

English/Spanish Legal Glossary/Glosario Legal

ABANDONMENT – ABANDONO When a parent leaves a child without enough care, supervision, support, or parental contact for an excessive period of time.
ABATE – CESAR to put an end to; to cancel out.
ABROGATE – ABROGAR to repeal or cancel an old law using another law or constitutional power.
ACCESSORY/ ACCOMPLICE – CÓMPLICE A person who helps someone else commit a crime, either before or after the crime.
ACCUSED – ACUSADO/ INDICIADO/IMPUTADO The person that is charged with a crime and must go to criminal court. (See DEFENDANT)
ACQUIT – ABSOLVER – EXHONERAR To legally find the innocence of a person charged with a crime. To set free, release or discharge from an obligation, burden, or accusation. To find a defendant not guilty in a criminal trial
ACQUITTAL – ABSOLUCIÓN – EXHONARACIÓN When a judge or jury finds a person not guilty at trial
AD LITEM – AD LITEM Comes from Latin meaning for the "purposes of the lawsuit." For example, a <i>guardian ad litem</i> is a person appointed by the court to protect the interests of a minor or legally incompetent person in a lawsuit
ADJUDICATE – ADJUDICAR When a judge hears and decides a case
ADMISSIBLE EVIDENCE – PRUEBA ADMISIBLE Evidence that can be legally and properly be used in court
ADVERSE WITNESS – TESTIGO ADVERSO A person called to testify for the other side
AFFIANT – DECLARANTE A person who makes and signs an affidavit
AFFIDAVIT – DECLARACIÓN JURAMENTADA A written statement that someone swears to under oath in front of someone that is legally authorized, like a judge or notary public.
AFFIRMATION /AFFIRMED – RATIFICACIÓN / RATIFICÓ When an appellate court says that the lower court's decision was right.
AGGRAVATED – AGRAVANTES Circumstances or elements that will increase the punishment for a crime. (See ENHANCEMENT)
AGGRAVATED ARSON – INCENDIO PREMEDITADO CON AGRAVANTES Deliberately setting fire with specific intent to cause injury or damage structures.
AGGRAVATED BATTERY – AGRESIÓN QUE CAUSA LESIONES CON AGRAVANTES Unlawful use of force against another such as using a dangerous weapon
AGGRAVATED MAYHEM – MUTILACIÓN CRIMINAL CON AGRAVANTES Causing permanent disability or disfigurement with specific intent to cause the injury and with extreme indifference to well-being of another person
AGGRAVATED TRESSPASS – INVASION DE PROPIEDAD CON AGRAVANTES Unlawfully entering property of another with specific intent to carry out prior threat of serious bodily injury.
AGGRAVATING FACTORS – FACTORES AGRAVANTES Any factors associated with the commission of a crime which increase the seriousness of the offense
AID & ABET – AYUDAR E INSITAR to help or assist, in committing a crime
ALLEGED – PRESUNTO Said to be true as described; a person who is accused, but has not yet been tried in court

ALLEGATION – ALEGACIÓN A statement or claim that is made and has not been proved to be true or false.
ALIBI – COARTADA A defense claim that the accused was somewhere else at the time a crime was committed
ALIMONY – PENSIÓN Money the court orders you to pay to a spouse or ex-spouse.
AMEND – ENMENDAR To add to or change a claim that has been filed in court
AMENDMENT – ENMIENDA A change made by correction, addition, or deletion
ANNULMENT – ANULACIÓN A legal action that says your marriage was never in effect.
APPEAL – RECURSO DE APELACIÓN When someone that loses at least part of a case asks a higher court (called an "APPELLATE COURT") to review the decision and say if it is right.
APPEARANCE – COMPARECENCIA Going to court. Or a legal paper that says you will participate in the court process
APPELLATE COURT – TRIBUNAL DE APELACIONES Reviews a lower court's (called a "TRIAL COURT" or "superior court.") decision.
ARBITRATION/ MEDIATION – CONCILIACION / ARBITRAJE MEDIACIÓN A process in which people that are having a dispute are helped by a neutral person to communicate so they can reach a settlement acceptable to both
ARGUMENT – ARGUMENTO/ ALEGATO Remarks made by an attorney to a judge or jury on the facts of the case or on points of law
ARRAIGN – INSTRUCCIÓN DE CARGOS, LECTURA DE CARGOS Process where the person who is accused is brought before the court to hear the criminal charge(s) against him or her, and to plead guilty, not guilty or no contest
ARREST – ARRESTO / DETENCION The legal capture of a person who is charged with a crime
ARREST OF JUDGEMENT – SUSPENSIÓN DE LA SENTENCIA Postponing the result of a judgment already entered
ARSON – INCENDIO PREMEDITADO The malicious burning of someone's own house or of someone else's house, or of someone's commercial or industrial property
ASSAULT – AGRESIÓN When someone tries or threatens to hurt someone else. Can include violence but is not battery.
ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON – AGRESIÓN CON ARMA MORTAL When someone tries to hurt someone and there is threat to do bodily harm by use of a weapon like a gun or a knife
ATTEMPT – TENTATIVA, INTENTO DE An effort to do an act or commit a crime
ATTEST – ATESTIGUAR – DECLARAR, DAR FE To witness, to affirm to be true or genuine, to certify
ATTORNEY OF RECORD – ABOGADO DE REGISTRO / ABOGADO QUE CONSTA EN ACTAS The lawyer whose name is listed in a case record as representing someone in the case
AUTO TAMPERING – MANIPULACION FORZADA UN AUTOMÓVIL The manipulation of an automobile and its parts for a specific (illicit) purpose

BAIL – FIANZA / CAUCION A security deposit (usually money) given to release a defendant or witness from custody and to make sure that they go to court when they're supposed to
BAIL BOND – BONO DE FIANZA / CAUCION A legal paper that you buy from a bondsman and give to the court instead of bail.
BAIL BONDSMAN – CAUCIONISTA Person who is responsible for paying the bond for the defendant's release from jail
BAIL EXONERATION – EXONERACIÓN DE FIANZA The return of the money posted with a bail bondsman or insurance ("surety") company isn't responsible for said bail anymore.
BAIL FORFEITURE – DECOMISO, INCAUTACION DE LA FIANZA A court order to let the court keep the bail deposit because the defendant failed to appear.
BAILIFF – ALGUACIL Person who oversees security in the court.
BANKRUPT – INSOLVENTE The state or condition of a person who is unable to pay his or her debts when they are due
BANKRUPTCY – INSOLVENCIA/BANCARROTA The inability of a business or person to pay the money they owe. A legal remedy to get rid of debts or to pay a portion of what is owed.
BAR – COLEGIO DE ABOGADOS All of the lawyers qualified to practice law. For example, a state bar includes all of the lawyers qualified to practice law in that state
BATTERED CHILD SYNDROME (B.C.S.) – DESORDEN DE AGRESION INFANTIL Physical condition of a child where external or internal injuries result from acts committed by a parent or custodian
BATTERY – AGRESIÓN CON DAÑOS CORPORALES Illegal beating or physical violence or control of a person without their permission
BATTERY, SPOUSAL – AGRESIÓN CON DAÑOS CORPORALES AL CONYUGE An offensive touching or use of force on a spouse without the spouse's consent
BENCH – ESTRADO DEL JUEZ (1) the desk where a judge sits in court; (2) Judges in general, or a specific judge
BENCH CONFERENCE – CONFERENCIA EN PRIVADO A meeting either on or off the record at the judge's bench between the judge, counsel, and sometimes the defendant, out of the hearing of the jury
BENCH TRIAL – JUICIO ANTE UN JUEZ Trial without a jury. The judge decides the case.
BENCH WARRANT – ORDEN JUDICIAL DE ARRESTO An order given by the judge ("Court or bench") to arrest a person who didn't do what the court ordered. For example, didn't go to court when they were supposed to.
BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT – MÁS ALLÁ DE LA DUDA RAZONABLE The burden of proof in a criminal case requiring that the jury be convinced that every element of a crime has been proven by the prosecution
BIAS – PREJUICIO A pre-conceived opinion or a predisposition to decide a cause or an issue a certain way
BIND – OBLIGACION CONTRACTUAL To make yourself or someone else legally responsible for something
BIND OVER – VINCULACION A JUICIO / VINCULACION A PROCESO A judge's decision before a trial that says there is enough evidence for a trial

BLOOD–ALCOHOL CONTENT (BAC) – MEDIDA DE ALCOHOL EN LA SANGRE, ALCOHOLEMIA The measurement in grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood or grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath
BOOK (BOOKING) – FICHAR What the police do when they arrest someone. Includes taking fingerprints, photographs, and writing down personal information about the person
BRANDISHING A WEAPON – BLANDIR UNA ARMA Showing a weapon to another person, typically the police or the victim
BREACH – INCUMPLIMIENTO (civil) The breaking or violating of a law, right, obligation, or duty either by doing an act or failing to do an act
BREAKING AND ENTERING – ALLANAMIENTO DE MORADA Going into someone's house at night with intent to commit a felony
BRIBE – COHECHO O SOBORNO A gift, not necessarily of monetary value, given to influence the conduct of the receiver.
BURDEN OF PROOF – CARGA DE PRUEBA When one person in the case must prove more than the other person
BURGLARY – ESCALAMIENTO When someone unlawfully breaks into or enters a building or home, and they intend to or do commit a theft or other crime
CALENDAR – CALENDARIO JUDICIAL A list, in alphabetical order, of all the cases in each courtroom every day. "To calendar" something means to give a day, time, and courtroom to a case
CAPITAL CASE, CRIME, PUNISHMENT – CASO, DELITO, CASTIGO CON PENA DE MUERTE A criminal case where the defendant can get the death penalty.
CAPTION – EPÍGRAFE The information at the top of all papers (called "pleadings") like case name, court, and case number, given to the court.
CARJACKING – ROBO DE VEHÍCULO CON VIOLENCIA Taking a motor vehicle that belongs to someone else against his will, by means of force or intimidation.
CASE – CASO / CAUSA / QUERRELLA A lawsuit or a complaint filed in criminal, traffic, or civil court
CASE LAW – PRECEDENTES Law made by earlier decisions in similar cases
CAVEAT – ADVERTENCIA A warning; a note of caution
CHAIN OF CUSTODY – CADENA DE CUSTODIA A method to track the whereabouts of evidence from the moment it is received in custody until it is offered in court
CHALLENGE – IMPUGNACIÓN Someone's right to object to or fight something in a legal case
CHALLENGE FOR CAUSE – RECUSACIÓN POR CAUSA Reasons that a lawyer gives for removing a juror or judge from a case
CHAMBERS – OFICINA DEL JUEZ A judge's private office
CHANGE OF VENUE – CAMBIO DE JURISDICCION, DE COMPETENCIA When a civil or criminal case is moved from one court jurisdiction to another.
CHARGE (TO) – FORMULAR IMPUTACIÓN, FORMULAR CARGOS In criminal law, the defendant is accused of committing a crime.

CHARGE TO THE JURY – INSTRUCCIONES AL JURADO	The judge's instructions to the jury concerning the law that applies to the facts of the case on trial
CHARGING DOCUMENT – FORMULACIÓN DE IMPUTACIÓN	A written accusation saying a defendant has committed an offense. Includes a citation, an indictment, information, and statement of charges
CHILD ABUSE – MALTRATO O ABUSO DE MENORES	Hurting a child physically, sexually, or emotionally
CHILD ABDUCTION – SECUESTRO DE MENORES	The offense of taking away a child by deceit and persuasion, or by violence
CHILD MOLESTATION – ABUSO SEXUAL DE MENORES	Any form of indecent or sexual activity on, involving, or surrounding a child under the age of 18
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY – PORNOGRAFÍA INFANTIL	Any obscene material that depicts a person under the age of 18 years personally engaging in or simulating sexual conduct
CHILD SUPPORT – PENSION	Money paid by a parent to help support a child or children
CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE – PRUEBA CIRCUNSTANCIAL	All evidence that is indirect. Testimony not based on actual personal knowledge or observation of the facts in dispute
CITATION – INFRACCIÓN	Document that tells a defendant what the charges are. Also tells the defendant to appear court and/or post bail
CLAIM – DEMANDA / DISPUTA	The statement of a right to money or property
CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE – PRUEBA CLARA Y CONVINCENTE	Standard of proof commonly used in civil lawsuits and in regulatory agency cases. It governs the amount of proof that must be offered for the plaintiff to win the case
CLERK – SECRETARIO DEL TRIBUNAL	Officer of the court who files pleadings, motions, judgments, etc., issues process, and keeps records of court proceedings
CLOSING ARGUMENT – ALEGATOS DE CIERRE	Counsel's final statement to the judge/and or jury after all parties have concluded their presentation of evidence
CODE – CÓDIGO	The law created by statutes. For example, the Nevada Code of Civil Procedure, Nevada Civil Code, Nevada Vehicle Code, Nevada Penal Code, and Nevada Health and Safety Code
CO-DEFENDANT – COACUSADO	In a criminal case, an individual charged with involvement in the same crime as another
COERCION – COACCIÓN	Compulsion; constraint; compelling by force or arms or threat
COMMIT (TO) – COMETER / INTERNAR	to carry out an action, crime, or to put someone under the care of an institution. Or to use a court order to send a person to jail
COMMITMENT – 1. INTERNACION 2. OBLIGACION	1. The action of sending a person to a prison or mental institution 2.The compromise incurred through a contract or a duty
COMMON LAW – DERECHO CONSUECUDINARIO	Laws that come from court decisions and not from statutes ("codes") or constitutions
COMPENSATORY DAMAGES – REPARACIÓN DE DAÑOS	Money that one person must pay another to cover the cost of a wrong or injury

COMPLAINT – 1. DEMANDA (CIVIL) FORMULACIÓN DE IMPUTACIÓN 2. ACUSACIÓN (PENAL)– 1. The initial legal document that begins a civil lawsuit. It states what the plaintiff thinks the defendant did and asks the court for help. Also called the "initial pleading" or "petition." 2. It is used to state the charges in a criminal case .
CONCEAL – OCULTAR Withholding of something which one knows and which one, in duty, is bound to reveal
CONCURRENT SENTENCES – SENTENCIA SIMULTÁNEA Sentences you can serve at the same time. For example, if you have concurrent sentences of 10 years and 5 years, you must serve a total of 10 years
CONDITIONAL RELEASE – LIBERTAD CONDICIONAL Freedom from custody which regulates the activities and associations of the defendant. If a defendant fails to meet the conditions, the release is revoked
CONFISCATE – CONFISCAR / INCAUTAR / DECOMIZAR to seize or take private property for public use (the police took the weapon)
CONSENT – CONSENTIMIENTO A written agreement to obey a decision or deal
CONSPIRACY – CONSPIRACIÓN / CONFABULACION Where two or more persons intentionally agree to commit crime and do an act towards committing the crime
CONSTRUCTIVE POSSESSION – POSESIÓN PASIVA Where a person does not actually possess a thing, but knowingly has control over it
CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT – GARANTIA CONSTITUCIONAL A right guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, interpreted by the federal courts; also, a right guaranteed by some other constitution (such as a state constitution)
CONTEMPT OF COURT – DESACATO Disobeying a court order, punished by a fine or jail
CONTINUANCE – APLAZAMIENTO Putting off a court case to a later date
CONTROLLED SUSTANCES – SUSTANCIAS CONTROLADAS Any drug identified/ defined by law whose availability is restricted.
CORONER – MÉDICO FORENSE, LEGISTA Public official charged to inquire into the causes and circumstances of any death which occurs through violence or suddenly (suspicious causes)
COUNT / CHARGE – CARGO Each separate charge (or statement) in a criminal case.
COUNTERCLAIM – CONTRADEMANDA an independent charge by one side in a case (either the plaintiff or defendant) that goes against the claim made by the other side
COUNTERFEIT/ FORGERY – FALSIFICACIÓN to forge, to copy or imitate, without authority or right, and with the purpose to deceive by passing off the copy as genuine
COUNTY JAIL – CÁRCEL A building or structure used to house alleged criminals and/or convicted criminals of local area crimes
COURT – JUEZ/ JUZGADO O TRIBUNAL A judge or group of judges whose job is to hear cases and carry out justice
COURT ORDER – ORDEN JUDICIAL A decision made by a judicial officer that gives someone certain rights or tells someone to do something

COURT REPORTER – ESTENOGRAFO, TAQUIGRAFO DEL JUZGADO Trained professional who writes down, word for word said in court. The document recorded is called a TRANSCRIPT
COURT, APPEALS – TRIBUNAL DE APELACIONES In some states, the highest appellate court, where it is the Court's decision whether to hear the case. Comprised of 3 or more judges
COURT, DISTRICT – JUZGADO DISTRITAL (1) Federal - A trial court with general Federal jurisdiction. (2) State - Meaning varies from state to state
COURT, JUVENILE – JUZGADO DE MENORES A court having jurisdiction over cases involving children under a specified age, usually 18. Cases generally involve delinquent, dependent, and neglected children
CRIME – DELITO Act or omission punishable under a law with death; jail or prison; fine; being removed from office; being unable to hold any office of honor, trust, or profit
CRIMINAL – DELINCUENTE Someone convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor
CRIMINAL CASE – CASO PENAL A court case that starts because of a crime
CRIMINAL CONDUCT – CONDUCTA DELICTIVA Willful action illicit in nature or involving a crime
CRIMINAL RECORD – ANTECEDENTES PENALES (1) Arrest record. A written account listing all the instances in which a person has been arrested. (2) A form completed by a police officer when a person is arrested
CROSS EXAMINATION – CONTRA INTERROGATORIOS When the other side's lawyer asks a witness question in a hearing or trial
CUSTODIAL PARENT – PADRE TUTELAR The parent that has primary care, custody, and control of the child(ren)
CUSTODY – 1. TUTELA 2. CUSTODIA (1) the care and control of children. (2) When someone is under the physical control of the court to make sure they go to court when they're supposed to; when the judge sends a person to jail after they are found guilty of a crime;
DAMAGES – DAÑOS Y PERJUICIOS Money that the losing side must pay to the winning side to make up for losses or injuries. There are two kinds of damages: (1) "compensatory," meaning money to pay for the actual cost of an injury or loss; and (2) "punitive" or "exemplary," an amount of money above the actual damages. This is a punishment for willful or malicious acts
DEADLY WEAPON – ARMA MORTÍFERA Any weapon, instrument or object that is capable of being used to inflict death or great bodily injury
DEATH ROW – PABELLÓN DE LA MUERTE The area of a state or federal prison where criminals who are sentenced to death are confined until their sentence is commuted or carried out
DECEDENT – DIFUNTO / FINADO/ OCSISO In criminal law, it means a murder victim; in probate law, it means a dead person
DECREE – FALLO A court decision. It can be (1) "interlocutory," which means it is not a final decision, or (2) "final," which means all issues of the case are settled
DETENTION HEARING – AUDIENCIA DE DETENCIÓN A hearing where the judge decides if a defendant can be released. The initial hearing in Dependency Court soon after the child has been removed from the parent

DIRECT EXAMINATION – INTERROGATORIO DIRECTO A witness questioned by the party that asked them to testify. (Compare CROSS–EXAMINATION
DISCOVERY – DESCUBRIMIENTO The gathering of information (facts, documents, or testimony) before a case goes to trial. Discovery is done in many ways, such as through depositions, interrogations, or requests for admissions. It can also be done through independent investigation or by talking with the other side's lawyer
DISMISS – DESESTIMAR, SOBRESER To terminate legal action involving outstanding charges against a defendant in a criminal case
DISPOSITION – RESOLUCIÓN The final decision by the court in a dispute
DISSOLUTION – DISOLUCIÓN A marriage that is ended by a judge's decision, also known as a "divorce."
DISTRICT ATTORNEY / PROSECUTOR – AGENTE DEL MINISTERIO PUBLICO, FISCALIA A lawyer appointed or elected to represent the state in criminal cases in his or her respective judicial districts.
DIVERSION – MEDIDA ALTERNA Instead of going to jail, a defendant participates in some form of a rehabilitation ("rehab") supervised program
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – VIOLENCIA INTRAFAMILIAR, DOMÉSTICA An assault committed by one member of a household against another
DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI) – MANEJAR EBRIO O DROGADO/ MANEJAR EN ESTADO DE EBRIEDAD The unlawful operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In some jurisdictions it is synonymous with DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE (DUI)
DURESS – COACCIÓN Consists in any illegal imprisonment or threats of bodily harm to coerce the will of another and inducing him to do an act contrary to his free will
EMBEZZLEMENT – MALVERSACIÓN DE FONDOS To willfully take or convert to one's own use, another's money or property, which the wrongdoer initially acquired lawfully, because of some office, employment, or some position of trust
ENHANCEMENT – AGRAVANTE An allegation added to a basic charge which, if proven, increases the basic sentence. Example: "use of a gun in the commission of a crime" may be added to the felony charge
ENTER A GUILTY PLEA – DECLARARSE CULPABLE The formal statement before the court that the accused admits committing the criminal act
ENTRY OF DEFAULT – FALLO POR INCUMPLIMIENTO The clerk's record that the defendant has defaulted by not answering, or not answering on time. The plaintiff must request this record entry
EVICITION – DESALOJO Recovery of land or rental property from another by legal process.
EVIDENCE – EVIDENCIA/PRUEBA Any proof legally presented and admitted at trial through witnesses, records, and/or exhibits
EVIDENCE, CIRCUMSTANTIAL – PRUEBA CIRCUNSTANCIAL Conclusion drawn from proven facts
EXECUTE – 1,2. EJECUTAR 3. RUBRICA (1) To carry out all terms of a contract or court order; (2) to kill (3) to sign (a document);

EXHIBIT – ELEMENTO DE PRUEBA A document or an object shown and submitted to be admitted in court as evidence in a case
EXHIBIT, PEOPLE’S –PRUEBA DE CARGO Exhibit and/or evidence that is offered by the prosecution
EXONERATE – EXONERAR To clear of blame or to relieve from responsibility
EXPERT TESTIMONY – TESTIMONIO PERICIAL Testimony given in relation to some scientific, technical, or professional matter by experts
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES – CIRCUNSTANCIAS ATENUANTES circumstances which render a crime less aggravated, heinous, or reprehensible than it would otherwise be
EYEWITNESS – TESTIGO OCULAR/PRESENCIAL One who saw the act, fact, or transaction to which he or she testifies
FACTUAL BASIS – BASES FÁCTICAS The underlying facts supporting a defendant’s guilty or NOLO CONTENDERE plea
FAILURE TO APPEAR – NO COMPARECER, FALTA DE COMPARECENCIA The act of not appearing in court after being presented with a subpoena or summons
FELONY – DELITO GRAVE A serious crime that can be punished by more than one year in prison or by death. (Compare INFRACTION, MISDEMEANOR)
FELONY MURDER – HOMICIDIO/ SESINATO CALIFICADO A murder committed during the commission of a felony such as robbery, burglary, or kidnapping
FIELD SOBRIETY TEST – EXAMEN DE SOBRIEDAD A method of determining whether a person is intoxicated using a motor skills test which is administered by testing the driver's speaking ability and/or physical coordination
FILE (TO) – PRESENTAR, PROMOVER, ENTABLAR When a person officially gives a paper to a court clerk and that paper becomes part of the record of a case
FINDING / JUDGEMENT – FALLO When a judicial officer or jury says something is a fact
FORFEITURE – EXTINCION DE DOMINIO When a person must give up money or property because he or she didn't meet a legal obligation.
FORGERY – FALSIFICACIÓN The act of claiming one's own writing to be that of another
GREAT BODILY INJURY – LESIONES CORPORALES GRAVES Injury which involves a substantial risk of death, serious permanent disfigurement, or loss of function of any part of an organ of the body; more serious than ordinary battery
GUARDIANSHIP – TUTELA A court proceeding where a judge chooses someone to care for a person under age 18 or to manage the minor's estate (property), or both. (Compare with CONSERVATORSHIP.)
HARASSMENT – ACOSO Words, gestures, and actions which tend to annoy, alarm, and verbally abuse another person.
HEARSAY – INFORMACION DE OIDAS Statements by a witness who did not see or hear the incident in question but heard about it from someone else. Hearsay usually can't be used as evidence in court

HOUSE ARREST WITH MONITORING – ARRAIGO DOMICILIARIO CON MONITOREO An alternative to imprisonment where an individual is confined to his or her home and monitored electronically
HOMICIDE – HOMICIDIO The unlawful killing of one human being by another
HOSTILE WITNESS – TESTIGO HOSTIL A witness whose testimony is not favorable to the party who calls him or her as a witness
IMPOUND – INCAUTAR To take and keep an animal or an object in custody
IMPRISONMENT – ENCARCELAMIENTO The act of putting or confining a man in prison, or the restraint of a man's personal liberty
INDICTMENT – ACUSACIÓN FORMAL POR GRAN JURADO / FORMULACION DE CARGOS POR EL GRAN JURADO A formal charge by a grand jury saying there is enough evidence that the defendant committed the crime to justify having a trial.
INFORMATION – ESCRITO ACUSATORIO A written accusation charging a person with a crime. It is presented in court by a prosecuting officer under oath and does not come from a grand jury
INITIAL APPEARANCE – COMPARECENCIA INICIAL in criminal law, the hearing at which a judge determines whether there is sufficient evidence against a person charged with a crime to hold him or her for trial. The Constitution bans secret accusations, so initial appearances are public unless the defendant asks otherwise; the accused must be present, though he or she usually does not offer evidence. Also called FIRST APPEARANCE
INMATE – PRESO / REO A person confined to a prison, penitentiary, or jail
IN PROPIA PERSONA (IN PRO PER, PRO SE) – EN PROPIA PERSONA When a person represents himself or herself without a lawyer. This comes from the Latin for "in one's own proper person." (See also PRO PER AND PRO SE.)
INTERROGATORIES – INTERROGATORIOS Written questions asked by one party in a lawsuit for which the opposing party must answer them in writing
INTOXICATION – EBRIEDAD A diminished ability to act with full mental and physical capabilities because of alcohol; drunkenness
INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER – HOMICIDIO IMPRUDENCIAL The unlawful killing of a human being in which there is no intention to kill or do grievous bodily harm, but that is committed with criminal negligence or during the commission of a crime not included within the felony murder rule. (Also called negligent manslaughter.)
JUDGE – JUEZ An elected or appointed public official with authority to hear and decide cases in a court of law
JUDICIAL NOTICE – ADMITIR COMO CIERTO A court's recognition of the truth of basic facts without formal evidence.
JURISDICTION – JURISDICCIÓN (1) The legal authority of a court to hear and decide a case. (2) The geographic area over which the court has authority to decide cases. (3) the territory, subject matter, or persons over which lawful authority may be exercised by a court.
KIDNAPPING – RAPTO / SECUESTRO The taking or detaining of a person against his or her will and without lawful authority
LARCENY – HURTO Stealing or theft

LAWSUIT – LITIGIO / QUERELLA An action between two or more persons in the courts of law, not a criminal matter
LAY PERSON – SECULAR/LEGO One not trained in law
LENIENCY – INDULGENCIA Recommendation for a sentence less than the maximum allowed
LEWED CONDUCT – ACTOS LASCIVOS Behavior that is obscene, lustful, indecent, vulgar
LIBEL – DIFAMACIÓN False and malicious material that is written or published that harms a person's reputation. See DEFAMATION
LIFE IMPRISONMENT – CADENA PERPETUA A type of sentence where the convicted criminal is ordered to spend the rest of his or her life in prison
LINEUP – RUEDA DE SOSPECHOSOS A police identification procedure by which the suspect to a crime is exhibited, along with others, before the victim or witness to determine if the victim or witness can identify the suspect as the person who committed the crime
LITIGANT – LITIGANTE / QUERELLANTE A party, or side involved in a lawsuit
MAGISTRATE – JUEZ DE CONTROL DE GARANTIAS, Judicial officer with the power to issue arrest warrants
MALICE – DOLO / ALEVOSIA Ill will, hatred, or hostility by one person toward another which may prompt the intentional doing of a wrongful act without legal justification or excuse
MALICE AFORETHOUGHT – PREMEDITACIÓN Intending to kill another person or intending to do an act with knowledge that it is dangerous to human life
MALICIOUS MISCHIEF – VANDALISMO Willful destruction of property, from actual ill will or resentment toward its owner or possessor
MALPRACTICE – CONDUCTA PROFESIONAL NEGLIGENTE Violation of a professional duty to act with reasonable care and in good faith without fraud or collusion. This term is usually applied to such conduct by doctors, lawyers, or accountants
MANSLAUGHTER – HOMICIDIO SIMPLE Unlawful killing of another, without malice, when the death is caused by some other unlawful act not usually expected to result in great bodily harm
MANSLAUGHTER, VOLUNTARY – HOMICIDIO CON CIRCUMSTANCIAS ESPECIALES/ CULPOSO Unlawful killing of another, without malice, when the act is committed with a sudden extreme emotional impulse
MATERIAL EVIDENCE – PRUEBA SUSTANCIAL / MATERIAL That quality of evidence which tends to influence the judge and/or jury because of its logical connection with the issue
MATERIAL WITNESS – TESTIGO RELEVANTE/ESENCIAL In criminal trial, a witness whose testimony is crucial to either the defense or prosecution.
MAYHEM – MUTILACIÓN A malicious injury which disables or disfigures another
MISDEMEANOR – DELITO MENOR A crime that can be punished by up to one year in jail

MIRANDA RIGHTS – GARANTIAS CONSTITUCIONALES Requirement that police tell a person who is arrested or questioned their constitutional rights before they question him or her: specifically, the right to remain silent; that any statement made may be used against him or her; the right to an attorney; and if the person cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed if he or she desires
MISTRIAL – JUICIO NULO A trial that has been ended and declared void (of no legal effect) due to prejudicial error in the proceedings or other extraordinary circumstances
MITIGATING FACTORS / CIRCUMSTANCES – CIRCUNSTANCIAS /FACTORES ATENUANTES Facts which do not constitute a justification or excuse for an offense, but which may be considered as reasons for reducing the degree of blame
MOTION – MOCIÓN (ADMINISTRATIVE) PETICION (CRIMINAL) Oral or written request made by a party to an action before, during, or after a trial asking the judge to issue a ruling or order in that party's favor
MUGSHOT – FOTO DE PRONTUARIO Pictures taken after a suspect is taken into custody (booked), usually used as an official photograph by police officers
MURDER – ASESINATO The unlawful killing of a human being with deliberate intent to kill
NOLO CONTENDERE – NOLO CONTENDERE From the Latin for "I do not wish to contend." - "No deseo refutar." Same as pleading guilty, except that your plea cannot be used against you in civil court. This can only be used in traffic or criminal court.
NOTARY PUBLIC – FE DATARIO A person authorized to certify a person's signature, administer oaths, certify that documents are authentic, and take depositions
OATH – PROTESTA / JURAMENTO When a witness promises to tell the truth in a legal proceeding
OBJECT (TO) / OBJECTION – OBJETAR / OBJECIÓN to protest, A formal protest to the court over testimony or evidence that the other side tries to introduce in court, against an act or omission by the opposing party
OR- ON A PERSON'S OWN RECOGNIZANCE – LIBERTAD BAJO PALABRA Release of a person from custody without the payment of any BAIL or posting of BOND, upon the promise to return to court
OPENING ARGUMENT – ALEGATO DE APERTURA The initial statement made by attorneys for each side, outlining the facts each intends to establish during the trial
OVERRULE – DENEGAR A judge's decision not to allow an objection. A decision by a higher court finding that a lower court decision was wrong
PANDERING – ALCAHUETEAR Pimping. Arranging for acts of prostitution
PARDON – INDULTO When the chief executive of a state or country releases a convicted person from the punishment given him or her by a court sentence
PEACE OFFICER – OFICIAL DEL ORDEN PÚBLICO Includes sheriffs and their deputies, members of the police force of cities, and other officers whose duty is to enforce and preserve the public peace
PENALTY – SANCION Punishment for breaking a law
PENALTY ASSESSMENT – COSTO JUDICIAL An amount of money added to a fine

PENALTY OF PERJURY – PENA DE PERJURIO	Circumstances under which a person takes an oath that he will testify, declare, depose, or certify truthfully
PEOPLE (PROSECUTION) – ESTADO (PARTE QUE ACUSA)	A state, for example, the People of the State of Nevada
PETTY OFFENSE – INFRACCION	An offense for which the authorized penalty does not exceed imprisonment for 3 months or a fine of \$500
PETTY THEFT – HURTO MENOR	The act of taking and carrying away the personal property of another of a value usually below \$100.00 with the intent to deprive the owner of it permanently
PIMP – ALCAHUETE	(1) the act of getting customers for a whore or prostitute; (2) one who gets customers for a whore or prostitute
PLAINTIFF – DEMANDANTE / QUERELLANTE	The person or company that files a lawsuit
PLEA – DECLARACIÓN DE CULPABILIDAD	In a criminal case, the defendant's statement pleading "guilty" or "not guilty" in answer to the charges.
PLEA BARGAIN – DECLARACIÓN DE CULPABILIDAD NEGOCIADA	An agreement between the prosecutor and the defendant. It lets the defendant plead guilty to a less serious charge if the court approves
PLEADINGS – ALEGATOS	Written statements filed with the court that describes a party's legal or factual claims about the case and what the party wants from the court
POSTPONEMENT – APLAZAMIENTO	To put off or delay a court hearing
PRIORS – ANTECEDENTES	Term meaning previous conviction(s) of the accused
PROBABLE CAUSE – MOTIVO FUNDADO	A good reason to believe that a crime has or is being committed; the basis for all lawful searches, seizures, and arrests
PROBATION – LIBERTAD CONDICIONAL BAJO SUPERVISION	A sentencing alternative to imprisonment in which the court releases a convicted defendant under supervision of a probation officer that makes certain that the defendant follows certain rules, for example, gets a job, gets drug counseling
PRO PER – PRO SE	Persona que presenta sus propios casos en el tribunal, sin abogados (Ver también IN PROPIA PERSONA y PRO SE
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY – FISCAL, MINISTERIO PUBLICO	A public office who prosecutes criminal cases for the state. See PROSECUTOR and DISTRICT ATTORNEY
PROSECUTION – FISCALÍA	The party that starts a criminal case and files criminal charges. The prosecution is the lawyer for the state. A common name for the state's side of the case
PUBLIC DEFENDER – DEFENSOR PÚBLICO/ABOGADO DE OFICIO	A lawyer picked by the court to represent a defendant who cannot afford a lawyer
QUASH – INVALIDAR, ANULAR	To overthrow, to vacate, to annul or make void

RAP SHEET – ANTECEDENTES PENALES A written summary of a person's criminal history
RAPE – VIOLACIÓN Unlawful intercourse with an individual without their consent
REASONABLE DOUBT, BEYOND A – MÁS ALLA DE LA DUDA RAZONABLE The degree of certainty required for a juror to legally find a criminal defendant guilty. An accused person is entitled to acquittal if, in the minds of the jury, his or her guilt has not been proved beyond a "reasonable doubt"
RECKLESS DRIVING – CONDUCIR IMPRUDENTEMENTE Operation of a motor vehicle that shows a reckless disregard of possible consequences and indifference of other's rights.
RECORD – ACTAS The official papers that make up a court case
RESTITUTION – REPARACIÓN DE DAÑOS - RESARCIMIENTO Giving something back to its owner. Or, giving the owner something with the same value, like paying to fix his or her property.
RETALIATION – REPRESALIA Infliction upon someone in response to an injury that he/she has caused another.
ROBBERY – ROBO The act of taking money, personal property, or any other article of value that is in the possession of another by means of force or fear.
SEARCH AND SEIZURE – REGISTRO E INCAUTACIÓN A person or place is searched and evidence useful in the investigation and prosecution of a crime is taken. The search is conducted after an order is issued by a judge.
SEARCH WARRANT – ORDEN DE REGISTRO/CATEO An order that tells the police to search a specific place to find specific people or things. A judge can order a search warrant if there is probable cause.
SENTENCE (ING)– SANCION(AR) A judge's formal pronouncement of the punishment to be given to a person convicted of a crime.
SERVE A SENTENCE – PURGAR UNA PENA The act of spending an allotted amount of time in a designated location such as a prison as punishment for the crime committed
SETTLEMENT – FINIQUITO, LIQUIDACION When both sides reach an agreement that solves the case before the judge or jury decides
SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT – ABUSO SEXUAL/AGRESIÓN Unlawful sexual contact with another person
SEXUAL BATTERY – AGRESIÓN SEXUAL The forced penetration of or contact with another's sexual organs or the sexual organs of the perpetrator.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT – ACOSO SEXUAL Sexual words, conduct, or action (usually repeated and persistent) that, being directed at a specific person, annoys, alarms, or causes substantial emotional distress in that person and serves not legitimate purpose.
SEXUAL MOLESTATION – ABUSOS DESHONESTOS Illegal sex acts performed against a minor by a parent, guardian, relative or acquaintance.
SHERIFF – ALGUACIL Elected officer of a county whose job is to conserve peace within his or her territorial jurisdiction as well as aid in the criminal and civil court processes.

SHOPLIFTING – RATERÍA DE TIENDAS The willful taking and concealing of merchandise from a store or business with the intention of using the goods for one’s personal use without paying the purchase price.
SLANDER – CALUMNIA, Defamation of a person's character or reputation through false or malicious oral statements. (See DEFAMATION)
SMALL CLAIMS COURT – TRIBUNAL DE CUANTIAS MENORES A court that handles civil claims for \$5,000 or less. People often represent themselves rather than hire an attorney
STALKING – ACECHAR The act or an instance of following another by stealth; the offense of following or loitering near another, often surreptitiously, with the purpose of annoying or harassing that person or committing a further crime such as assault or battery.
STATUTE – LEY A law passed by Congress or a state legislature.
STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS – LEY DE PRESCRIPCIÓN A law that says how much time you have to file a lawsuit after something happens.
STAY – SUSPENSIÓN The act of stopping a judicial proceeding by order of the court.
STAY OF EXECUTION – SUSPENSIÓN DE EJECUCIÓN DE LA SANCION. An order that prevents the execution of an action, e.g. the serving of a sentence. The stay may be granted on a motion by the defendant, or it may be ordered in accordance with statutory law.
SUBPOENA – CITATORIO JUDICIAL An official order to go to court at a certain time. Subpoenas are commonly used to tell witnesses to come to court to testify in a trial.
SUE (TO) – DEMANDAR To commence legal proceedings for recovery of a right.
SUIT – DEMANDA, QUERELLA Any proceeding by one person or persons against another in a court of law.
SUMMONS – CITATORIO, EMPLAZAMIENTO JUDICIAL (1) A notice to a defendant that he or she has been sued or charged with a crime and is required to appear in court. (2) A jury <i>summons</i> requires the person receiving it to report for possible jury duty.
TESTIFY – DECLARAR, TESTIFICAR To give evidence under oath as a witness in a court proceeding.
TESTIMONY – DECLARACION, TESTIMONIO Oral evidence at a trial or deposition
THEFT – ROBO The act of stealing or the taking of property without the owner's consent
TRANSCRIPT – ACTAS A record of everything that is said in a hearing or trial
TRESPASSING – ALLANAMIENTO Unlawful interference with one's person, property and rights
TRIAL, SPEEDY – JUICIO RÁPIDO The Sixth Amendment of the Constitution guarantees the accused to an immediate trial in accordance with prevailing rules, regulations and proceedings of law
TRUE BILL – FORMULACION DE ACUSACIÓN POR EL GRAN JURADO The endorsement made by a grand jury on a bill of indictment when it finds sufficient evidence for trial on the charge alleged
UNDERCOVER – ENCUBIERTO A person participating in a secret investigation in order to acquire information about the crime without the other party realizing their identity

<p>UNDER THE INFLUENCE – BAJO LOS EFECTOS Any abnormal mental or physical condition which is the result of indulging in any degree in intoxicating liquors, and which tends to deprive one of that clearness of intellect and control of himself which he would otherwise possess</p>
<p>VACATE – REVOCAR To render an act void; to set aside</p>
<p>VAGRANCY – VAGANCIA The state or manner of living by wandering from place to place without a home, job, or means of support</p>
<p>VEHICULAR HOMICIDE – HOMICIDIO VEHICULAR Caused by the illegal operation of a motor vehicle. Both intentional conduct and negligence maybe the basis for such charge though statutes vary from state to state as to the elements of the crime</p>
<p>VENUE – JURISDICCIÓN The court where you can file your action</p>
<p>VIOLATION – INFRACCIÓN A breach of a right, duty, or law</p>
<p>VIOLATION OF PROBATION – INCUMPLIMIENTO A LAS CONDICIONES LIBERTAD CONDICIONAL A new allegation against a defendant for non- compliance with a previous probation condition related to a criminal sentence</p>
<p>VOIR DIRE – SELECCION DE JURADOS The process of questioning potential jurors to choose the people who will decide a case. Latin meaning "to speak the truth."</p>
<p>VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER – HOMICIDIO CULPOSO Committed voluntarily during a heated moment; for example, during a sudden quarrel, two persons fight, and one of them kills the other</p>
<p>WAIVE (RIGHTS) – RENUNCIAR (DERECHOS) – To give up a legal right voluntarily, intentionally, and with full knowledge of the consequences</p>
<p>WARRANT – ORDEN JUDICIAL DE ARRESTO, APRENSION A court order telling an officer to do something</p>
<p>WEAPON, DEADLY – ARMA MORTAL A weapon, device, instrument, material or substance, whether animate or inanimate, which if used as it is used or intended to be used is known to be capable of producing death or serious bodily injury</p>
<p>WILLFUL – PREMEDITADO A “willful” act is one done intentionally, as distinguished from an act done carelessly or inadvertently</p>
<p>WITNESS – TESTIGO 1. A person called testify about what he or she saw, heard, or knows. 2. To sign your name to a document for the purpose of authenticity.</p>
<p>WITNESS DEFENSE – TESTIGO DE DESCARGO A non-hostile witness that is called by the defense counsel to assist in proving the defense’s case</p>
<p>WITNESS, EXPERT – PERITO Qualified by knowledge, skill, experience, training or education to provide a scientific, technical or specialized opinion of the subject about which he or she is to testify. That knowledge must not be generally possessed by the average person</p>
<p>WITNESS, PROSECUTION – TESTIGO DE CARGO The person whose complaint begins a criminal prosecution and whose testimony is mainly relied on to secure a conviction at the trial.</p>
<p>WRIT – MANDATO JUDICIAL, ORDEN JUDICIAL A court order that says certain action must be taken</p>
<p>WRIT OF EXECUTION – MANDAMIENTO JUDICIAL DE EJECUCIÓN A court order that tells the sheriff to enforce a judgment</p>

