

The Structure and Function of the Legal System

The legal system plays an important role in every country. It is designed to protect people's rights and to make sure that justice is served. The system is usually based on the constitution, which defines the basic laws and principles of the state. The constitution guarantees that all citizens are equal before the law and that everyone has the right to a fair trial.

When a crime is committed, the first step is usually the arrest of the suspect by the police. After the arrest, the case is brought to court. The person accused of the crime is called the defendant, and the person who brings the case is the plaintiff. Both sides have the right to be represented by a lawyer. The lawyer's duty is to defend the interests of their client and to present strong evidence to support their arguments.

During the trial, the judge is responsible for making sure that the process is fair and follows the law. In some cases, a jury is also present. The jury listens to the witnesses and examines the evidence before making a decision. At the end of the trial, the judge or the jury decides whether the defendant is guilty or innocent. If the defendant is found guilty, the judge gives a sentence. The punishment can be time in prison, a fine, or sometimes bail until another trial. Everyone has rights that are written in the country's constitution, and these rights help protect people from unfair treatment.

The purpose of the legal system is not only to punish those who commit crimes but also to prevent future crimes and to protect the rights of every citizen. For this reason, studying law helps students understand how society functions and how justice can be achieved. Law students learn to think critically, analyze evidence, and apply legal principles to real-life situations.

■ Reading Comprehension Questions (Multiple Choice)

1. What is the main purpose of the legal system?
 - a) To protect people's rights
 - b) To send everyone to prison
 - c) To pay a fine
 - d) To help the lawyer win
2. What document defines the basic laws and principles of a country?
 - a) The sentence
 - b) The constitution
 - c) The evidence
 - d) The trial
3. Who is the person accused of a crime in a court case?
 - a) The plaintiff
 - b) The judge

- c) The defendant
- d) The witness

4. What is the role of a lawyer during a trial?

- a) To decide the sentence
- b) To make the arrest
- c) To defend their client and present evidence
- d) To serve on the jury

5. Who decides if the defendant is guilty or innocent?

- a) The plaintiff
- b) The lawyer
- c) The witness
- d) The judge or jury

6. What can be a possible result if the defendant is found guilty?

- a) A trial
- b) A jury
- c) A sentence such as prison or a fine
- d) A right

7. What is the purpose of collecting evidence during a trial?

- a) To pay the bail
- b) To show the truth of the crime
- c) To write new laws
- d) To help the judge travel

8. Why is studying law important for students?

- a) Because they will pay a fine
- b) Because it helps them understand justice and society
- c) Because they like witnesses
- d) Because they want to visit a prison

■ Vocabulary Exercise

A. Match the words with their meanings.

1. Judge - a. A person who decides if someone is guilty or innocent
2. Defendant - b. A person accused of a crime
3. Plaintiff - c. A person who brings a case to court
4. Witness - d. A person who sees an event and tells the court about it
5. Sentence - e. The punishment given by a court
6. Jury - f. A group of people who listen to the trial and help decide the result
7. Lawyer - g. A person who represents someone in court
8. Crime - h. An illegal act against the law
9. Constitution - i. The main law that defines citizens' rights and duties
10. Evidence - j. Facts or information used to prove something in court

B. Fill in the blanks with the correct word.

Use these words: judge, lawyer, crime, evidence, defendant, guilty, rights, prison, jury, constitution

1. The _____ listens carefully to both sides during the trial.
2. The _____ defends the client and presents facts in court.
3. Stealing from a shop is a _____.
4. The police collected _____ to show who did the crime.
5. The _____ was found _____ and sent to prison.
6. Every citizen has equal _____ under the law.
7. The _____ is made up of people who decide the result of the case.
8. The country's _____ explains the basic laws and people's freedoms.
9. The thief stayed in _____ for three years after the trial.

■■ Think–Pair–Share Activity: “Fairness and Justice”

Objective: To help students use new legal vocabulary and discuss ideas about fairness and justice in simple English.

Step 1 – THINK: Students think about the following questions individually and write short notes.

1. Why do we need laws in a country?
2. What can happen if there is no judge or court?

3. What does a 'fair trial' mean to you?
4. How can evidence and witnesses help a defendant?
5. Do you think all people have equal rights in real life? Why or why not?

Step 2 – PAIR: Students share their ideas with a partner and try to use at least 3 legal words (law, court, rights, evidence, trial, etc.).

Step 3 – SHARE: Each pair shares one or two interesting ideas with the class.

Example sentences: 'We need laws to protect people's rights.' / 'A witness can help the defendant by giving evidence.'