


Unit Resources - Glossary Terms from "The Judicial Branch"

[Resources](#) > **Glossary Terms**

Glossary Terms from: 

Show As List

Show As Flash Cards

alien

foreign-born resident, or noncitizen

appellate jurisdiction

the authority of a court to review decisions of inferior (lower) courts

assemble

to gather with one another in order to express views on public matters

Bill of Rights

the first 10 amendments to the Constitution

certificate

the result of a process in which a lower court asks the Supreme Court to certify the answer to a specific question, such as a procedure or rule of law

civil case

a case involving a noncriminal matter such as a contract dispute or a claim of patent infringement

civil liberties

guarantees of the safety of persons, opinions, and property from the arbitrary acts of government, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion

civil rights

term used for positive acts of government that seek to make constitutional guarantees a reality for all people (e.g., prohibitions of discrimination)

civilian tribunal

a court operating as part of the judicial branch, entirely separate from the military establishment

concurrent jurisdiction

power shared by federal and state courts to hear certain cases

concurring opinion

an opinion which is basically in agreement with the decision that the court has made, but which bases that opinion on different reasons

content neutral

The government may not regulate assemblies on the basis of what might be said.

courts-martial

courts composed of military personnel, for the trial of those accused of violating military law

criminal case

a case in which a defendant is tried for committing a crime as defined by the law

defendant

in a civil suit, the person against whom a court action is brought by the plaintiff; in a criminal case, the person charged with the crime

dissenting opinion

an opinion written by a justice who does not agree with the court's decision, explaining the reasons why not

docket

a court's list of cases to be heard

Due Process Clause

part of the Fourteenth Amendment which guarantees that no state deny basic rights to its people

Establishment Clause

part of the First Amendment of the Constitution that guarantees the separation of church and State

Free Exercise Clause

the second part of the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom; guarantees to each person the right to believe whatever he or she chooses to believe in matters of religion

free speech zone

a government-designated area used to confine protesters

inferior courts

the lower federal courts under the Supreme Court

judicial review

the authority to decide the constitutionality of a law or action

jurisdiction

the authority of a court to hear a case

libel

false and malicious use of printed words

majority opinion

the opinion on which the decision of the court is based, which identifies the issues in the case and the reasons for the decision

original jurisdiction

the power of a court to hear a case first before any other court

parochial

church-related, as in a parochial school

plaintiff

in civil law, the party who brings a suit or some other legal action against another (the defendant) in court

precedent

court decision that stands as an example to be followed in future, similar cases

prior restraint

idea that government cannot curb ideas before they are expressed

process of incorporation

the process of incorporating, or including, most of the guarantees in the Bill of Rights into the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause

redress

satisfaction of a claim payment

shield laws

laws which gives reporters some protection against having to disclose their sources or reveal other confidential information in legal proceedings

slander

false and malicious use of spoken words

writ of certiorari

an order by the court directing a lower court to send up the record in a given case for review