

Learning about the Courts



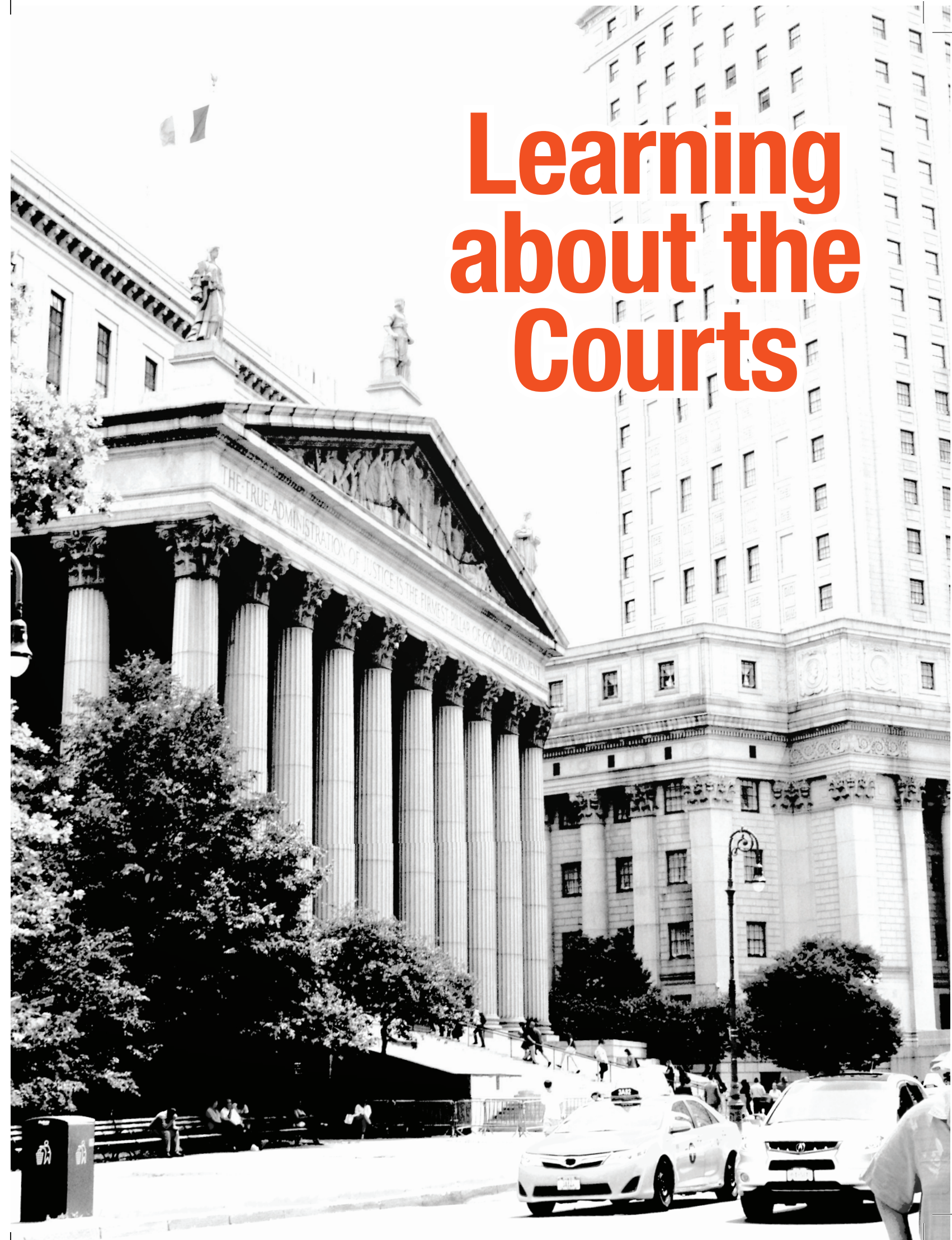
THANK YOU TO:

Office of Public Affairs, Melanie Sue

Office of Public Information, Arlene Hackel

Office of Language Access, Ann Ryan

Unified Court System's Graphics and Print Department



A Letter from the Chief Judge of the State of New York

Welcome!

I'm so happy you're learning about New York's courts. New York has many different types of courts across the state. All of our courts have one thing in common: they solve problems. When people or businesses have a disagreement, or when someone breaks the law, the courts help find a solution. *Millions* of cases come through New York's court system each year.

I love working as a judge because I get to learn new things and help people every day. If you would like to work in New York's courts too, there are many wonderful career paths you could choose from. For example:

- If you are friendly and like helping people, you might like to be a court officer. Court officers greet everyone who comes to court, and they make sure everyone who comes to court stays safe.
- If you like observing people and are good with details, you might like to be a court reporter. Court reporters type *everything* that gets said in a courtroom, so we have an accurate record of what happened in case we need to review it later.
- If you are good with languages, you might like to be an interpreter. Interpreters make sure everyone who comes to court understands what is being said in the courtroom—no matter what language they speak.
- If you like helping people stand up for their rights, you might like to be a lawyer. Lawyers come to court to help their clients tell their stories and make sure that their clients are treated fairly in court.
- And if you like helping people solve their problems, you might like being a judge—like me! It is my job to understand what the law is and to apply it in every case that I decide.

I urge you to learn everything you can about how our government works while you are in school. Learn about how we did things in the past. Think hard about how we can improve things in the future. By learning everything you can now, you will be better able to make changes when it is your turn to lead the state and the nation. The future belongs to you!

Warmly,

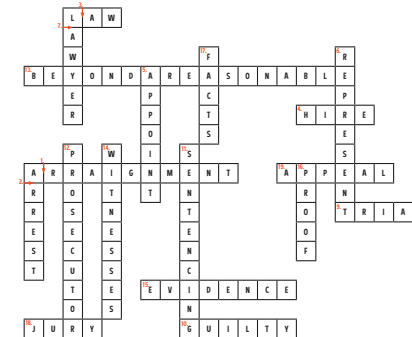


Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson



ANSWER KEY

SOLVE THE CASE



A criminal case begins with the defendant's **ARREST**.

The accused is brought before the court for **ARRAIGNMENT** on the charge.

During the arraignment, the accused is informed of the charge and advised of his or her right to a **LAWYER**.

If a defendant cannot afford to **HIRE** an attorney and requests one, the court will **APPOINT** a lawyer to **REPRESENT** the defendant without cost to the defendant or defendant's family.

In New York State, **LAW** enforcement officials must bring an arrested person before the court for arraignment within 24 hours.

During arraignment, a defendant can plead not guilty. If a not guilty **PLEA** is entered, the case is set down for **TRIAL** at a later date.

If a **GUILTY** plea is entered, the court sets a **SENTENCING** date.

If the case goes to trial, the **PROSECUTOR** must establish the defendant's guilt **BEYOND A REASONABLE** doubt, producing relevant **WITNESSES** and other **EVIDENCE**.

The defendant does not have to offer any **PROOF** on his or her own behalf.

Based on all the **FACTS** of the case, the **JURY** will decide whether or not the defendant is guilty.

If found not guilty, the accused is set free.

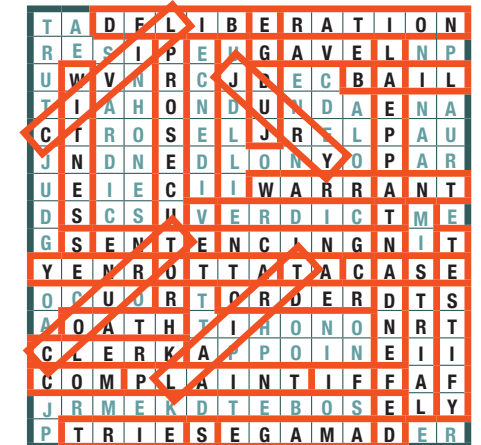
If found guilty, the defendant will come back to court for sentencing.

After sentencing, the defendant has the right to **APPEAL** to a higher court.

THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE QUIZ

1. **C. COURT REPORTER** - The Court Reporter records all proceedings in the courtroom, including testimony of the witnesses, objections made to evidence by the attorneys; and lists and marks for identification any exhibits that become part of the record.
2. **B. WITNESS** - A witness is a person who is called to testify before a court on what he has seen, heard or observed.
3. **C. JURORS** - Jurors are a group of people summoned to appear in court to decide a case.
4. **B. BENCH WARRANT** - Order issued by a judge for the arrest of a person who fails to appear in court.
5. **B. 7** - There are 7 Judges on the New York State Court of Appeals.
6. **C. COURT OF APPEALS** - The Court of Appeals is the highest court in New York State. It is the court of final resort.
7. **B. HUNG JURY** - A hung jury is another term used to describe a dead-locked jury.
8. **C. FOREPERSON** - The foreperson has the responsibility for speaking for the entire jury. This is the person who presides over the jury's deliberation efforts.
9. **B. DEFENDANT** - In a criminal case a defendant is the person accused of committing a criminal act.
10. **B. SEARCH WARRANT** - A search warrant is an order issued by a judge directing a law enforcement officer to search for, and seize, any property that may serve as evidence.
11. **B. STATUTE** - A statute is a written law of the legislature declaring, commanding, or prohibiting something.
12. **C. SETTLEMENT** - In a settlement the parties to a case come to an agreement which ends their case.
13. **C. LADY JUSTICE** - Lady Justice, usually portrayed as a blindfolded woman carrying the scales of justice, is symbolic of fairness, liberty and justice.
14. **B. CHAMBERS** - The chambers is a judge's private office which the judge uses when not on the bench.
15. **B. A DOCUMENT** - the court gives people to tell them that they must come to court.

SEARCH FOR JUSTICE!



LETTERS OF THE LAW

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 1. Civil | 11. Verdict |
| 2. Jury | 12. Money |
| 3. Crime | 13. Jail |
| 4. Oath | 14. Attorney |
| 5. Trial | 15. Deliberate |
| 6. Gavel | 16. Witness |
| 7. Appeal | 17. Guilty |
| 8. Judge | 18. Innocent |
| 9. Clerk | 19. Truth |
| 10. Court | 20. Sentence |

COURT VOCABULARY MATCH

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Defendant | 11. Crime |
| 2. Trial | 12. Jury |
| 3. Witness | 13. Oath |
| 4. Attorney | 14. Sentence |
| 5. Evidence | 15. Civil |
| 6. Court | 16. Guilty |
| 7. Deliberate | 17. Plaintiff |
| 8. Judge | 18. Appeal |
| 9. Verdict | 19. Clerk |
| 10. Prosecutor | 20. Complaint |

MYSTERY WORDS

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| $5 + 4 = 9 = I$ | $18 + 3 = 21 = U$ |
| $11 - 8 = 3 = C$ | $17 - 14 = 3 = C$ |
| $26 - 4 = 22 = V$ | |
| $6 + 6 = 12 = L$ | The mystery words are: |
| $10 - 1 = 9 = I$ | CIVIL COURT |
| $10 + 5 + 5 = 20 = T$ | |
| $8 + 7 = 15 = O$ | |
| $13 + 5 = 18 = R$ | |

COURT FILL-IN

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Innocent | 9. Court of Appeals |
| 2. Attorney | 10. Misdemeanor |
| 3. Oath | 11. Surrogate's Court |
| 4. Testimony | 12. Transcript |
| 5. Verdict | 13. Chambers |
| 6. Sentence | 14. Clerk |
| 7. Plaintiff | 15. Appellate |
| 8. Prosecutor | |

MYSTERY WORDS

1. Solve the math problems.
2. Then use the chart below to find the correct letter.
Example: $8 + 6 = 14 = N$.
3. Then use the letters to find the Mystery Words.

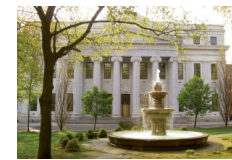
$5 + 4 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$	$10 + 5 + 5 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$
$11 - 8 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$	$8 + 7 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$
$26 - 4 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$	$13 + 5 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$
$6 + 6 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$	$18 + 3 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$
$10 - 1 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$	$17 - 14 = \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

1=A	2=B	3=C	4=D	5=E	6=F
7=G	8=H	9=I	10=J	11=K	12=L
13=M	14=N	15=O	16=P	17=Q	18=R
19=S	20=T	21=U	22=V	23=W	24=X
25=Y	26=Z				

The MYSTERY WORDS are:

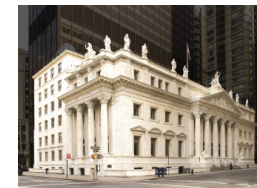
THE COURTS AND WHAT THEY DO

Court of Appeals



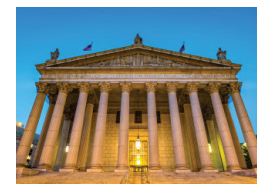
The Court of Appeals is the highest court in the state. The Court of Appeals hears both criminal and civil appeals.

Appellate Division of Supreme Court



The Appellate Division is the intermediate appellate court of the state. It handles appeals in civil and criminal cases. The Appellate Division is divided geographically into four departments.

Supreme Court



Supreme Court is the state-wide trial court covering both criminal and civil cases. It can hear any type of case brought before it, except for claims against the state. The Supreme Court is divided into 13 judicial districts statewide.



Court of Claims

The Court of Claims hears cases brought against the State of New York or certain state entities.

Family Court



Family court handles matters involving families and children. It hears matters involving young people between ages of 7 and 18, who are charged with offenses that would be a crime if committed by an adult. It also handles cases involving adoption, guardianships, foster care, domestic violence, child protection, custody, and visitation.



Surrogate's Court

Surrogate's Court handles all matters relating to the estates of people who have died, as well as guardianships and adoptions.

County Court



A County court exists in each county of the state outside New York City. County courts handle felony criminal cases and some civil cases with claims that do not exceed \$25,000.

Local Courts

NYC Civil Court

The NYC Civil Court has jurisdiction over civil matters involving amounts that do not exceed \$50,000.

NYC Criminal Court

The NYC Criminal Court has jurisdiction over criminal matters at the initial stages and handles both misdemeanors and violations to disposition.

Housing Court

Housing Court handles landlord-tenant matters and cases involving housing code violations. There are housing courts in New York City and Buffalo.

Small Claims Court

Small Claims Court handles cases brought by individuals for amounts up to \$10,000. This court is designed to make it easier for a person to sue for small amounts of money without having to be represented by an attorney.

Town, Village and City Courts

There are almost 1,300 Town, Village and City Courts in New York State outside of New York City. These courts have jurisdiction over criminal matters at the initial stages and handle both misdemeanors and violations. These courts also handle vehicle and traffic offenses, civil matters and landlord-tenant cases when there is no housing court in that location.

COMMON COURTROOM TERMS

LEGAL TERMS

Accomplice
Someone who helps another person commit a crime

Acquittal
Decision reached by a jury, based on all the evidence presented at a criminal trial, that the defendant has not been proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt

Arraignment
In criminal cases, the appearance by a person charged with a crime before the judge to enter a plea

Assigned Counsel
Lawyer appointed by the court to represent a person who cannot afford to pay a lawyer

Bench Warrant
Order issued by a judge for the arrest of a person who fails to appear in court

Booking
Process of photographing, fingerprinting, and recording information about a person following their arrest

Contract
Agreement between two people, usually involving payment for goods, services, or real estate

Cross Examination
Questions posed to a witness who has testified for the other side

Damages
Money awarded by a court to a person injured by the unlawful act or negligence of another party

Discovery
Legal process which takes place before a trial, where one party learns what evidence the opposing party will introduce during the trial

Docket
List of cases to be heard by a court

Exhibit
Document or article used as evidence during a trial or court hearing

Felony
Serious crime, such as robbery or assault with a deadly weapon, for which the punishment is a prison sentence of at least one year

Grand Jury
Group of citizens assembled to hear evidence and consider allegations of criminal behavior and decide if there is enough evidence to charge the party under investigation with a crime

Hung Jury
Jury that cannot agree upon a verdict

Miranda Warning
Before questioning suspects, the police warn people in custody of their constitutional rights to remain silent and to have an attorney

Misdemeanor
Less serious crime, such as trespassing, for which the punishment is generally a fine or up to a year in jail

Motive
Reason why a person commits an act



COURT VOCABULARY MATCH

1. The individual charged with a crime

2. The legal process that uses a jury to determine who wins a lawsuit

3. A person that testifies at trial

4. Lawyer

5. The information presented at trial

6. The place where a trial or appeal takes place

7. To consider all the evidence presented

8. A person who presides over the court

9. The decision of the jury

10. The lawyer who conducts the case in a criminal trial

11. What a defendant is accused of

12. A group of citizens that examines evidence

13. A witness swears to tell the truth

14. The jail term the defendant must serve

15. A type of case between people, usually over money

16. If the defendant is not innocent

17. The person who brings a civil case

18. Continuing the case to see if the trial result was wrong

19. Assists a judge with court details

20. The paper filed to begin a civil case
-

WORD BANK

- Appeal

Attorney

Civil

Clerk

Complaint
- Court

Crime

Defendant

Deliberate

Evidence
- Guilty

Judge

Jury

Oath

Prosecutor
- Plaintiff

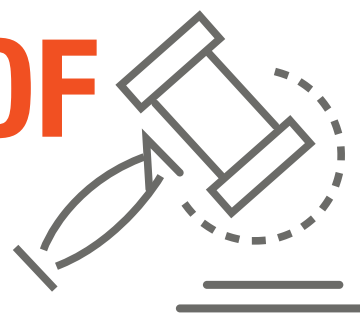
Sentence

Trial

Verdict

Witness

LETTERS OF THE LAW



Unscramble the vocabulary words listed below

1. CVIIL
2. YRUJ
3. ERIMC
4. HAOT
5. RAITL
6. VLEGA
7. EALPAP
8. GEDUJ
9. RELKC
10. TCRUO
11. REDVITC
12. YNOEM
13. LJAI
14. NORTATYE
15. LIEDBRETAE
16. SWINTSE
17. LYTIUG
18. TENNNCOI
19. HTURT
20. ENSTCEEN

WORD BANK

Appeal
Attorney
Civil
Clerk
Court

Crime
Deliberate
Gavel
Guilty
Innocent

Judge
Jail
Jury
Money
Oath

Sentence
Trial
Truth
Verdict
Witness

Parole

Release from state prison after serving part of a sentence, with supervision by a parole officer

Plaintiff

Person who starts a civil lawsuit

Plea

Defendant's declaration in open court that they are guilty or not guilty

Probable Cause

Sufficient legal basis for allowing the search and seizure of evidence or arrest of a person

Prosecutor

A lawyer who represents the government in a criminal case

Search Warrant

Written order issued by a judge to search a specific area for evidence of a crime

Sentence

Punishment ordered by the court for a person found guilty of a crime

Testimony

Evidence given by a witness under oath

Transcript

Official record of all the testimony and exhibits presented during a court proceeding

Verdict

Jury's decision, reached after it has considered all evidence presented during the trial



COURTROOM AND STAFF

Bench

Judge's desk, usually raised, where the judge sits while presiding in the courtroom

Chambers

Private office of a judge

Court Clerk

Person who reviews court documents, swears in witnesses, and makes sure trial evidence is safely kept

Court Interpreter

Person fluent in another language who translates for witnesses, defendants, and other court users who do not speak or understand English

Court Officer

Peace officer who maintains order and provides security in the courtroom

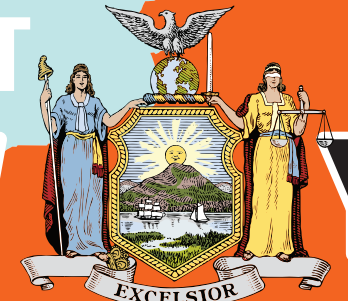
Court Reporter

Person trained to record word-for-word the testimony and discussions that take place during a court proceeding

Judge

Public official who oversees court trials and hearings, sentences offenders, and issues court orders and decisions

FUN FACTS ABOUT NEW YORK



NY CAPITAL
Albany

NICKNAMES
Empire State

MOTTO
Excelsior
(Ever Upward)

11TH STATE
NY Gained
Statehood
July 26, 1788

STATE'S NAME
NY was named
after England's
Duke of York

STATE BIRD
Bluebird

STATE FLOWER
Rose

STATE FRUIT
Apple

STATE TREE
Sugar Maple

STATE ANIMAL
Beaver

STATE SONG
"I Love
New York"

LARGEST CITIES IN NY:
New York,
Buffalo,
Rochester,
Yonkers &
Syracuse

NY hosted the
**1ST US CHESS
TOURNAMENT**
in 1843

**30TH LARGEST
STATE IN THE US!**
NY is 47,224
square miles

**4TH MOST
POPULATED
STATE IN THE US!**
2020 Census:
Pop. 20,201,249

In 1901 NY was
the 1st state to
require **LICENSE
PLATES** for cars
which were home-
made until 1910!

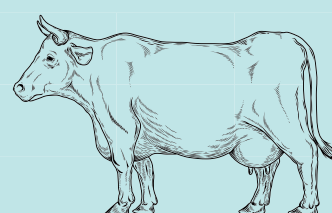
6 BORDER STATES
Connecticut,
Massachusetts,
New Jersey,
Pennsylvania,
Vermont & shares
a water border with
Rhode Island

**NY HAS THE OLDEST
RUNNING NEWSPAPER
IN THE US!** Alexander
Hamilton founded
The **NEW YORK POST**
in 1803.

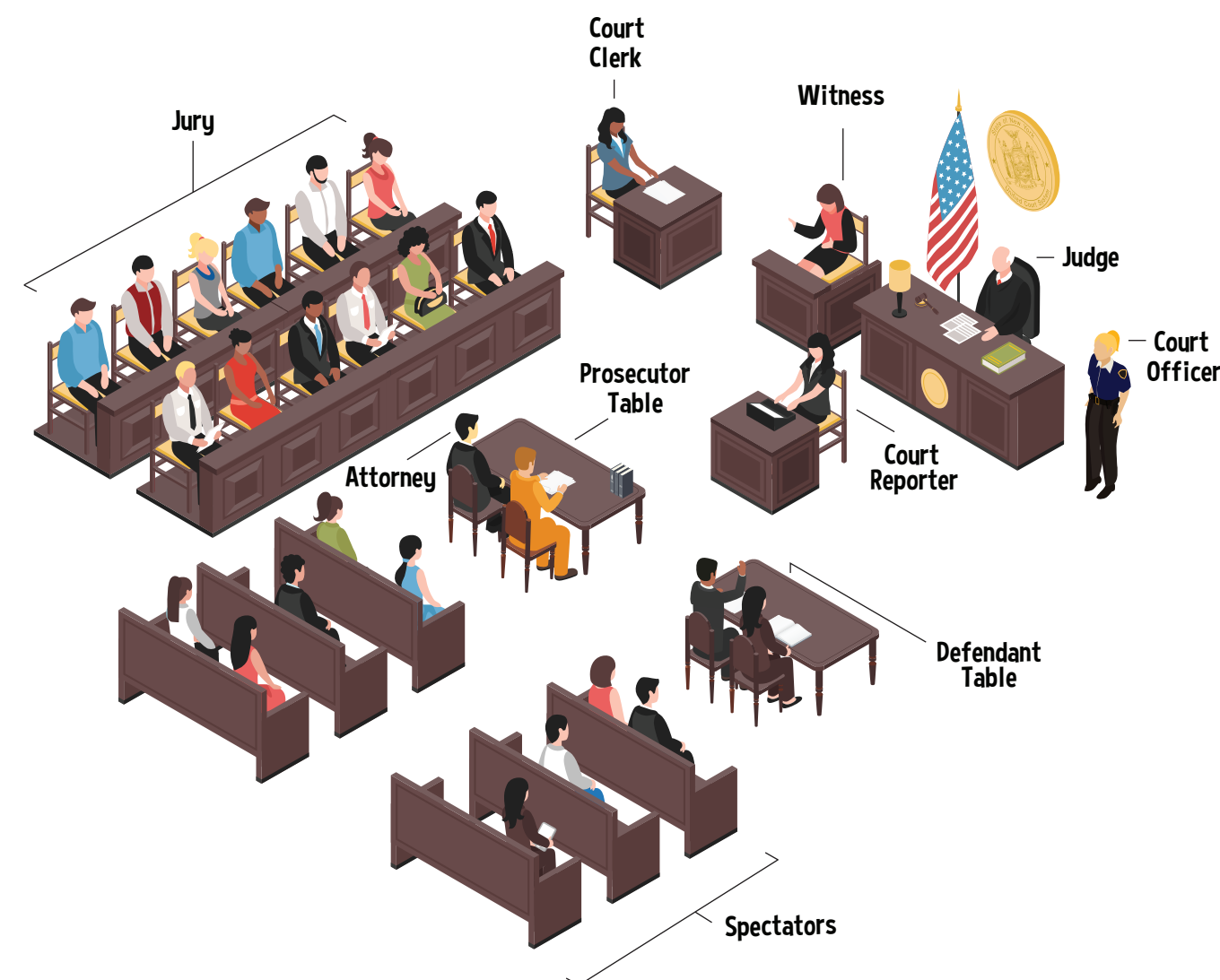
**JOSEPH
GAYETTY**
of NYC
introduced
toilet paper
to the United States
in 1857.

The **OLDEST CATTLE
RANCH** in the US was
started in 1747
Montauk, Long Island.

In 1895 Gennaro Lombardi
opened the 1st US pizzeria
in New York City.



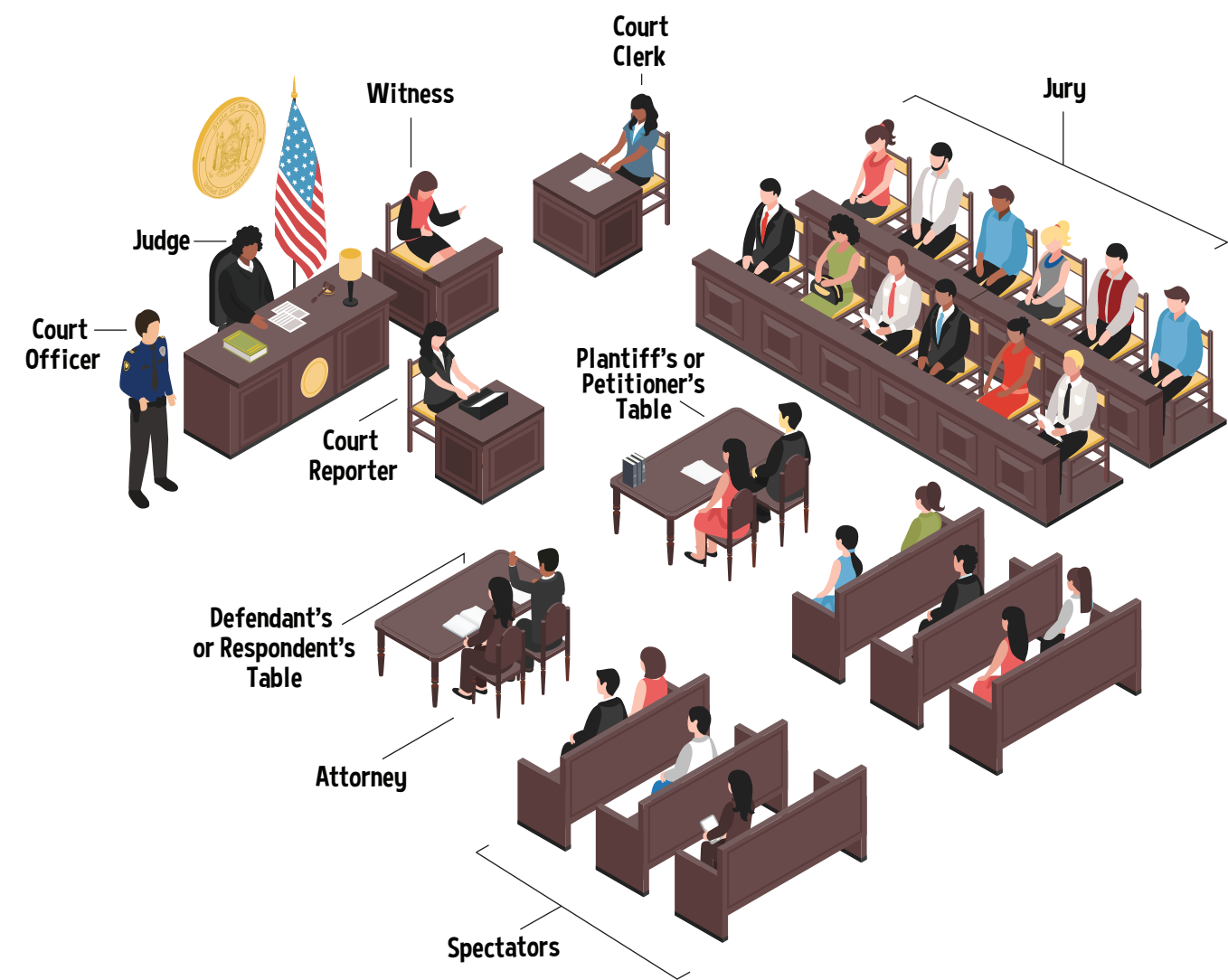
CRIMINAL COURT



ENGLISH	SPANISH	FRENCH
Judge	Juez	Juge
Court Clerk	Escribano	Greffier
Court Officer	Oficial del Orden Público	Auxiliaire de Justice
Court Reporter	Taquígrafo/a	Sténographe
Court Interpreter	Intérprete judicial	Interprète Judiciaire
Juror	Jurado	Juré
Petitioner	Demandante	Pétitionnaire
Plaintiff	Demandante	Plaignant(e)
Respondent	Demandado	Répondant(e)
Defendant	Acusado	Prévenu(e)
Prosecutor	Fiscal	Procureur
Defense Attorney	Abogado defensor	Avocat(e) de la Défense



CIVIL COURT



ENGLISH	SPANISH	FRENCH
Judge	Juez	Juge
Court Clerk	Escribano	Greffier
Court Officer	Oficial del Orden Público	Auxiliaire de Justice
Court Reporter	Taquígrafo/a	Sténographe
Court Interpreter	Intérprete judicial	Interprète Judiciaire
Juror	Jurado	Juré
Petitioner	Demandante	Pétitionnaire
Plaintiff	Demandante	Plaignant(e)
Respondent	Demandado	Répondant(e)
Defendant	Acusado	Prévenu(e)
Prosecutor	Fiscal	Procureur
Defense Attorney	Abogado defensor	Avocat(e) de la Défense

DID YOU KNOW?

The first court in what is now New York State was created in 1653 in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam (now Manhattan).

New York City was the seat of the major colonial and state courts until 1797, when the capital was moved to Albany.

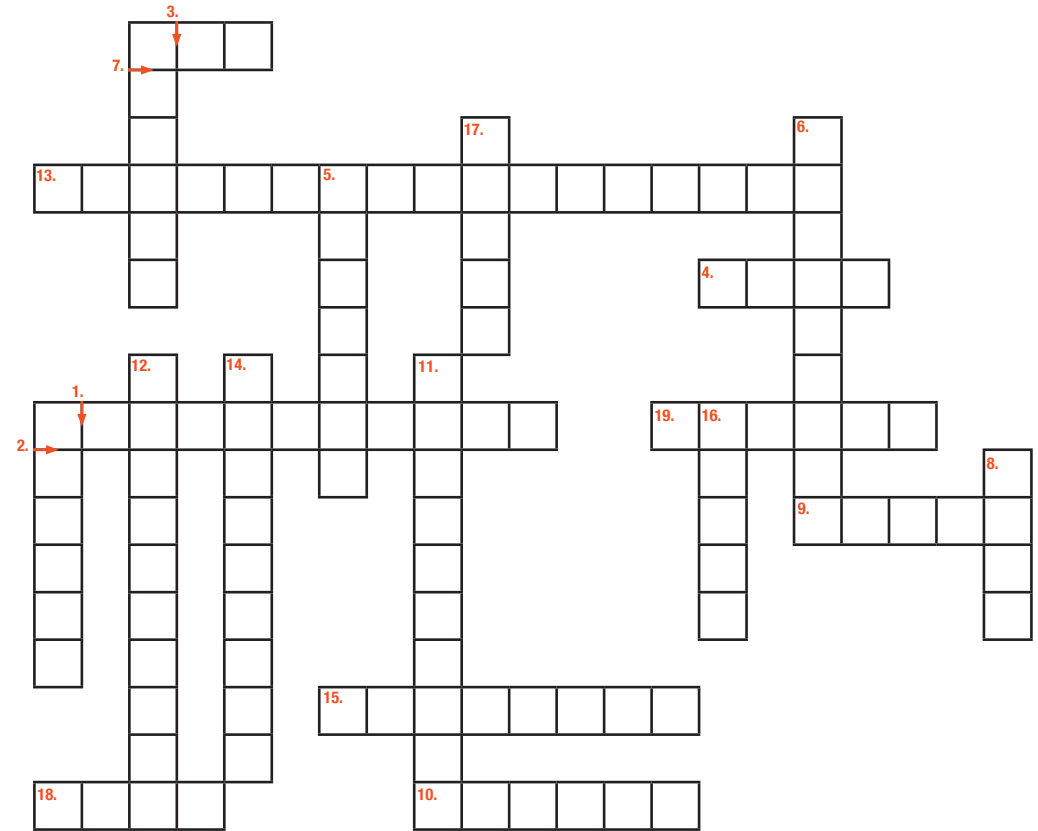


Jane Bolin was the first African American woman to graduate from Yale Law school and the first African American woman to serve as a judge in the U.S. In 1939, she was appointed to New York's Domestic Relations Court (now called family court), where she served until her retirement in 1978.



SOLVE THE CASE

Use the word bank to complete the puzzle and paragraph below



A criminal case begins with the defendant's 1. _____. The accused is brought before the court for 2. _____ on the charge. During the arraignment, the accused is informed of the charge and advised of his or her right to a 3. _____. If a defendant cannot afford to 4. _____ an attorney and requests one, the court will 5. _____ a lawyer to 6. _____ the defendant without cost to the defendant or defendant's family. In New York State, 7. _____ enforcement officials must bring an arrested person before the court for arraignment within 24 hours.

During arraignment, a defendant can plead not guilty. If a not guilty 8. _____ is entered, the case is set down for 9. _____ at a later date. If a 10. _____ plea is entered, the court sets a 11. _____ date. If the case goes to trial, the 12. _____ must establish the defendant's guilt 13. _____ doubt, producing relevant 14. _____ and other 15. _____. The defendant does not have to offer any 16. _____ on his or her own behalf.

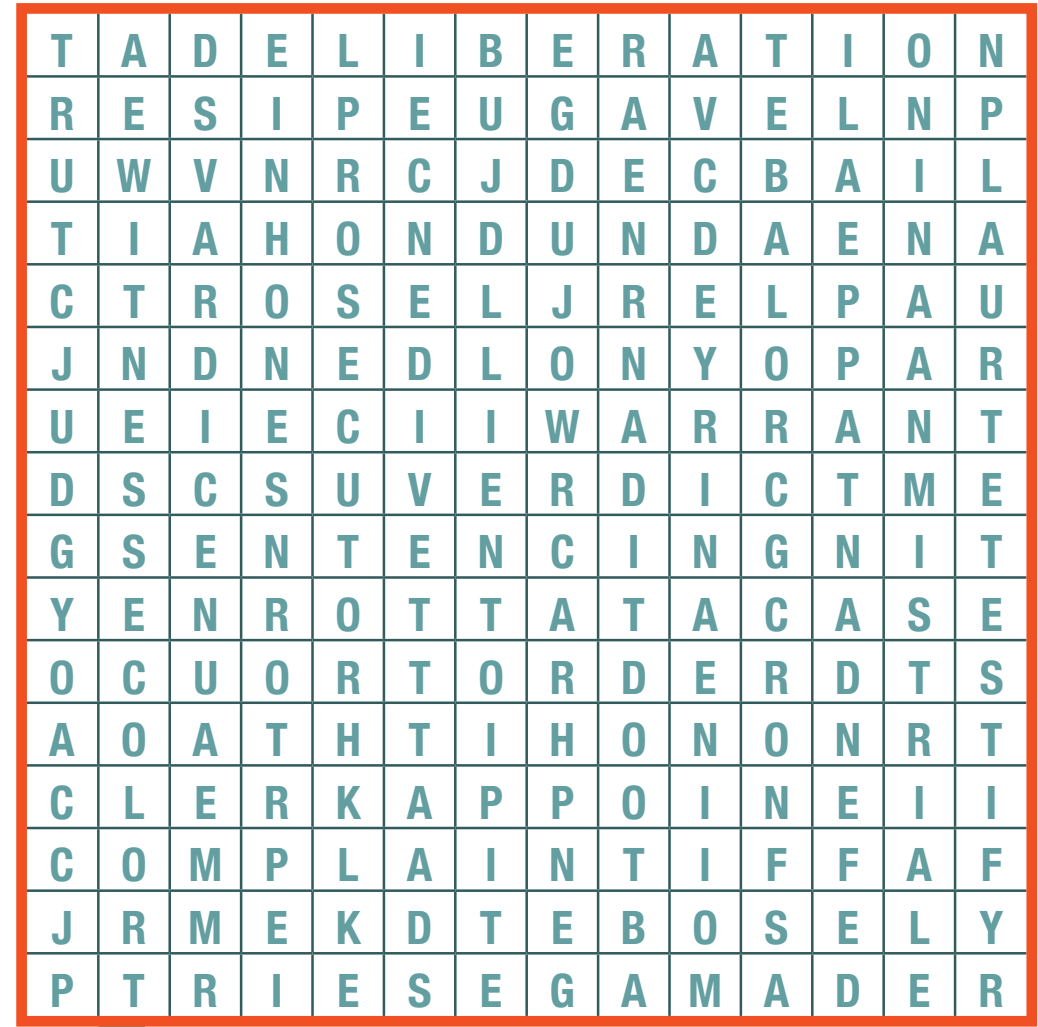
Based on all the 17. _____ of the case, the 18. _____ will decide whether or not the defendant is guilty. If found not guilty, the accused is set free. If found guilty, the defendant will come back to court for sentencing. After sentencing, the defendant has the right to 19. _____ to a higher court.

SEARCH FOR JUSTICE!

The words below are in the word search puzzle, written across and up-and-down. How many of the words can you find?

WORD BANK

- Appeal
- Attorney
- Bail
- Case
- Civil
- Clerk
- Complaint
- Court
- Damages
- Defendant
- Deliberation
- Evidence
- Gavel
- Judge
- Jury
- Mistrial
- Oath
- Order
- Plaintiff
- Prosecutor
- Sentencing
- Testify
- Tries
- Verdict
- Warrant
- Witness



WORD BANK

- Arraignment
- Appeal
- Appoint
- Arrest
- Beyond a reasonable
- Evidence
- Facts
- Guilty
- Hire
- Jury
- Law
- Lawyer
- Plea
- Proof
- Prosecutor
- Represent
- Sentencing
- Trial
- Witnesses

COURT FILL-IN

Use the word bank below to complete each of these sentences.

1. Every criminal defendant is _____ until proven guilty.
2. Every criminal defendant is entitled to be represented by an _____.
3. Witnesses take an _____ and swear to tell the truth.
4. At a trial, attorneys use witnesses to present _____ to the jury.
5. After the jury deliberates, the jury foreperson will be asked to announce the _____.
6. When the judge tells the defendant the amount of time that the defendant must go to jail, the judge pronounces the _____.
7. A civil suit is started when a _____ files a complaint.
8. The _____ is the attorney who represents the government in a criminal trial.
9. The _____ is the highest court in New York State.
10. A felony is a more serious crime than a _____.
11. The _____ hears cases relating to the property of individuals who have passed away.
12. The official record of court proceedings is called a _____.
13. A judge's private office is called _____.
14. If the judge has a research question, the judge can ask his law _____ for help.
15. The highest court of the State of New York is not a trial court; instead it's an _____ court.

WORD BANK

Appellate	Misdemeanor	Court of Appeals	Transcript	Verdict
Attorney	Oath	Clerk	Prosecutor	Testimony
Chambers	Sentence	Surrogate's Court	Plaintiff	Innocent

PURSUIT OF JUSTICE QUIZ

1. The person who sits in the courtroom and makes a word-for-word record is the ...
 - a. File clerk
 - b. Law clerk
 - c. Court reporter
2. The person asked to give testimony at a trial is a ...
 - a. Prosecutor
 - b. Witness
 - c. Spectator
3. Members of the public assembled by the court to decide a case are called the ...
 - a. Litigants
 - b. Plaintiffs
 - c. Jurors
4. An order to have a person arrested and brought to court because they failed to appear for their court date is a ...
 - a. Indictment
 - b. Bench Warrant
 - c. Subpoena
5. The number of judges on the New York State Court of Appeals is
 - a. 1
 - b. 7
 - c. 1,200
6. The highest court in New York State is the ...
 - a. Supreme Court
 - b. Court of Claims
 - c. Court of Appeals
7. Another name for a deadlocked jury is a ...
 - a. Grand jury
 - b. Hung jury
 - c. Petit jury
8. On the jury, the one person designated to speak is the ...
 - a. Court Officer
 - b. Trustee
 - c. Foreperson
9. The person charged with committing a crime is the ...
 - a. Plaintiff
 - b. Defendant
 - c. Juror
10. A written court order allowing a police officer to search a house or car is a ...
 - a. Summons
 - b. Search warrant
 - c. Removal order
11. A law that is passed by the New York State Legislature is a ...
 - a. Rule
 - b. Statute
 - c. Decision
12. When parties to a civil lawsuit agree to resolve their differences among themselves without a trial it's called ...
 - a. Admission
 - b. Acquittal
 - c. Settlement
13. The Statue that symbolizes Justice that is sometimes blindfolded is called ...
 - a. Lady Freedom
 - b. Statue of Liberty
 - c. Lady Justice
14. Another name for the office used by a judge is ...
 - a. Closet
 - b. Chambers
 - c. Deliberation Room
15. A subpoena is ...
 - a. A document a person gives the police to report a crime.
 - b. A document the court gives people to tell them that they must come to court.
 - c. A document the jury must use to report its decision.

THE MOST

INTERPRETED LANGUAGES IN THE NEW YORK STATE COURTS

