

# A MODERN LAW TEXTBOOK: WHAT IS IT LIKE

**Tetyana Remekh**

## **Abstract**

*The article considers the tasks, functions and structure of a modern textbook on the law fundamentals for the secondary school students. The conceptual approaches to the design of a competence oriented textbook as the main means of teaching the main issues of jurisprudence for students are underscored. The main (textual, non-textual) content components of the textbook "Fundamentals of Law" are described. The modern requirements for the structure and presentation of the text in the textbook "Fundamentals of Law" as well as the opportunities that are provided by a textbook for the organization of students' training in law fundamentals by a teacher are defined. The features of the textbook, its structure, the system of cognitive tasks that ensure the formation of the key and legal core competences of the 9th grade students are described in detail. Keywords: fundamentals of law, textbook, competence approach.*

## **Introduction.**

Since 2017-2018 academic year, in the 9th form of comprehensive educational bodies, a new subject "Fundamentals of Law" has been presented. This subject belongs to the social component of the educational area "Social Science" of the State Standard for Basic and Complete Secondary Education (hereinafter referred to as the Standard) [6]. The standard is fundamental to the curriculum of the subject "Fundamentals of Law" [1], which, in its turn, determines the content of the school textbook for the students in this subject as well as the main approaches to its design.

### **1. The tasks and functions of a textbook at the lessons of law fundamentals.**

Due to the peculiarities of school law, a textbook on the fundamentals of law is the main means of teaching students. For the overwhelming majority of students, a textbook on Law is a source of knowledge, the carrier of the subject

content. Moreover, it is a means of learning as it has a material form associated with the content of learning and the process of its mastering.

The selection of the educational material content in the textbook *Fundamentals of Law* is based on: systematic nature, novelty, scientific and practical value and relation to the present; taking into account the current trends in the development of legal science and the variability of Ukrainian legislation, the age features of the 9th grade students and their life experiences.

Textbook *Fundamentals of Law* (Grade 9) [4] is fully consistent with the curriculum whereas the content and the system of cognitive tasks presented therein provide for mastering the knowledge, abilities and skills defined by it.

The abovementioned educational book enables the implementation of a competent approach in teaching fundamentals of law for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. This approach is considered as a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, ways of thinking, views, values, personal qualities that determine the ability of a person to act successfully under new unpredictable conditions [2; p. 10]. The result of this approach implementation at the lessons of the Fundamentals of Law is to enhance key (primarily social and civic) competences as well as legal core competencies.

Competent approach to teaching the fundamentals of Law for students is implemented in the textbook systematically, fully and purposefully through the selection and composition of the main and additional texts, thorough selection of cognitive competency-oriented tasks for the learning, application and consolidation of legal knowledge by students, assessment of the knowledge acquired at the lesson learned.

The textbook on the fundamentals of law provides the ways to perform its main functions:

- information function which is performed by the author's text that reveals the main ideas of the subject as a whole, a specific section and topics in particular; system of reproductive, problem-based, research, creative tasks; additional

specific texts, author's illustrations (tables, diagrams, fragments of sources, etc.);

- motivational function, which involves maintaining and raising the cognitive interest of students in law; formation of the students' legal attitude at legal events, phenomena and processes; providing one's own estimation and revealing emotional-value attitudes;

- developmental function, which is performed through the texts that are diverse in content and a system of cognitive tasks aimed at developing cognitive interest, motivation and critical thinking of students, comprehension of new material, reflection and generalization of the studied material; the optimal combination of an individual, cooperative and group forms of learning;

- educational function, which is ensured both by the content of the author's and additional texts, based on the idea of the right as an art of good and justice, and a system of special tasks that stimulate students to reflect on models of their own behavior and the behavior of others in accordance with the rules of law; definition of the value of law and awareness of its role in the human life, society, state; contribute to the formation of an active civic position, social activity of students and life skills in a democratic multi-variable society.

## **2. What are the components of the content of the textbook *Fundamentals of Law*.**

Functions of the textbook *Fundamentals of Law* (Grade 9) [3] are performed through all its structural components. They include textual, non-textual and auxiliary components. The structural components of this school book are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Parts of the textual component of the textbook *Fundamentals of Law***

<b>Main text</b>	by content: introductory, informational, final
	by nature: explanation, description, problem

	statement, generalization
<b>Explanatory text</b>	footnotes with the definition of the main and additional concepts, in-text explanations in the brackets, a glossary at the end of the textbook, information about the documents submitted
<b>Additional text</b>	parts of normative legal acts and international documents

[4]

**Table 2. The parts of the non-textual component of the textbook *Fundamentals of Law***

<b>Methodological tools (comprehension tools)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions and tasks</li> <li>Introductory and final assessment (questionnaires)</li> <li>Text tables and diagrams</li> <li>Check lists - algorithms, tips</li> <li>Projects</li> <li>Questions for discussion</li> <li>Tests for self-control</li> <li>Forms for self-evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Orientation tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General content</li> <li>Rubrics and thematic symbols</li> <li>Signal symbols (icons)</li> <li>Highlighting terms, fragments of legal documents, legal situations, tasks by font and color</li> <li>Dictionaries</li> <li>Running titles, fly titles</li> </ul>

[4]

The additional texts in the textbook are primarily extracts of articles of laws and international acts that illustrate theoretical positions or are intended for the analysis and solving legal problems, as well as samples of legal documents

(applications, complaints, etc.). The number of such fragments in the textbook is minimized, while students are offered tasks for independent search with the involvement of Internet sources, which provide for the students' search for the relevant information with its further processing and application.

The non-textual component of the textbook comprises tables, diagrams, projects, practical tips and algorithms for applying certain methods (instruction for students).

The training projects are designed in the textbook in detail and are presented in the heading "Collaboration in the educational project" (for example: "Can Ukraine become a society of legal culture", "School Charter of Freedom of Thought, Speech, Views, Beliefs", "The Right is an Instrument of Problem Solution", etc.) [4]. Mastering the methods of project work helps students to acquire knowledge, form subject skills, develop skills in cooperation in a group, teach them to lead their daily lives productively, and define a line of behavior in a proper way.

An innovation of the textbook *Fundamentals of Law* is an introductory and final assessment (questionnaires for students), which allow to include life experience of students, to reveal their legal ideas and knowledge, as well as expectations from studying a new subject in the introductory lesson; in the final lesson when students fill in the same questionnaire, they determine the level of their mastery with legal knowledge as well as subject skills and compare the expected results with those that were actually achieved [4; 11-12; 214-215].

The textbook also provides practical tips for students (the "Good Tips" section), which describes the way to accomplish tasks or effective behavioral models in one or the other legal situations. Under the heading "If you want to deepen your knowledge and skills: a question for mini-studies," students will find problems for discussing or writing compositions of reflection.

**3. How a textbook meets modern requirements for the structure and presentation of the text.**

It is of common knowledge that a textbook is primarily an educational text; therefore, it should contain such means, which stimulate, motivate, programme, implement the activities of students and achieve their goals [3; p. 3-9; .3-4].

In the literature on textbook creation, it is found that the volume of texts in the textbook should be pedagogically expedient; their structure should be clear, and the statement should be consistent, logical and concise. The textbook *Fundamentals of Law* (Grade 9) successfully combines scientific and popular science styles, texts are made available and understandable for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students with an explanation of examples of complex legal concepts and definitions of legislation. The volume and complexity of the material of the paragraphs correspond to the possibilities of its assimilation by 14-15 year old pupils. Most paragraphs consist of three or four points that is the most optimal for the students of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. For the real and effective assimilation of educational information by all students without significant teacher assistance, the structure of the text is constructed as a combination of small semantic parts.

The presentation of the material in a textbook is dialogic; its textual and non-textual components are constructed as a kind of dialogue between authors and students. This approach to the presentation of the material in the textbook and the tasks for co-operative work (in pairs, in groups of three, small groups) provide a dialogue at different levels such as student-teacher, student-students, student-student.

The teaching material introduced in the textbook is based on the life experience of the students of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade; it develops a conversation about legal relationships, the participants are minors; it is practically significant for students (for example, it describes models of lawful behavior of subjects of legal relations); based on the presentation of the problem it allows students to think, to formulate and express their attitude to legal phenomena, processes, actions of participants of legal relations. The modern textbook should focus on the

practical significance of the acquired knowledge and the efficiency of educational outcomes [7; p. 426].

#### **4. The way the textbook helps a teacher to organize the learning process.**

A new textbook on the fundamentals of Law is designed in the way to allow a teacher to take into account the methodological stages of learning, to organize various types of students' cognitive activity in the class consistently. They include upgrading their knowledge and life experience; motivation to study the topic; assimilation and comprehension of new pieces of knowledge in the active cognitive activity (legal concepts, processes, phenomena, their features and relationships between them, examples illustrating and specifying them); formation and improvement of objective (for instance, to give examples of legal facts) and operational (for example, to analyze certain provisions of documents) students' abilities, generalization, reflection of the learned, bringing it into the system with the known, revision and consolidation of the learned material, further understanding of the learned content in the process of completing homework.

The system of multilevel cognitive tasks allows the teacher to organize the study of schoolchildren, taking into account both their individual characteristics and the level of education of the whole class, ensuring the gradual development of the legal core competence of students in a combination of cognitive, activity and axiological components.

In the textbook, the cognitive tasks also provide the optimal combination of various forms of learning in the educational process; they are the following: individual form (reading the text, writing compositions of reflection), frontal form (discussion of all students in the class) and cooperative form (work in pairs, groups). In order to organize such activities efficiently in the textbook, students are offered detailed instructions to perform certain tasks.

The design and content of the textbook allows a teacher to organize and give different types of lessons in the fundamentals of Law such as:

1. An introductory lesson when a teacher represents the objectives and the tasks of the new subject for the students, the textbook structure, working rules at the lessons, organizes the introductory questionnaire for students, etc.

2. Lessons in mastering new content, skills development when students' activities are devoted to the processing of texts that bear information which is new for them and making appropriate exercises.

3. Lessons of reflection and synthesis of learned material; for providing such lessons, the textbook contains the final comprehensive tasks (test tasks, legal situations and creative tasks).

4. Practical classes that are the lessons of development and improvement of skills of students in a specific topic (for example, "Appeal of citizens", "Property of minors", etc.), relevant content (legal situations, questions and tasks to them), a selection of additional sources and materials (fragments of regulations) and student's self-assessment sheets. By fulfilling cognitive tasks in practical classes, students learn to analyze legal situations, to evaluate facts, processes, actions of persons from the legal positions; to regulate their relationships with others; to choose behavior models in life situations in accordance with the rules of law; to apply legal knowledge in order to exercise and protect their rights, freedoms and legitimate interests.

The thoroughly developed paragraphs of the textbook reproduce the triple-element structure of the interactive lesson:

1. Introductory part, which uses the system of tasks and a series of questions to update and motivate students to study. The tasks offered to students are aimed at refreshing the knowledge, ideas, skills related to the subject under study; checking these knowledge and ideas; focus students on a new topic; create a context for the perception of new ideas.

2. The main part of the lesson when by means of cognitive tasks and exercises performed by students both individually and in cooperation with others, they comprehend theoretical ideas, concepts; track their own thoughts; draw



conclusions; link new content with personal experience; develop objective and operational skills.

3. The final part that is the stage of reflection and generalization; it means that the students summarize and interpret the main ideas of the topic, exchange opinions, express a personal attitude to legal phenomena, evaluate the acquired knowledge, apply self-assessment and mutual evaluation procedures, perform the relevant tasks.

In the curriculum for the Fundamentals of Law, the purpose of studying this subject is "to provide students with the basics of legal knowledge, enhance respect and love for their state as well as state-building and law-making traditions, provision of conditions for the formation of legal culture elements, legal guidelines and lawful behavior of schoolchildren" [1]. The achievement of this goal requires a modern innovative textbook that will fully implement the competent approach that is considered a leading one in the learning process. In fact, it is a competently oriented textbook on Law, which should ensure that students acquire the necessary and sufficient amount of legal knowledge, the formation of skills for their application in practical tasks and problem solving, and act on the basis of value orientations developed in the course of law studies [5; p. 377].

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## **Ремех Тетяна**

### **СУЧАСНИЙ ПІДРУЧНИК ІЗ ПРАВОЗНАВСТВА: ЯКИЙ ВІН**

*У статті розкриваються завдання, функції й будова сучасного підручника з основ правознавства для учнів основної школи. Наголошено на концептуальних підходах до конструювання компетентнісно орієнтованого підручника як основного засобу навчання учнів основ*

правознавства. Охарактеризовано основні складові елементи змісту підручника «Основи правознавства» (текстовий, позатекстовий компоненти). Визначено сучасні вимоги до будови й викладу тексту в підручнику з основ правознавства та можливості підручника для організації вчителем навчання учнів основ правознавства. Детально описано особливості підручника, його структуру, систему пізнавальних завдань, що забезпечують формування ключових та правової предметної компетентностей учнів 9 класу. Ключові слова: основи правознавства, підручник, компетентнісний підхід.

*name: **Remekh Tetiana***

*academic titles: **Ph.D. (Pedagogy)***

*full Transferable officially recognized by the organization: **Institute of Pedagogic of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine***

*the legal address of the organization (at least city and country): **Kyiv, Ukraine***

*a personal e-mail: **remehtatyana@gmail.com***

*actual professional or academic position (function and workplace): **Head of the department of social science education***

*membership in the most important professional or academic institutions: **no***

*where and when he / she graduated: **1986, Kyiv State Pedagogical Institute***

*professional orientation or specialization: **teacher of history and social science***

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