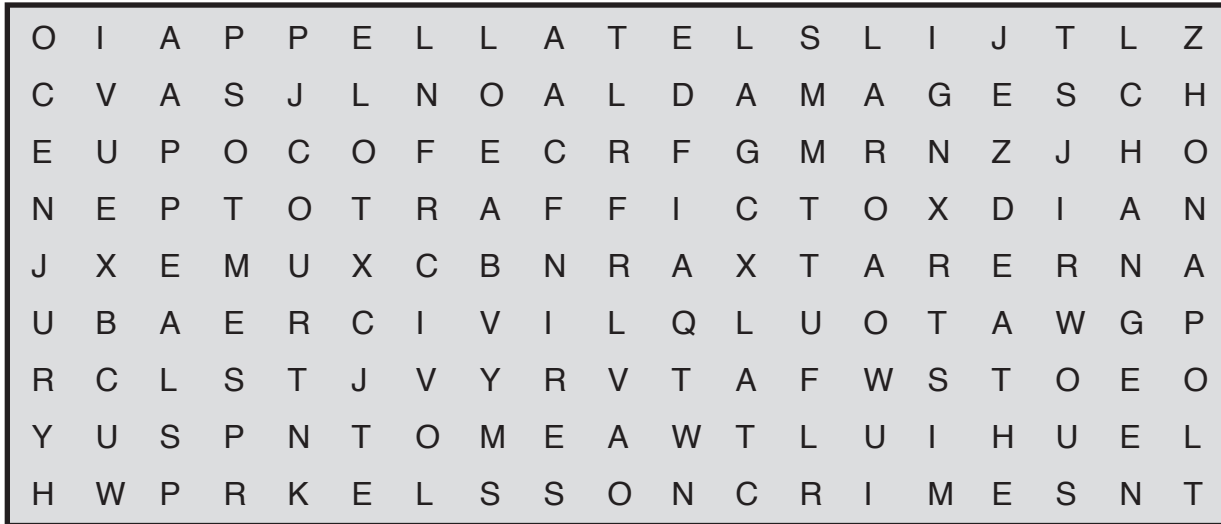


# THE COURT SYSTEM

## Directions

Fill in the missing words, names, and terms in the following sentences. All answers are hidden on the word search puzzles, either horizontally or vertically. Begin with Puzzle 1, which contains the words, names, and terms needed to complete questions 1-10. Find and circle the answers on the puzzle first, then use these words to complete the statements. Continue in the same way with the other sentences and puzzles.

## Puzzle 1



## The Role of Courts

- (1) Courts settle legal disputes and administer justice. They resolve conflicts involving individuals, organizations, and governments. Courts also decide the guilt or innocence of persons accused of \_\_\_\_\_ and sentence the guilty.
- (2) All courts are presided over by judges. These officials decide all questions of law, including what evidence is fair to use. In many cases, the judge also decides how much truth there is in each side's claims. In other cases, a \_\_\_\_\_ decides any questions of fact.
- (3) The word \_\_\_\_\_ may refer to a judge alone or to a judge and jury acting together. It also may refer to the place where legal disputes are settled.
- (4) Some court rulings affect only the persons involved in a case. Other decisions deal with such issues as freedom of the press, racial discrimination, and the rights of persons accused of a crime. In this way, courts serve as a powerful means of social and political \_\_\_\_\_.
- (5) Generally, courts are classified as trial courts or appellate courts, and as criminal courts or \_\_\_\_\_ courts.
- (6) Nearly all legal cases begin in trial courts. These courts may have general jurisdiction (authority to decide a case) or limited, also called special, jurisdiction. Courts of general jurisdiction hear many types of cases. Courts of limited or special jurisdiction specialize in one or more types of cases, such as those involving juvenile offenders or \_\_\_\_\_ violations.
- (7) The losing side in a case often has the right to appeal — that is, to ask that aspects of the case be reconsidered by a higher court called an appellate or \_\_\_\_\_ court.

- (8) Appellate courts review cases decided by trial courts if the losing side questions the ruling of the lower court on a matter of law. \_\_\_\_\_ courts cannot review a trial court's decision on the facts.
- (9) Criminal courts deal with actions considered harmful to society, such as murder and robbery. In criminal cases, the government takes legal action against an individual. The sentences handed down by criminal courts range from probation and fines to imprisonment and, in some states, \_\_\_\_\_.
- (10) Civil courts settle disputes between individuals. Civil suits involve such noncriminal matters as contracts, family relationships, and accidental injuries. In most civil cases, an individual or organization sues another individual or organization. Most civil court decisions do not involve a prison sentence, though the party at fault may be ordered to pay \_\_\_\_\_.

**Puzzle 2**

J	I	A	P	C	E	H	L	B	A	R	G	A	I	N	I	N	G	Z
E	V	A	C	Q	U	I	T	T	E	D	Y	M	A	J	E	S	C	H
O	U	S	S	C	O	F	D	C	T	F	G	M	R	N	Z	J	A	O
P	E	U	T	T	R	I	A	L	F	I	L	A	W	Y	E	R	U	P
A	X	S	M	U	S	C	B	N	R	A	X	T	A	R	E	R	S	F
R	B	P	E	R	C	T	V	P	L	V	L	U	O	T	A	W	E	A
D	C	E	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Y	F	W	S	T	O	D	U
Y	U	C	S	N	T	H	M	P	L	A	I	N	T	I	F	F	E	L
H	W	T	R	F	E	L	S	H	O	N	D	R	Z	M	Q	C	S	T

**Criminal Court Cases**

- (11) Most persons arrested on suspicion of a crime appear before a judge called a magistrate within 24 hours after the arrest. In cases involving minor offenses, the magistrate conducts a trial and sentences the guilty. In more serious cases, the magistrate decides whether to keep the defendant in jail or to release him or her on bail. The magistrate also may appoint a state-paid defense attorney, called a public defender, to represent a defendant who cannot afford a \_\_\_\_\_.
- (12) In a case involving a serious crime, the police give their evidence of the suspect's guilt to a government attorney called a prosecutor. The prosecutor presents the evidence to a magistrate at a preliminary hearing. If the magistrate decides that there is probable cause (good reason for assuming) that the defendant committed the crime, the magistrate orders the defendant held for \_\_\_\_\_.
- (13) In some states and in federal courts, the prosecutor presents the evidence to a grand jury, a group of citizens who decide whether the evidence justifies bringing the case to trial. If the grand jury finds sufficient evidence for a trial, it issues a formal accusation called an indictment against the \_\_\_\_\_.
- (14) The defendant then appears in court to answer the charges. This hearing is called an arraignment. If the defendant pleads guilty, the judge pronounces sentence. Many defendants plead guilty, rather than go to trial, in return for a reduced charge or a shorter \_\_\_\_\_.

sentence. This practice is called plea \_\_\_\_\_. Most criminal cases in the United States are settled in this way. But if the accused pleads not guilty, the case goes to trial.

- (15) The defendant may request a jury trial or a bench trial, which is a trial before a judge. The jury or judge must decide if the evidence presented by the prosecutor proves the defendant guilty “beyond a reasonable doubt.” If not, the defendant must be \_\_\_\_\_ (found not guilty).
- (16) If the defendant is found guilty, the judge pronounces sentence. Convicted defendants may appeal their case to an appellate court. However, prosecutors may not appeal an acquittal because the United States Constitution forbids the government to put a person in double \_\_\_\_\_ (try a person twice) for the same crime.

**Civil Court Cases**

- (17) A civil lawsuit begins when an individual or organization, called the plaintiff, files a complaint against another individual or organization, called the defendant. The complaint formally states the injuries or losses the plaintiff believes were \_\_\_\_\_ by the defendant’s actions. The complaint also asks for a certain amount of money in damages.
- (18) The defendant receives a summons, a notice that a complaint has been filed. It directs the defendant to appear in court on a certain date. The defendant then files a document called an answer. The answer contains the defendant’s version of the facts of the case and asks the court to dismiss the suit. The defendant also may file a counterclaim against the \_\_\_\_\_.
- (19) Most civil cases are settled out of court. However, if serious questions about the facts remain, a formal discovery takes place. This procedure forces each litigant (party involved in the case) to reveal the testimony or records that would be introduced as evidence in court. If the case still remains in dispute after the \_\_\_\_\_, it goes to trial.
- (20) Civil cases may be decided by a judge or by a jury. The judge or jury determines who is at \_\_\_\_\_ and how much must be paid in damages. Both sides may appeal.

**Puzzle 3**

W	S	C	O	N	S	T	I	T	U	T	I	O	N	S	O	T	N	J
S	V	C	R	E	F	U	S	E	L	T	L	S	P	S	R	S	I	T
P	E	O	L	P	T	A	Z	P	S	Y	S	R	T	N	A	U	D	J
W	E	P	O	N	G	D	V	E	A	P	W	A	N	A	S	P	M	T
W	X	Y	N	O	X	S	B	A	C	G	N	X	S	L	N	R	S	W
I	B	R	D	H	L	B	D	C	E	Y	R	O	T	B	T	E	P	E
L	W	I	Z	A	W	I	E	E	R	S	P	C	A	D	M	M	D	L
L	P	G	S	N	T	L	M	L	A	L	T	P	T	A	I	E	N	V
S	A	H	R	A	Z	H	I	G	H	E	S	T	E	Z	L	I	R	E
L	A	T	N	W	A	V	K	V	G	M	C	U	T	R	I	T	N	O
V	U	M	I	L	I	T	A	R	Y	U	T	O	L	N	A	L	T	A

## **Courts in the United States**

- (21) The United States has both federal and state courts. Federal courts receive their authority from the U.S. Constitution and federal laws. State courts receive their powers from state \_\_\_\_\_ and laws.
- (22) Federal courts handle both criminal and civil cases involving the Constitution or federal laws, and cases in which the U.S. government is one of the sides. They also try cases between individuals or groups from different states, and cases involving other countries or their citizens. They handle such matters as bankruptcy actions and cases of patent and \_\_\_\_\_ violation.
- (23) The federal court system includes district courts, courts of appeals, and the \_\_\_\_\_ Court of the United States.
- (24) District courts are the first courts to hear most cases involving a violation of federal law. The United States and its possessions have more than 90 district courts. Each \_\_\_\_\_ has at least one such court.
- (25) Courts of appeals try federal cases on appeal from district courts. They also review the decisions made by such federal agencies as the Securities and Exchange Commission and the National Labor Relations Board. The United States is divided into \_\_\_\_\_ circuits (districts), each of which has a court of appeals.
- (26) The Supreme Court of the United States is the highest court in the nation. A person who loses a case either in a federal court of appeals or in the highest state court may appeal to the Supreme Court, but it may \_\_\_\_\_ to review many cases.
- (27) The federal court system also includes several specialized courts. The United States Claims Court hears cases involving claims against the federal government. Taxpayers ordered to pay additional federal income taxes may appeal to the Tax Court of the United States. \_\_\_\_\_ courts have jurisdiction over offenses committed by members of the armed forces.
- (28) The lowest state courts handle a variety of minor criminal and civil cases. Such courts include police courts, magistrate's courts, or county courts, and justices of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- (29) Other lower state courts specialize in only one type of case. For example, small-claims courts try cases that involve small amounts of money. Probate or surrogate courts handle \_\_\_\_\_ and disputes over inheritances.
- (30) Higher state courts include circuit courts, superior courts, and courts of common pleas. The \_\_\_\_\_ court in most states is the state supreme court.

## The Court System

### Multiple-Choice

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ All questions of law in the courtroom, including what evidence is fair to use, is determined by the: (a) jury (b) attorneys (c) judge
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_ A formal accusation ordering a person held for trial is called an: (a) injunction (b) indictment (c) affidavit
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_ The practice whereby an accused person pleads guilty in exchange for a reduced charge or shorter sentence is called: (a) plea bargaining (b) litigation (c) adjournment
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ A trial before a judge instead of a jury is known as: (a) a bench trial (b) judicial review (c) a jurisdictional trial
- (5) \_\_\_\_\_ If the evidence does not show the defendant guilty “beyond a reasonable doubt,” then the accused person is: (a) acquitted (b) incarcerated (c) pardoned

### True/False

- (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Some court decisions have brought about social and political change in the United States.
- (7) \_\_\_\_\_ A person found guilty in a civil case is never sentenced to prison.
- (8) \_\_\_\_\_ About half of all courts are presided over by judges.
- (9) \_\_\_\_\_ The Supreme Court reviews all cases appealed to it from the highest state courts and federal courts of appeals.
- (10) \_\_\_\_\_ Small-claims courts and probate courts are examples of lower state courts that specialize in only one type of case.

### Matching

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| (11) _____ trial courts         | (a) the authority that some courts have to hear many types of cases   |
| (12) _____ civil courts         | (b) deal with such cases as murder and robbery; its sentences include probation, fines, and imprisonment              |
| (13) _____ magistrate           | (c) handle disputes over such noncriminal matters as contracts and personal injury accidents                          |
| (14) _____ criminal courts      | (d) where nearly all legal cases begin  |
| (15) _____ general jurisdiction | (e) state-paid defense attorney appointed to represent a defendant who cannot afford a lawyer                         |
| (16) _____ prosecutor           | (f) the losing side in a case can appeal the decision to this higher court  |
| (17) _____ grand jury           | (g) in some states and federal courts, it decides whether enough evidence exists to order a defendant to stand trial  |
| (18) _____ appellate court      | (h) the authority that some courts have to hear one specific type of case, such as those involving juvenile offenders |
| (19) _____ public defender      | (i) most persons suspected of a crime appear before this person within 24 hours after being arrested                  |
| (20) _____ limited jurisdiction | (j) presents the evidence against the defendant in a case   |