

Bennion on Statutory Interpretation

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How to Use this Book

The book is designed to serve at all levels, from mere dip to thoroughgoing research. Because it examines the subject in depth, the book may appear difficult. Like most appearances, that is deceptive. The difficult books are the ones that treat their material superficially. This is no more abstruse than what it describes.

The book takes the form of a Code (Man, said Lévi-Strauss, is a structure-making animal). Drafted in a way similar to that used for Acts of Parliament, the Code is divided into numbered sections. These are arranged in Parts, each with a brief introductory note. The Parts are presented in seven Divisions, as explained in the Introduction (pp 14-17).

Each section of the Code is followed by a Comment. These Comments include numbered Examples, many being relevant to more than one section. To facilitate cross-referencing, the Examples are numbered in the order in which they appear in relation to each section of the Code.

Suggestions to the user

To gain a thorough knowledge of statutory interpretation Read the book from beginning to end: it forms a connected narrative, with pictures and stories. The book also forms an introduction to, and summary of, Britain's entire legal system: see p 8 below.

For the basic rule of statutory interpretation See section 193.

To acquire an outline knowledge Read the Code without the Comments.

For a bird's-eye view Glance through the Arrangement of Sections.

To ascertain the rules, principles, presumptions and canons of construction and how they operate Study Part X.

To solve a particular problem Consult section 186.

To look up a particular point Use the very full Index.

For court technique See Appendix A.

For a checklist of interpretative criteria See Appendix B.

For a list of terms defined in the Code or Comments See Appendix E.

For the updated text of the Interpretation Act 1978 See Appendix C. All but relatively minor details of the Interpretation Act 1978 are also reproduced in the appropriate place in the body of the work. The explanatory white paper on the 1978 Act prepared by the Law Commission is reproduced in Appendix D

To see how to interpret European Community law See Part XXIX.

For guidance on the Human Rights Act 1998 See Part XXX.

For the updated text of the Human Rights Act 1998 See Appendix F.