

Privilege	special rights which some people have because of the job they do or their special status. For example, diplomats of foreign countries are immune from arrest in the UK.
Privity of contract	only the parties to a contract can sue each other over breaches of contract.
Privy Council	a body of people appointed by the Crown. Its members include members of the royal family, present and former cabinet ministers and people who hold or have held high office. Its main duties are advising the Queen.
Privy Purse	money given to the Crown for royal household expenses.
Probate	authority to deal with a dead person's estate. When someone has died and left a will, the executors of the estate apply to the court for this authority.
Probate Registry	a registry which deals with the forms which are needed when someone applies for probate.
Probation	If a court convicts someone of an offence, the court may order that the offender is supervised by a probation officer for a period of at least six months but for no more than three years. This is known as probation and it is an alternative to sending the person to prison.
Process	In law a process is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a summons or writ which is used to order someone to appear in court; • the whole of a case from beginning to end; or • the total number of summonses or writs issued during a case.
Procurator	a person who has been given authority to manage another person's affairs, such as under a power of attorney.
Procurator fiscal	under Scottish law, a person who acts as public prosecutor and coroner.
Product liability	the liability of manufacturers and sellers to compensate people for unsafe goods which have caused injury to people or property.

Promisee	a person who has been promised something.
Promisor	a person who has promised something.
Promissory note	a written promise to pay an amount of money to someone at a given time.
Property	the name for anything which can be owned.
Pro rata	in proportion. For example, if 10 items cost £100 you would expect three items to cost £30 if they were priced pro rata. (This term is Latin.)
Prosecution	the name for the team of people (lawyers and so on) bringing proceedings against someone else. Also when legal proceedings are taken against someone it is called a prosecution.
Prosecutor	the person who brings legal proceedings, on behalf of the Crown, against the accused.
Prospectus	a formal document giving details of a company's past performance and of its plans for the future. If a public company wants people to invest in it, it prepares a prospectus.
Prostitution	selling sexual services for money.
Protected tenancy	a tenancy agreement for a house. It gives the tenant the right to a fair rent and protection from eviction as long as the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement are kept to.
Proviso	a clause in a legal document which qualifies another section of the agreement.
Provocation	causing someone to lose their self-control by doing or saying something (such as threatening to harm a baby) which would cause a reasonable person to temporarily lose their self-control.
Proxy	a person appointed by a shareholder to go to a meeting of shareholders. The proxy can vote at the meeting for the shareholder.
Proxy form	a form for shareholders by which, if it is delivered to a company at least 48 hours before the shareholders' meeting, the person who is the proxy will be able to vote at that meeting.
Public mischief	something that someone does which damages the general community.

Public nuisance	a crime by which the general public is put in danger or suffers damage to its health, property and so on.
Putative father	the man found by a court to be the father of an illegitimate child.
Q	
Qualifying child	when used in connection with Child Support this means a natural child or adopted child who is under 16, or under 19 if receiving full-time education.
Quango	an organisation set up by the Government to do a particular activity. It is partly independent and does not form part of the Government.
Quarter days	in England the days when payments which are made every quarter should be paid. The quarter days are the days that the seasons are said to start. The actual dates and their names are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 March - Lady Day; • 24 June - Midsummer Day; • 29 September - Michaelmas Day; and • 25 December - Christmas Day.
Queen's Bench Division	part of the High Court. Its main function is to deal with civil cases.
Queen's Counsel (QC)	a barrister who has been chosen by the Lord Chancellor to serve as counsel to the Crown. A Queen's Counsel is more senior than other barristers.
Queen's evidence	evidence for the prosecution given by someone who is also accused of the crime being tried.
Quiet enjoyment	allowing a tenant to use land without interference. When a tenancy is created the landlord is expected to allow the tenant to use the land without any interference, unless the tenancy agreement allows it.
Quiet possession	using property without interference. When property is sold the buyer should be able to use the property free from interference by the seller.

Quorum the lowest number of qualifying people needed for a meeting to be able to make a decision.

R

Racial discrimination treating someone less favourably because of their race, colour, nationality or culture.

Rack rent the full market value rent of a property.

Rape having sex with a person without their permission (such as if they were asleep or unconscious) or forcing them to have sex against their will.

Real relating to immovable property such as buildings or land.

Real estate land owned by someone who has died. In the USA it is also land and buildings used for business purposes.

Real property land and buildings, minerals in the land and rights over the land.

Realty another word for real property.

Reasonable force necessary force. Reasonable force is a complex issue but essentially use of some force must be necessary to defend your property or yourself and the force used must be in proportion to the threat.

Receiver someone appointed to:

- sell assets to raise money to repay lenders; or
- protect property.

Receiving gaining control of stolen property.

Recognisance an undertaking, given by someone to a court, to make sure that they do what the court requires. If they do not do as the court wishes they may have to pay a sum of money.

Record the documents in a court case from beginning to end.

Recorder	a part-time High Court judge.
Recovery	regaining possession of land by taking court proceedings.
Redemption	paying off all the money borrowed under an agreement.
Redundancy	being dismissed from a job because it no longer exists.
Registered land	any land recorded at the Land Registry. There is a system of recording and registering, at the Land Registry offices, details of land ownership and interests in land.
Registered office	the official address where documents can be served on a company.
Also, the company's registers can be inspected at the registered office.	
Registrar of Companies	an official in charge of the office which keeps records of registered companies. There is a registrar for Scotland and another one for England and Wales.
Reinsurance	an insurance company insuring part of a risk it is covering. If an insurance company has taken on a large insurance contract it may decide to spread the risk of loss by insuring part of the risk with another insurance company.
Release	means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to give up a valid claim against someone; • to free someone from prison; or • a document used to cancel a claim one person has against another.
Remainder	an interest which starts when a previous interest finishes. When more than one person has been left an interest in land the first person to possess an interest will have to die before the next person can possess an interest in the land, and so on.

Remand	being kept in prison or paying bail. If an accused person is placed on remand they are either kept in prison for a short period or have to pay bail or get someone to pay it for them. It is used for short periods before a trial starts.
Remedy	using the law to get compensation for damage done or for rights infringed. Also, a remedy can be using the law to prevent something from happening.
Renouncing probate	a proposed executor refusing to act. Sometimes when a testator dies an executor will not wish to accept appointment. The executor has to tell the Probate Registry about it in writing.
Rent	a regular payment to the landlord by a tenant in return for being allowed to possess and use the landlord's property.
Repeat offender	a person who continues to commit the same offence.
Reply	a claimant ('plaintiff' before April 1999)'s answer to a claim. In a civil case the defendant may offer a defence to the claim, or even make a counterclaim.
Repossession or Repossess	a mortgagee recovering vacant possession of the property mortgaged.
Representation	Is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acting on behalf of someone else (such as a solicitor acting for a client); • taking someone else's place (such as when a court gives an executor the right to deal with a dead person's affairs); or • a statement in a contract.
Representative action	one or more people, in a group of people with the same grievance, taking legal action representing the group.
Reprieve	a judge suspending or cancelling punishment for an offence.
Rescission	the cancellation of a contract.
Reservation of title	a contract which leaves ownership of the goods with

the seller until the goods have been paid for.

Reserves

money set aside in accounts which can be spent in later years. Some types of reserve can only be spent if certain conditions are met.

Residence order

an order which a court issues when it has decided where a child should live, setting out details of the court's decision.

Residuary legacy

what remains to be given out from an estate after all debts, taxes and specific legacies have been paid.

Residue

what is left of an estate after all debts, taxes, expenses and specific legacies have been dealt with.

Res ipsa loquitur

proof is not needed because the facts speak for themselves. If the defendant was in charge of events and an accident was caused on the face of it by negligence, then it may be presumed that the defendant was negligent unless there is evidence to the contrary. (This term is Latin.)

Resisting arrest

a person trying to prevent the police arresting him or her. A charge could be made of obstructing a police officer in the course of duty.

Resolution

a decision taken by the members of a company in a meeting.

Respondent

the person an action is being taken against.

Restitution

is:

- an order for the return of stolen goods to the victim of the theft or for compensation to be paid to the victim; or
- a writ, following a successful appeal, for the return of the items lost after the original case.

Restraining order

an order which a court may issue to prevent a person from doing a particular thing. For example, if someone has been harassing another person, the court may order that the harassment must stop.

Restriction

when placed on a piece of land the owner cannot sell or mortgage the land.

Restriction order	This order by the Crown Court prevents a person being discharged from hospital, to protect the public.
Restrictive covenant	a deed which restricts how a piece of land can be used.
Retainer	a payment to a barrister to act in a case.
Retention of title	another term for reservation of title.
Reversion	
Revocation	cancellation.
Revoke	to cancel or withdraw.
Revolving credit Agreement	a loan agreement under which a person can borrow again to top up the loan, as long as they do not go over their credit limit.
Right of way	a legal right obliging the owner of land to allow authorised people to cross it.
Rights issue	an issue of extra shares by a company. Existing shareholders can buy extra new shares in proportion to the shares they already hold. The shares are usually on sale at a lower price than the stock market price to encourage shareholders to buy. The shareholders can sell the rights if they do not wish to use them.
Riot	a gathering of 12 or more people using, or threatening to use, violence to achieve a common end.
Robbery	using or threatening to use force while carrying out a theft.
S	
Sale or return	an arrangement under which goods can be kept by the potential buyer for a period while their resale is attempted. Unsold goods can be returned if the conditions of the contract have been kept to and the buyer pays for the goods used.

Salvage	compensation paid by the owners for saving ships, aircraft and property from the sea.
Satisfaction	is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying a debt; • settling an obligation by an act; or • settling an obligation by substituting something satisfactory for what was originally required.
Scheme of Arrangement	an agreement between a person with debts, who cannot pay them when they are due, and the creditors. The creditors share the money the debtor manages to pay in proportion to what they are each owed.
Scrip	a certificate showing the extra shares and fractions of shares the owner is entitled to.
Scrip dividend	a dividend paid in shares instead of cash.
Scrip issue	free shares offered to the members of a company in proportion to their shareholdings.
Search	inspection of the registers maintained by organisations such as the Land Registry. When a person intends to buy a property such as a house, a solicitor arranges the inspection. This is to find out if there is any adverse information about the property or the surrounding area.
Search warrant	a warrant issued by a magistrate, or High Court judge, to allow police officers to search premises.
Securities	stocks, shares, debentures and so on where there is a right to receive interest or dividends from the investment.
Security	something of value pledged to a bank by a borrower. If the borrower fails to repay the debt, the bank can sell the security and repay the debt out of the proceeds of the sale.
Security of tenure	protection from a landlord attempting to obtain possession of the property the tenant is renting.

Sedition	writing things or saying things which encourage ordinary people to rise up against the Government or which cause discontent.
Sentence	the penalty the court imposes on someone found guilty of an offence.
Separation order	a court order that a husband and wife can live separately if they wish.
Sequestration	a court order for the seizure of someone's property.
Settle	means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to create a settlement; • to end a case by agreement; or • to draw up a contract and agree its terms.
Settlement	when property is bestowed, usually by a will or a deed, on a trust for the benefit of people decided by the settlor. It also means voluntarily agreeing to settle a civil case.
Settlor	the person who gives property to a settlement.
Several	separate (not joint).
Shadow director	a person who has not been appointed a director of a company but nevertheless gives instructions to the directors, which they comply with.
Share capital	the money invested directly in a company by its members. When the shares are first made available by the company, people can apply to buy them. The company states the price it wants for the shares.
Share certificate	a document which certifies who owns shares in a Company. It gives the type and number of shares owned by the shareholder and lists the serial numbers of the shares.
Share premium Account	an account in a set of books recording the extra amount over face value that shares have been issued for. If shares are issued for more than their face value, the extra amount over face value is called a share premium.

Sheriff	someone appointed each year by the Crown to be a county's senior officer. Each county in the UK has a sheriff. To be eligible for the office the person must own some land in the county. The areas of the law which come within the sheriff's jurisdiction are largely dealt with by the under-sheriff.
Shoplifting	stealing goods from a shop.
Shorthold tenancy	a tenancy under which the law allows the landlord to repossess the house.
Sine die	indefinitely. If a case has been adjourned sine die no date has been set for it to be continued. (This term is Latin.)
Slander	saying something untrue about a person or doing something, such as making a gesture, which damages their reputation.
Small claims court	a section of the county court which deals with small claims. There is a simplified way of making a claim in the county court in a civil case where the claim is for no more than £5000 (or £1000 in personal injury cases). Neither side can claim costs.
Smuggling	importing or exporting goods illegally to avoid a ban on them or to avoid the duties on them.
Sold note	a note that shows details of investments which have been sold, including the sale price and any charges taken. Stockbrokers produce sold notes for their clients.
Soliciting	a prostitute attempting to get clients in a street or other public place.
Solicitor	a person who can deal with legal matters for the public and give advice on legal matters. All solicitors are listed on the roll of solicitors kept by the Law Society. Some solicitors can appear for their clients in some of the lower courts.
Solicitor General	the assistant of the Attorney General. They both advise the Government.

Special resolution	a resolution which must be approved by holders of at least 75% of the shares with voting rights. (Some types of share give their owners the right to vote at shareholder meetings, but there are other types which do not.)
Specific performance	a court order to complete a contract. The courts may order a person who has failed to fulfil an obligation under a contract to complete it.
Spent conviction	a conviction which, after the passage of a stated time period, does not have to be disclosed (revealed) to a court.
Squatter	a person who occupies land illegally.
Stalking	the name given to a form of harassment where a person is made to feel alarmed or distressed by another person's actions. The prosecution has to prove that a reasonable person would have known that the behaviour would create distress or fear. The harassment must have happened on at least two occasions.
Stamp duty	a tax on the transfer documents for certain types of transaction. Examples are buying shares, patent rights and properties.
Statement of claim	the claimant's written statement setting out the claim in a civil case. (This term has not been used since April 1999.)
Status	how the law regards a person, such as whether the person is a minor or a bankrupt and so on.
Statute	an Act of Parliament.
Statute book	all the existing statutes in a country.
Statute law	the law created by Acts of Parliament.
Statute of limitation	a statute which sets out the time limits within which a court action must take place.
Statutory accounts	company accounts which have been filed with the Registrar of Companies. The accounts have to disclose (show) the information required by the Companies Acts.

Statutory audit	an audit required by law. Certain companies have to have their accounts audited by suitably qualified accountants.
Statutory books	books of account which companies must keep by law to show and explain all their transactions.
Statutory demand	a written demand for payment of a debt of more than £750.
Statutory instrument	a power delegated by Parliament. Parliament can delegate its power to make and amend law to a person or organisation. A statutory instrument is one of these powers and is used by government ministers to amend legislation.
Stay of execution	the suspension of the carrying out of a court order.
Stipendiary magistrate	a magistrate who gets a salary.
Stockbroker	a person who buys and sells stocks and shares for clients.
Subduct	to withdraw.
Subject to contract	an agreement which is not binding until a contract has been signed.
Sub judice	describes something being dealt with by a court which cannot be discussed outside the court. (This term is Latin.)
Subpoena	a writ requiring the person it is addressed to to attend at a specific place (such as a court) on a specific date and at a stated time.
Subrogation	substituting one person for another including all rights and responsibilities.
Subscribers	the people who set up a limited company.
Subsidiarity	subsidiary activities. Member countries of the European Community agreed that activities could be done by the individual member countries unless they could not do them adequately alone. The European Community therefore should only do subsidiary activities and this is called subsidiarity.

Subsidiary	a company controlled by another company. The control is normally a result of having more than 50% of the voting rights.
Sue	to start legal proceedings in the civil court against someone.
Suicide	the act of killing oneself intentionally.
Sui generis	describes something that belongs in a particular category or is the only one of its class. (This term is Latin.)
Sui juris	describes someone who can enter into a contract without any restriction. (This term is Latin.)
Suit	proceedings brought by one person against another in a civil court.
Summary judgement	obtaining judgement without a trial. In an action in the High Court to recover damages or a debt, if the claimant ('plaintiff' before April 1999) swears an affidavit that it is believed that there is no defence to the claim, the claimant ('plaintiff' before April 1999) can obtain summary judgement.
Summary offence	an offence that can only be tried by magistrates. Most minor offences are summary offences.
Summary proceedings	a trial by magistrates, where the defendant has the right to choose which court should hear the case, but has agreed to be tried in the magistrates' court.
Summary trial	a trial by magistrates.
Summing up	the judge's summary of a case. At the end of a trial by jury the judge explains points of law in the case to the jury, explains the jury's role and summarises the evidence.
Summons	an order by a court that a person attend at a particular court at a stated time on a particular date.
Superior courts	the higher courts in English law, which include the High Court, the Court of Appeal, the Crown Court and the House of Lords. Their decisions act as precedents for the lower courts to follow.

Supervision order	a court order that a child should be supervised by a probation officer or a local authority.
Supra	above (see above or before in the document). (This word is Latin.)
Supreme Court	the highest court in the UK, the Supreme Court is the final court of appeal for both civil cases in the UK, and for criminal cases in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Surcharge	a penalty charged if tax is paid late. It is also an extra charge banks make if customers do not keep to the agreements they made with the bank.
Surety	someone who takes responsibility for someone else's debts or promises, and guarantees that they will be paid or undertaken (done). It is also the name for the money put up as security that someone will appear in court. If they do not appear in court the money will be forfeited.
Suspended sentence	a sentence that is postponed until the offender is convicted of another offence.
SWIFT payment	a payment from one bank account to another using the SWIFT system. SWIFT stands for Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications and it is an international system for paying by credit transfer.