linguistic and didactic potential of legal thrillers can contribute to the professional growth of law students. She states that including legal thrillers and films into teaching materials for the English language course and other law related disciplines is a promising didactic tendency in the methodology of teaching at higher education.

Integrating reading legal thrillers into the syllabus of Legal English can be carried by giving certain number of classes to extensive reading. For example, in the academic year 2024-2025, students majoring in International Law at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy had legal English three times a week and one of these classes was given to the class devoted to reading legal thrillers. During the other two lessons students worked with the textbook (Introduction to Legal English by Amy Krois Lindner and Matt Firth) which included intensive reading, working with the terms, working with the audio, case studies and etc.

For the class devoted to reading legal thrillers, groups have selected legal thrillers by Grisham. Some have selected "The Guardians" and some "A time to Kill". The classroom activities included discussing questions related to the chapters the students have read, analyzing legal processes, comparing them with their jurisdictions, creating glossaries for chapters, discussing legal terms, doing quizzes. The students mostly did the group



25-november 2025

discussions and a whole group discussion. One of the 5 self-study assignments that was required for the course completion was related to the book they were reading. The students were required to analyze any chapter they have selected and give a brief account of the events in that chapter, work with the key vocabulary, identify cultural differences and similarities, describe linguistic and cultural lacunas, give a brief account of the events in the chapter, compare character's line of behavior and etc.

In order to motivate students to read more, a competition was organized between them after the end of the course. The competition was called "The Battle of Bookworms", in which student competed by completing the following tasks: role play (each team performed a role play of any scene from the novel); describe the characters in the novel (the students chose the cards with the name of characters of the novel and were asked to give characteristics of that particular character), describe legal cases in the novel (the students chose the cards with the names of the legal cases described in the novel and gave details of it), question and answer session (each member of the team answered one question related to the information in the book), recognizing the legal terms (the teams were given an online vocabulary test on the key words in the book. The test was be based on the words from the glossary they have created).

### **Conclusion.**

In conclusion we can say that integrating reading legal thrillers into teaching legal English can have a positive effect on developing students' fluency. It significantly increases their vocabulary, expands their knowledge of legal processes and gives a context through which the memorization of words and legal terms becomes easier and more enjoyable.

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25-november 2025

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25-november 2025

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