

# LAW and ORDER

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## *Differences between US and UK legal systems*

A lawyer is a legal professional that acts as an attorney, barrister, solicitor, or advocate, using the practical application of the law to solve problems or represent plaintiffs and defendants in or out of court. The term lawyer can mean different things in different countries, but all lawyers require extensive schooling and training to represent and fight for legal issues and rights. Historians believe that lawyers have existed since Ancient Greece, when they provided services similar to those they offer today. Lawyers can specialize in various disciplines of law including family law, real estate law, business law, criminal law, civil law, estate law, and some offer their services 'pro bono' which means they work for free or are paid by the government.



The UK and US legal systems share the same historical roots and are therefore fairly similar to one another, but there are some key differences between the legal systems.

### **The terminology**

In the US, every legal professional is generally referred to as a lawyer, as litigators and non-litigators are not separately licenced, whereas in the UK there are solicitors and barristers – terminology that is not used across the pond.

Those who [work in solicitor jobs](#) in the UK work with clients on a range of legal topics, offering advice and drafting together legal documents. Solicitors can represent their clients in court in minor cases, but generally their role involves working on everything outside of court.

Barristers, on the other hand, are the experts in the courtroom that are involved in cross examining witnesses, defendants and victims in front of a jury. The solicitor takes their client to a barrister to represent them in court.

# Court System



The court systems in both the UK and the US are very similar to one another. Minor criminal and civil offences are handled by magistrate courts, which are often referred to as state courts in the US.

For more serious crimes or civil cases, the Crown Court in the UK or the District Court in the US will handle these cases before being passed onto the Courts of Appeals and the Supreme Court if necessary.

One of the major differences between the court systems in the UK and the US is the fact that the US does not have a Tribunal System like the UK has in place for certain types of disputes. Instead, the US has specific courts for bankruptcy etc.

## Juries

Juries in the UK are selected at random as British residents who are between the ages of 18 and 70 and on the electoral roll are eligible for jury service. Jury duty must be honoured and only in exceptional circumstances will people be allowed to miss jury service.

In contrast, American juries are pre-selected and are then agreed upon by counsellors for both the defence and prosecution teams.

## Legal education

Legal education also differs from the UK to the US. In the UK, law students are required to pursue further courses and apprenticeships after completing their law degree.

However, students in the US need to take a three-year course at an accredited law school and will then just be asked to pass a bar exam in the state of their choosing before being allowed to practice law in their specialist field.

# USEFUL PHRASES TO USE DURING BUSINESS MEETINGS



## INTERRUPTING

May I have a word?  
If I may, I think...  
Excuse me for interrupting.

## GIVING OPINIONS

I (really) feel that...  
In my opinion...  
The way I see things...

## ASKING FOR OPINIONS

Do you (really) think that...  
(name of participant) can  
we get your input?  
How do you feel about...?

## COMMENTING ON OPINIONS

I've never thought about it  
that way before.  
Good point!  
I get your point.  
I see what you mean.

## AGREEING

Exactly!  
That's (exactly) the way I  
feel.  
I have to agree with (name  
of participant).

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## DISAGREEING WITH OTHER OPINIONS

Up to a point I agree  
with you, but...  
(I'm afraid) I can't agree.

## ADVISING AND SUGGESTING

We should...  
Why don't you...  
How/What about...  
I suggest/recommend that...

## CLARIFYING

(Statement) Have I made  
that clear?  
(Statement) Do you see  
what I'm getting at?  
Let me put this another way  
(statement)  
I'd just like to repeat that  
(statement)

## ASKING FOR REPETITION

I didn't catch that.  
Could you repeat that,  
please?  
I missed that. Could you say  
it again, please?  
Could you run that by me  
one more time?