

1

SECTION 1

Introduction to law: basic terms

The following terms introduce you to the law and basic legal terminology. Below are the definitions. Find the definition for each term.

authority court govern judge
law enforcement agency lawyers legal action legal system
legislation rule the judiciary ~~tribunal~~

- 1 a body that is appointed to make a judgement or inquiry tribunal
- 2 a country's body of judges _____
- 3 an act or acts passed by a law-making body _____
- 4 behaviour recognized by a community as binding or enforceable by authority _____
- 5 legal proceedings _____
- 6 an official body that has authority to try criminals, resolve disputes, or make other legal decisions _____
- 7 an organization responsible for enforcing the law, especially the police _____
- 8 a senior official in a court of law _____
- 9 the body or system of rules recognized by a community that are enforceable by established process _____
- 10 the control resulting from following a community's system of rules _____
- 11 members of the legal profession _____
- 12 to rule a society and control the behaviour of its members _____



Lawyer is a wide term which refers to all professionals working in the legal profession; it does not refer to a specific job.

2

SECTION 1

Introduction to law: basic concepts

Complete the following text about basic legal concepts using the following words and phrases. Use each term once.

authority court govern judges
law enforcement agency lawyers legal action ~~legal systems~~
legislation rule the judiciary tribunal

Why do we have laws and legal systems ? At one level, laws can be seen as a type of _____ which is meant to _____ behaviour between people. We can find these rules in nearly all social organizations, such as families and sports clubs.

Law, the body of official rules and regulations, generally found in constitutions and _____, is used to govern a society and to control the behaviour of its members. In modern societies, a body with _____, such as a _____ or the legislature, makes the law; and a _____, such as the police, makes sure it is observed.

In addition to enforcement, a body of expert _____ is needed to apply the law. This is the role of _____, the body of _____ in a particular country. Of course, legal systems vary between countries, as well as the basis for bringing a case before a court or _____. One thing, however, seems to be true all over the world – starting a _____ is both expensive and time-consuming.



Nouns in English can be divided into countable and uncountable. Countable nouns have a singular and a plural form; uncountable nouns have only one form. **Law** is a countable noun; **legislation** is an uncountable noun.

4

SECTION 1

The subject matter of the legal system

- A** One way of classifying and understanding the law is by subject matter. Lawyers often divide the law and the legal system into two: criminal law and civil law. Classify the following terms into the appropriate column below. Two terms can appear in both columns.

compensation contract crime damages family law
 intellectual property ~~plaintiff~~ police private individual
 prosecution the accused the defendant theft
 to bring a case to bring an action to fine
~~to charge someone with something~~

Criminal	Civil
to charge someone with something	plaintiff

- B** Now complete the following text contrasting criminal and civil law by choosing from the words/phrases above.

Criminal Law vs Civil Law

One category is the criminal law – the law dealing with crime. A case is called a _____. The case is instituted by the prosecutor, who takes over the case from the _____ who have already decided _____ the defendant (or _____) with specified crimes. The civil law is much more wide-ranging. The civil law includes the law of _____ and _____. In a civil case, the _____, normally a _____ or company, _____ to win _____. If the case is proven (on the balance of probabilities, meaning that one is more sure than not), the defendant normally pays the plaintiff _____ (money).



Notice the distinction between **damage** and **damages**. **Damage** (uncountable singular) refers to physical harm; **damages** (uncountable plural) refers to financial compensation that a person claims for injury or harm that has been suffered.