

# Who's who in the courtroom

## Counsel

The barristers in the case are known as counsel. They are hired by the solicitor to prosecute or defend the case in court. The barrister usually wears a wig and gown.

## Witness

Witnesses are called by either party to prove their side of the story and may be cross-examined by the opposing party as to the accuracy of their evidence.

## The Court Reporter / Stenographer

The stenographer takes a note of everything said in the case and later types up the notes in the event of an appeal being lodged.

## Judge

### The Judge

The judge is in charge of court proceedings and decides any legal issues arising in the case. If the case does not involve a jury, the judge also decides questions of fact, such as the guilt or innocence of the accused, or which party wins in a civil case.

## The Registrar / Court Clerk

The registrar / court clerk assists the judge with administrative matters and is in charge of the court documents and exhibits. He/she also records the names of witnesses and the decision in the case. The registrar / court clerk also administers the oath.

## Solicitor

Solicitors meet with clients and get instructions from them. They prepare the case for trial by getting all the papers ready and choosing/briefing a barrister to present the case.

## The Jury

A jury consists of twelve men and women randomly selected from the electoral register. Most people between the ages of eighteen and seventy who are registered to vote are eligible for jury duty. The jury hears the evidence and decides on the guilt or innocence of the accused in a criminal case and which party wins in a civil case.

## Tipstaff / Judge's Usher

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The tipstaff / judge's usher is the personal assistant to the judge. He/she walks ahead of the judge carrying a staff and says "all rise" as the judge enters the courtroom.

## Accused

The accused comes before the court accused of a crime.

## Accused

## Prison Officer

Sits in attendance with the accused.

## Counsel

## Solicitors

## Counsel

## Jury

## Members of Public

### Members of the Public

Anyone can watch any court case, except where there is a sign reading "in camera" on the door of the courtroom. This means that the case will be heard in private and that members of the public who are not involved in the case are not allowed into the courtroom to hear the evidence. The "in camera" rule is used to protect the privacy of the people in court mainly in family law matters and in cases before the juvenile courts.

### Note

The above illustration represents a court hearing a criminal case. In a civil case [i.e. where one party is usually seeking compensation in the form of money from another party] the people in the courtroom will not include an accused or a prison officer and will only include a jury if the case involves defamation of character, false imprisonment or

malicious prosecution. The person who sues in a civil case is called the plaintiff and the person being sued is called the defendant. The plaintiff and defendant usually employ a solicitor and sometimes a barrister to fight their case, although either party is entitled to fight their own case. They are then known as "lay litigants".



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