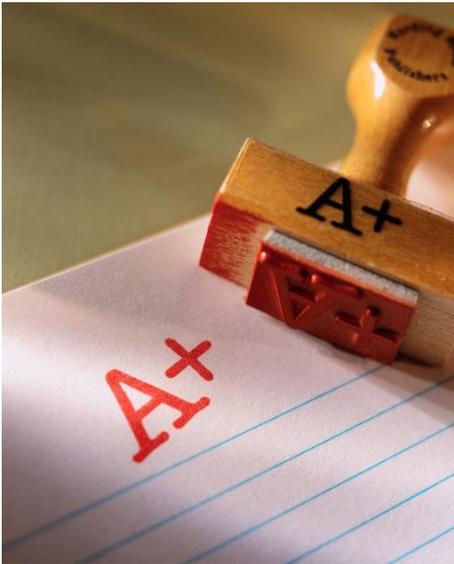


# Open Book Law Examinations

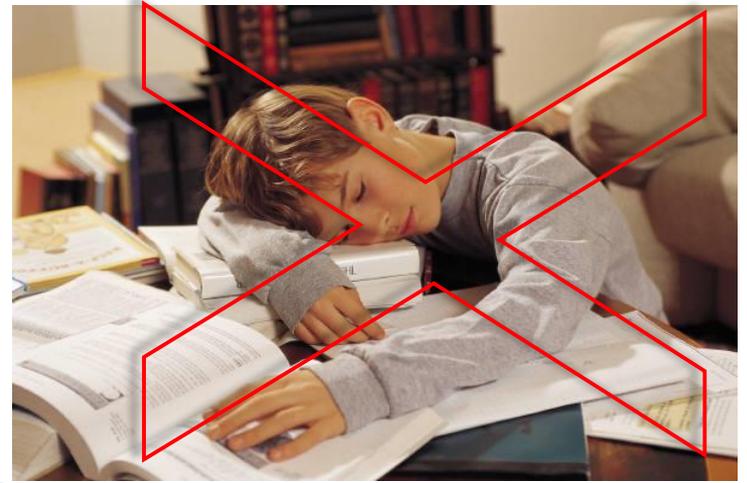


## Strategies and Common Problems

Nola Holmes  
First Year Advisor

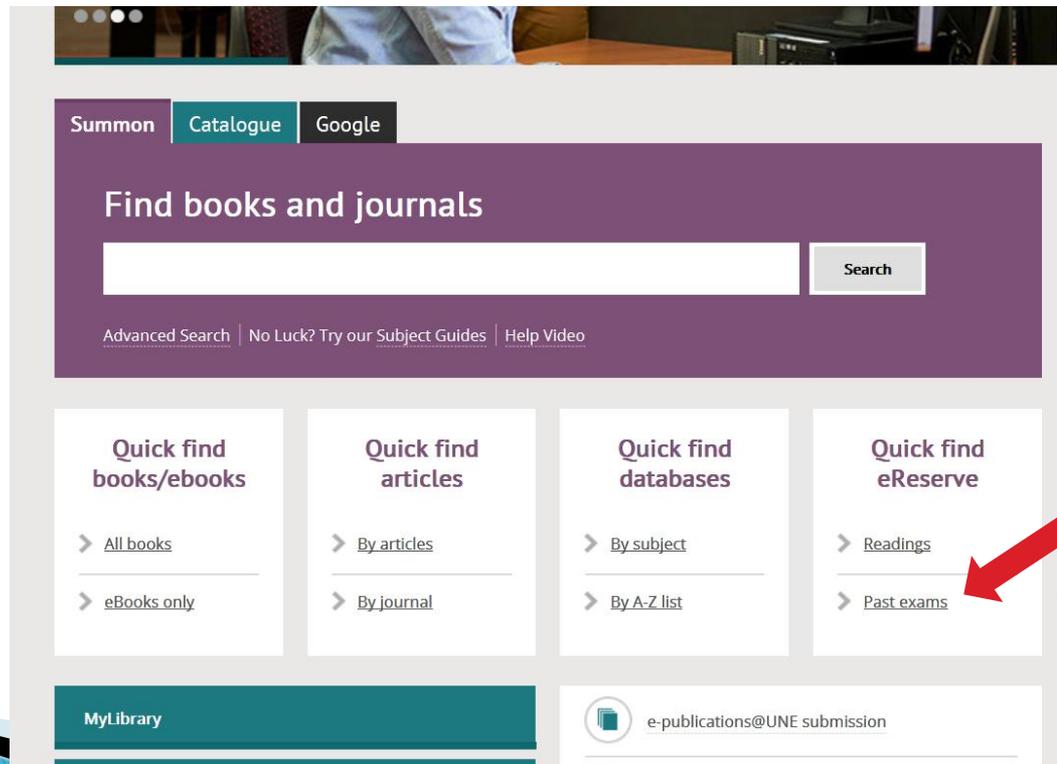
UNE Law & Business Schools

- ▶ **ALL** examinations require you to prepare and study
  - preparation + consistent effort = ↑ results
- ▶ You should **KNOW** your work thoroughly
- ▶ An **OPEN BOOK** exam just means that you can have some ‘back-up’ to help your memory in the exam
- ▶ Well-prepared students may not even use the books in an open book exam
  - they **KNOW** the work.



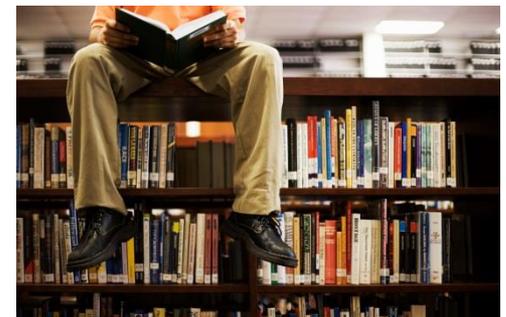
# Preparation for the exam:

- ▶ Go over 'recent' (<5 years old) **PAST EXAM PAPERS**, if they are available.
  - Older papers (>5 years old) may have different format/content
  - Some units/lecturers make these available through direct links on Moodle
  - All units–through the UNE Library site: <http://www.une.edu.au/library>



# Before the exam:

- ▶ Prepare early for the open book exam
- ▶ Identify and Review key topics and issues
- ▶ Make summaries from your text/s, lecture notes and other relevant resources
- ▶ Use a clear system to identify key issues you can access in the exam
  - External tags
  - Summary format
  - Contents page



# Sample Summary Format 1:

## Concept

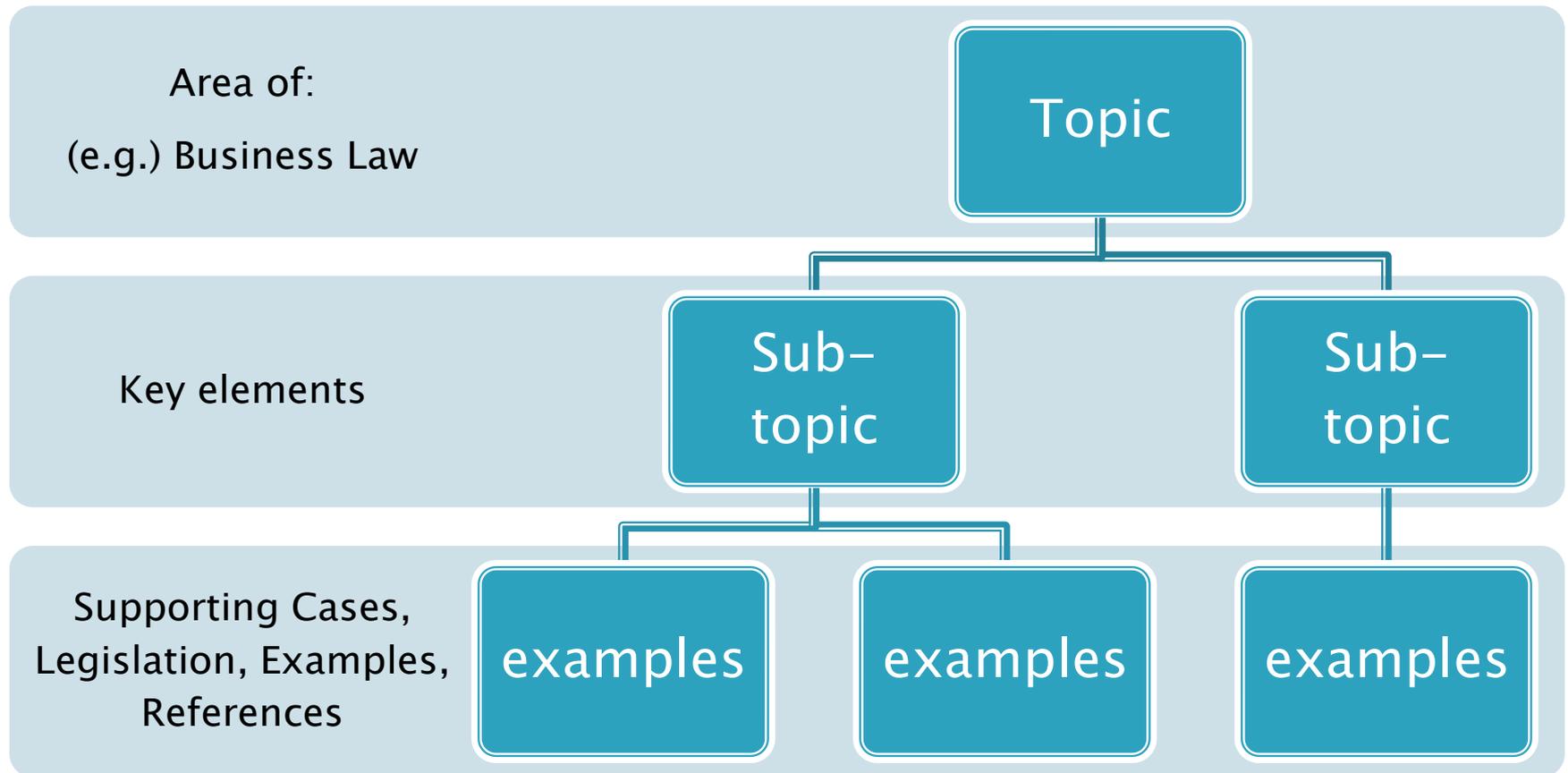
- ▶ 1:
- ▶ 2:
- ▶ 3:
- ▶ 4:
- ▶ etc

## Supporting

Cases, Legislation, Examples, References



# Sample Summary Format 2:



# In the OPEN BOOK exam:



Remember:

OPEN BOOK exams are designed to find out about YOU:

- what YOU know about the topic
- how you APPLY your knowledge of the topic

**Not** how much you can find and copy from a source.

**Use the exam time to think,  
develop and focus YOUR answer**

# Common Problems (1):



## ▶ Too many books to open

- There is not enough time in an Open Book exam to find and read lots of material from many different sources
- Keep it simple and focussed – limit your resources
- Know your resources, have key issues clearly marked and easy to find.

# Common Problems (2):



## ▶ Copying extensive sections

You will not receive marks, even if you reference the source correctly.

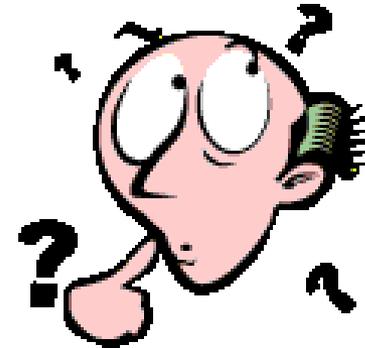
- Why?
- It is not YOUR answer, but a collection of information from other sources that just fills up the page

# Common Problems (3):

## ▶ Referencing in the exam?

What does THIS exam require?

- Basic mention?
- Author/case/source?
- Full references?
- No references?

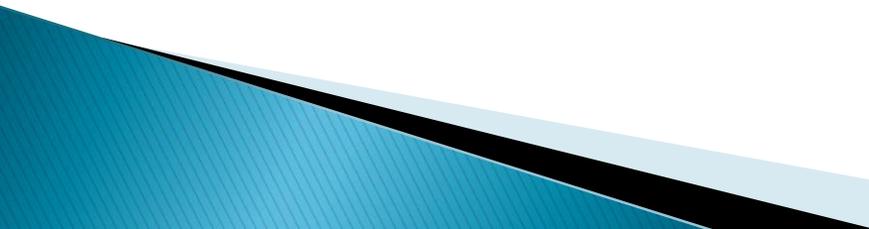


Find out before the exam and include that level of referencing in your summaries  
– AVOID PLAGIARISM –

# When answering a question (1):

- ▶ Identify the general topic area/s
- ▶ What is the focus of the question within that topic area/s?
- ▶ What am I asked to **do**?
  - break down the question into its parts

Consider: 1. **Instruction words** 2. **Topic words** 3. **Any focus/restrictions**



# When answering a question (2):

- ▶ What key terminologies should I include in my answer?
- ▶ Is there a reference/example I should include to support *my* answer?
  - State **why** it is relevant to the answer
- ▶ Make it easy for the reader (marker) to find your main points
  - **BE specific and obvious**
  - Don't leave the reader guessing what you are trying to say
  - Don't assume the reader will make 'mental leaps' to connect ideas in your answer – you must TELL them the links to prove that you know your content.

# When answering a question (3):

- ▶ **Focus on the specific task of the question**
  - Keep your answer **RELEVANT** to what the question asks
  - Show how your answer is tied to the focus of the question
    - Use key words/terms from the question in your answer
  - Don't fill your answer with everything you can think of or find in your exam resources about the topic – this is called 'dumping' information
  - 'Dumping' tells the reader (marker)
    - that you're not sure what is important and what is not
    - that you don't really *know* your work and how to *apply* it
    - that you expect the reader to search to find the answer
    - Remember – make it easy for the reader/marker to see your correct answer



# Open Book Exam Summary



## ▶ FOCUS on

- Time – to answer the question, not search books
- Limiting the use of resources to essentials
- Identifying and answering the specifics of the question



# Other UNE resources:

- **Law Library:** <http://une.au.libguides.com/law>
  - Referencing & Writing Support:  
<http://une.au.libguides.com/content.php?pid=292922&sid=2404914>

- **Academic Skills Office (ASO):**

<http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills>

- **Subject-specific writing: LAW**  
<http://learninghub.une.edu.au/subjectspecificwriting/ebl/law/index.html>
- **ASO Fact Sheets:** 2 page summaries – *MANY* topics, including exams  
<http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills/fact-sheets>
- **Online Study Skills Workshops:** self-directed workshops  
Learning Strategies (including exams)–Academic Reading–Academic Writing  
<http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/resources/academic-skills/online-study-skills-workshops>

# Other UNE resources:



## ➤ **Counsellors:**

- Support to succeed in all aspects of your studies

<http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/support/student-support/counselling>

## • **Tip Sheets:**

- Including: Emotional Well-being for Law Students, Relaxation, Procrastination, Dealing with Exam Anxiety, Improving Concentration, Staying Motivated and many more . . .scroll through the list at

<http://www.une.edu.au/current-students/support/student-support/counselling/tip-sheets>

And after this . . .



. . .then this !!!

