

IRAC Activity: *Bard v. Jahnke* (2005)

Objective

Students will apply IRAC to a real court case and practice identifying how courts analyze liability involving domestic animals.

Part 1: Warm-Up (5 minutes)

Answer briefly:

1. What is the purpose of IRAC in legal analysis?
 2. Why are “Rule” and “Application” the most important parts?
 3. What makes a strong legal issue statement?
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Part 2: Case Overview (Professor-Guided)

Case: *Bard v. Jahnke* (N.Y. App. Div. 2005)

Key Facts (Students will refine below)

- Plaintiff (Bard) was injured while working on a dairy farm
 - A bull pinned him against a stall
 - The bull was roaming freely for breeding purposes
 - No prior evidence the bull had acted violently
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Part 3: IRAC Breakdown Activity

Step 1: Facts (5–7 minutes)

Write 5–7 key facts:

- Who are the parties?
 - What happened?
 - Where did it occur?
 - What is important about the animal?
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Step 2: Issue (5 minutes)

Write **ONE** sentence:

Start with:

“The issue is whether...”

(Focus on liability for injury caused by a domestic animal.)

Step 3: Rule (8–10 minutes)

Identify the governing rule:

- When is an owner liable for harm caused by a domestic animal?
- What must be proven?

Include:

- “Vicious propensities” requirement
 - Whether general knowledge about a type of animal is enough
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Step 4: Application / Analysis (10–12 minutes)

Write **4–6 sentences**:

- Apply the rule to these facts
- Address:
 - No prior violent behavior
 - Expert testimony about bulls being dangerous
- Use:
 - “Because...”
 - “Since...”

* This section is where most points come from

Step 5: Conclusion (3–5 minutes)

Answer clearly:

- Is the defendant liable?
 - Why or why not?
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Part 4: Guided Discussion (10 minutes)

Discuss:

1. Why didn't the court accept the expert's claim that bulls are generally dangerous?
 2. What kind of evidence *would* have changed the outcome?
 3. Should the law treat bulls differently from other domestic animals?
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Part 5: Extension (Optional / Homework)

Compare & Reflect (Short Paragraph)

- Do you agree with the court's reasoning?
 - Should owners of inherently strong animals (like bulls) have stricter liability?
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Quick IRAC Template

Issue:

The issue is whether...

Rule:

Under New York law, ...

Application:

Because...

Since...

Conclusion:

Therefore, ...

AI Use Statement: AI was used for structural organization and developmental outlining of author's core original ideas.