

Courtroom Terminology

The following is a useful list of courtroom and testimony-related terms and their definitions.

Term	Definition
Bench Trial	Trial without a jury in which a judge decides the facts.
Continuance	To put off the trial or hearing until another time.
Cross Examination	The questioning of a witness by the attorney of the party who did NOT call the witness.
Direct Examination	The questioning of a witness by the party that has called that witness to give evidence, to support the case that is being made.
Evidence	Testimony and exhibits produced that the trier-of-fact (judge or jury) can rely on.
Exculpatory Evidence	Evidence favorable to the defendant that exonerates or tends to exonerate the defendant of guilt. It is the opposite of inculpatory evidence, which tends to present guilt.
Exhibits	Objects and documentation offered as part of the record and evidence.
Not Admissible	Cannot testify to or refer to; will not be used as evidence.
Objection	A formal protest raised during a court procedure indicating that the attorney wishes the judge to disallow either the testimony of a given witness or other evidence that would violate the rules of evidence or other procedural law.
Objection Overruled	You should answer the question. The judge has decided to reject the attorney's formal protest of a question asked of a witness or the admission of evidence. The judge will allow the question or evidence in court.
Objection Sustained	You should stop talking and not answer the question. The judge agrees with the protesting attorney and therefore the formal protest is approved, and the question cannot be asked or answered.
Plea	In a criminal case, the defendant's statement pleading guilty or not guilty in answer to the charges; a declaration made in open court.
Rebuttal	Evidence or argument introduced to counter, disprove, or contradict the opposing party's evidence or argument.
Re-Direct	Questioning of the witness by the calling party to address, clarify, or expound on testimony elicited by opposing counsel.
Testimony	Oral evidence offered by a witness under oath.