

# Glossary: A

**AA.** [Acronym]. **Atomic absorption.**

**AACAP** [Acronym]. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. *See also* the [AACAP](#) website.

**ABA** [Acronym]. American Bar Association. *See also* the [ABA](#) website.

**Aberrant.** Something that deviates from what is considered normal.

**Aberration.** An abnormal condition.

**ABFO.** [Acronym]. American Board of Forensic Odontology. *See also* the [ABFO](#) website.

**ABFO Scale.** An L-shaped scale of measurements used in forensic photography.

**Abolitionists.** Those who want to see an end to the use of capital punishment.

**Accreditation.** Voluntary rating of criminal justice agencies by professional organizations that is designed to increase professionalism.

**Accused.** The defendant in a criminal case; person alleged to have committed a crime.

**Accessory.** Party liable for separate, lesser offenses following indirect (aid, abet, harbor, etc.) participation in the commission of a crime.

**Accessories After the Fact.** Those who give aid and comfort to persons known to have committed crimes, such as harboring fugitives.

**Accessories Before the Fact.** Those who aid and abet but are not present when the crime is committed.

**Accomplices.** Parties liable as principals before and during the commission of a crime.

**Acid Phosphatase.** [Forensics]. An enzyme found in semen that works with certain reagents to allow forensic analysts to detect the presence of semen.

**ACJS** [Acronym]. Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. *See also* the [ACJS](#) website.

**ACLU** [Acronym]. American Civil Liberties Union. *See also* the [ACLU](#) website.

**Acquittal.** A judgment by a criminal court of not guilty.

**Action.** A court proceeding; applies to both civil and criminal proceedings.

**Actus Reus.** [Latin]. The overt act involved in a crime; most crimes are defined by a guilty act, the *actus reus*, and a guilty state of mind.

**ADAM** [Acronym]. Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring. *See also* the [ADAM](#) website.

**ADD** [Acronym]. Attention Deficit Disorder. *See also* the [ADD Association](#) website.

**Adequate Provocation Rule.** The rule that only certain legally defined circumstances can reduce murder to voluntary manslaughter.

**Adjudicate.** To decide a case or conclude a legal matter.

**Adjudication Hearing.** The phase of the juvenile process where evidence is heard and the judge decides the juvenile's status.

**ADMAX** [Acronym]. Administrative Maximum.

**Administrative Law.** The body of laws, rules, and regulations created by an administrative agency.

**Admissible.** A term describing evidence (both physical and testimonial) that may be legally presented to the finders of fact in a case (jury or judge).

**Admission.** A confession.

**Admit.** An acknowledgement of facts, up to and including guilt.

**Adversarial System.** A legal system where all cases are resolved by contest between two parties with a judge as an impartial referee; a pillar of the American legal system.

**AEDPA** [Acronym]. Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (1996) *See also* [Summary](#) on the [Federation of American Scientists](#) website.

**AFDA.** [Acronym]. Association of Federal Defense Attorneys. *See also* the [AFDA](#) website.

**Affiant.** The person who makes a affidavit.

**Affidavit.** A written statement given under oath before someone who is authorized to administer an oath.

**Affirm.** An action of an appellate court where the opinion of the lower court is upheld.

**Affirmation.** A declaration to tell the truth; used in place of an oath by those whose religious beliefs prohibit oath taking.

**Affirmative Defense.** A defense which will negate criminal blameworthiness even if it is proven that the defendant committed the alleged acts. (e.g., self-defense, insanity, and necessity); the defendant bears the burden of production.

**AFIS** [Acronym]. Automated Fingerprint Identification System. *See also* the [FBI's IAFIS Project](#) website.

**Age of Majority.** The legal age of adulthood, usually 18 or 21; also the age at which juveniles are no longer under the jurisdiction of the juvenile courts.

**Aggravated Rape.** A rape occurring with an aggravating circumstance, such as the use of weapons or physical injury to the victim.

**Aggravating Circumstances.** Characteristics of a criminal act that intensify the severity of the punishment; things that make a particular crime more offensive than the usual crime of that type.

**AJA** [Acronym]. American Jail Association. *See also* the [AJA](#) website.

**Alabama v. White** [[496 U.S. 325](#) (1990)]. Revised the totality of the circumstances test in reasonable suspicion to detain situations. *See also* [Adams v. Williams](#) and [Illinois v. Gates](#).

**ALI** [Acronym]. American Law Institute. *See also* the [ALI](#) website.

**Alibi.** Defense to a criminal allegation based on the fact that the defendant was not present at the location where the crime took place when the crime occurred.

**Allegation.** Claim made by a party to a legal action.

**Allege.** To assert or claim; generally refers to certain facts claimed to be true by the prosecution.

**Allocution.** The right of a convicted person to address the court directly prior to the imposition of sentence.

**Alternate Jurors.** Persons selected to replace any of the regular jurors who may become ill or for some other reason not attend a trial.

**Alternate Light Source.** [Forensics]. A high-intensity light source with filters of specific light wavelengths used by forensic analysts for the visualization of certain types of evidence, such as physiological fluids, fingerprints, fibers and so forth.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution. (ADR).** Refers to any means of deciding a case outside of court, most often by arbitration and mediation.

**Amendment.** The modification, addition, or deletion of something in a law; additions to the Constitution are known as *Amendments* and are referred to by number in the order in which they were passed. *See also constitutional amendments by number*

**American Bar Association.** A national association of lawyers in the United States, based in Chicago.

**Amicus Curiae** [Latin]. "A Friend of the Court." A person or group who is not a party to a case will often petition the court for permission to submit a brief in the case.

**Amido Black.** [Forensics]. A dye used to enhance fingerprints in blood.

**Anagen.** [Forensics]. The growth phase in the hair growth cycle.

**Analysis.** The separation of a whole into its parts for individual study.

**Anomie.** A theory developed by Emile Durkheim; holds that normlessness and social isolation are symptoms of a dysfunctional society and the causes of deviant behavior.

**Answer.** [Law]. A written response in relation to a filed complaint.

**AO** [Acronym]. Administrative Office (of the United States Courts). *See also* the [AO](#) webpage.

**APPA** [Acronym]. American Probation and Parole Association. *See also* the [APPA](#) website.

**Appeal.** [Law]. A request by a losing party in a lower court case that a higher court review the case.

**Appearance.** The act of coming to court.

**Appellant.** The person who initiates an appeal, usually the losing party in a lower court case.

**Appellate Court.** A court that has the authority to hear appeals from lower courts.

**Appellate Jurisdiction.** The authority to hear appeals.

**Appellate Review.** A rehearing of a case in a court other than the one in which the case was originally tried.

**Appellee.** Party who won in the lower court and argues to keep the appeals court from overturning the lower court's decision.

**Applied Ethics.** *See* entry for the [Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#).

**Arbitrary Action.** Action that is unreasonable.

**Arbitration.** A process of dispute resolution where both parties agree to abide by the decisions of a neutral third party.

**Argersinger v. Hamlin.** [[407 U.S. 25](#) (1972)]. Extended the Escobedo right to counsel to all cases where the possibility of jail time exists.

**Argument.** Any rationale provided by either side in a court case; also refers to any attempt to orally persuade a jury.

**Arizona v. Evans.** [[No. 93-1660](#) (1995)]. Created a good faith exception to the search warrant requirement when officers conduct searches on warrants later found to be invalid due to clerical errors.

**Arizona v. Hicks.** [[480 U.S. 321](#) (1987)]. "A truly cursory inspection - one that involves merely looking at what is already exposed to view, without disturbing it - is not a "search" for Fourth Amendment purposes, and therefore does not even require reasonable suspicion." If manipulation is required to bring something into view, then it is a search.

**Arraignment.** A proceeding in which the defendant is formally charged and enters a plea.

**Arrest.** The taking of a person into custody and restraining them until they can be brought before a court to answer the charges against them.

**Arrestee.** A person who has been arrested by law enforcement.

**Arson.** The malicious burning of a structure. *See full article titled [Arson](#).*

**ASC [Acronym].** American Society of Criminology. *See also the [ASC](#) website.*

**ASIS [Acronym].** American Society for Industrial Security. *See also the [ASIS](#) website.*

**Asportation.** The carrying away of a person (such as in kidnapping) or property.

**Assault.** The crime of willfully inflicting injury on another person.

**Assembly-line Justice.** A derogatory term applied to overworked courts that fail to provide adequate fairness to criminal defendants.

**Assigned Counsel System.** A program that provides an attorney to indigent clients.

**Assistant U.S. Attorney.** A government prosecutor who serves under the U.S. attorney and heads the prosecutor's office for each federal district.

**Atavistic Stigmata.** A key element in early biological theories of criminality; physical characteristics, believed to represent an earlier stage of human evolution, which could be used to differentiate the criminal from normal people.

**Atomic Absorption.** [Forensics]. A method used to analyze gunshot residue; detects barium and antimony commonly found in primer compounds.

**Attempt.** An incomplete criminal act.

**Attorney** (*also* counsel, lawyer). A person trained in law who has received a law degree and who is legally allowed to practice law in a particular jurisdiction.

**Attorney-client Privilege.** Attorneys are protected from disclosing information about their clients by this privilege.

**Attorney Competence.** A set of standards for determining whether clients were intelligently and fairly represented by their attorney.

**Attorney General.** A cabinet member who heads the Justice Department.

**Automatic Waiver.** Laws that specify when juveniles are to automatically be tried as adults, usually based on age or the seriousness of the offense.

**Automatism.** Actions taken during a state of unconsciousness; a rarely used criminal defense.

**Autopsy.** The examination of a body to determine cause of death. See also the [Virtual Autopsy](#).