

jurisdiction	the area over which a court has authority, which can be geographical or subject-based
jury	a group of ordinary citizens brought to court to decide on the guilt or innocence of an offender
legal aid	the provision of inexpensive legal services to people on limited incomes
majority verdict	a verdict in which the guilt of an accused person is decided by eleven out of the twelve people on a jury
mandatory sentencing	the practice of some parliaments of legislating for a particular sentence to be given for a particular crime or series of crimes

maximum penalty

the most severe sentence that can be given for a particular crime

mens rea

the guilty mind', including the intention to commit the crime, recklessness or gross negligence

mental illness

a complete criminal defence which proves that, at the time the defendant committed the crime, he or she was of unsound mind (that is, suffering from a mental illness which either prevented him or her from knowing that it was wrong)

mitigating factors

matters that persuade the judge in a sentencing hearing that the maximum penalty should not be imposed

necessity

a complete criminal defence in which the defendant claims that the act or omission committed was necessary to avert serious danger

negligence

failing to exercise the degree of care, skill or foresight that a reasonable person would have exercised in the same circumstances

no conviction recorded

an accused person is found guilty of a criminal offence, but the charge is dismissed and no record is made of conviction

non-parole period

the minimum time an offender must actually spend in prison

offences against the person

acts or omissions which harm other people, such as murder, assault and sexual assault

offences against the sovereign

acts or omissions which aim to disrupt or harm the governing bodies of a country, such as spying, treason and illegal demonstrations

opinion evidence

a witness cannot give his or her opinion in court about another person's words or actions, unless the witness is an expert in that field

parole period

a time when an offender no longer must be imprisoned, but is freed into the community under supervision

partial defence

a criminal defence which, if successfully proved, reduces the defendant's liability, for example from murder to manslaughter

parties

people who have participated in committing a criminal offence, either before, during or after the offence

penalty unit

an amount of money used to impose fines; in July 2008, one penalty unit equalled \$110

periodic detention

a punishment for which the offender is required to serve his or her prison sentence on consecutive weekends

plea bargaining

an agreement between the prosecution and defence, having met before the trial, with the defence agreeing that the accused will plead guilty if the prosecution reduces the charge; also known as charge negotiation

possession

having enough illegal drugs for personal use

preliminary crimes

attempting to commit a criminal act or omission, or planning to do so

presumption of innocence

the presumption in a criminal trial that an accused person is innocent until proven guilty