

Glossary of Legal Terminology English-Spanish

(471 words)

Karen Ratay
Spanish Interpreter and Translator
edited by Bruce Goodman

legal word (explanation)- *n.* (noun), *v.* (verb), or *adj.* (adjective) translation of word (*description, definition or synonym in target language*)

abstract (summary)- *n.* resumen, sumario, extracto

accessory (assistant in a crime)- *n.* accesorio

acid (LSD, an hallucinogenic drug)- *n.* ácido

accomplice (assistant in a crime)- *n.* cómplice

accusation (written charge)- *n.* acusación, denuncia

accused (defendant)- *n.* acusado

acquit (to decide as innocent, let free)- *v.* absolver, exogar, exculpar

acquittal (clearing of a person from a charge; finding the defendant not guilty)- *n.* absolución

action (lawsuit)- *n.* acción, proceso, acto

addict (someone who is addicted to drugs)- *n.* adicto

adjudicate (to judge)- *v.* adjudicar

adjudication (deciding of a case through judicial or administrative hearing)- *n.* adjudicación

admissible (acceptable)- *adj.* admisible, aceptable

admission (disclosure of adverse facts)- *n.* admisión, confesión

adoption (legal process establishing a parental relationship between adoptive parent and child born of other parents)- *n.* adopción

advisement of rights (making a person aware of their rights)- *n.* notificación de derechos

affidavit (official sworn statement)- *n.* declaración jurada, testimonio

affidavit of prejudice (sworn statement alleging a potential judge is biased)- *n.* declaración jurada de prejuicio

agreement (mutual promises)- *n.* acuerdo, convenio

aid and abet (to assist in a crime)- *v.* ser cómplice de, ayudar

alibi (defendant's story of innocence when a crime is committed, allegedly by another)- *n.* coartada, alibí

alien (foreign-born immigrant who is not naturalized)- *n.* extranjero

alimony (support payment to divorced spouse)- *n.* pensión alimenticia

allegation (statement of fact the party intends to prove)- *n.* alegación

alleged (asserted as a true fact, but not yet proven)- *adj.* alegado

amend (to revise)- *v.* enmendar

amendment (modification of a document)- *n.* enmienda

amphetamine (a stimulant and appetite-suppressing narcotic)- *n.* anfetamina

angel dust (PCP, an hallucinogenic drug)- *n.* polvo de ángel, cucuy

answer (defendant's formal document setting out defense in a civil case)- *n.* contestación a la demanda

anthrax (an infectious disease of livestock which can be transmitted to humans)- *n.* ántrax

appeal (a review of a case by a higher court)- *n.* ; (to file a case in a higher court)- *v.* apelación

appearance (party's presence in court)- *n.* comparecencia

arbitration (judging of a dispute)- *n.* arbitraje

argument (debate in front of the court)- *n.* argumento

argumentative (fond of arguing)- *adj.* argumentativo

arraign (to formally advise defendant of the charges at an initial court appearance)- *v.* acusar

arraignment (legal procedure to advise defendant of the charges; initial court appearance)- *n.* acusación, denuncia

arrest (law enforcement's taking of a suspect into formal custody)- *n.* arresto

arson (beginning a criminal fire)- *n.* incendio intencional

assault (attack on another person)- *n.* ataque, agresión

assault, aggravated (higher degree of assault)- *n.* asalto más grave, ataque agravado

assault with a deadly weapon (attacking a person with a weapon that could potentially take a life)- *n.* asalto con arma mortífera

assignee (counsel assigned to defendant)- *n.* apoderado, cesionario

at issue (in question; the issue being addressed)- *adj.* en cuestión, de lo que se está hablando

attest (to affirm under oath)- *v.* deposición, atestación

attorney (legal representative)- *n.* abogado, consejero, procurador

attorney of record (the person who has been recorded in the case file as the counsel for that case)- *n.* abogado que consta

authenticate (verify as authentic)- *v.* autenticar

auto tampering (to interfere or meddle with another's automobile)- *n.* hacer modificaciones fraudulentas a un auto

bail (money or property given as security for the release of a defendant awaiting trial)- *n.* fianza, caución

bail bondsman (person responsible hired to enforce the conditions of bail)- *n.* persona responsable de hacer cumplir las condiciones de la fianza

bail forfeiture (losing the money spent on bail because defendant violates the conditions of the bail)- *n.* pérdida del dinero usado para fianza por haberse violado las condiciones de la fianza

bail review (official reconsideration of bail)- *n.* revisión de fianza

bailiff (officer of the court)- *n.* alguacil

bankruptcy (legal declaration of one's inability to pay debts)- *n.* bancarrota, quiebra

battery (physical attack on another person)- *n.* agresión

battery, spousal (physical attack on one's spouse)- *n.* agresión contra la pareja

bench (judge or court)- *n.* banco, tribunal

bias (prejudice)- *n.* parcialidad, predisposición, prejuicio

blow (slang for cocaine, a stimulant narcotic)- *n.* cocaína

body attachment (official attachment of document to case file)- *n.* anexo oficial de un documento al archivo

bond (certificate of debt redeemable by court if defendant fails to appear in court)- *n.* bono, obligación

booking number (identification number for case of person under arrest)- *n.* número del caso o del arrestado

bookmaking (the business of taking bets)- *n.* el negocio de tomar apuestas

brandishing a weapon (carrying a weapon in a threatening manner)- *n.* llevar un arma en forma amenazadora

breaking and entering (illegally entering a building)- *n.* allanamiento de morada

breathalyzer (breath test for alcohol)- *n.* análisis de aliento

bribe (an illegal offer of money, property or services for another service)- *n.* soborno, mordida

brief (written summary of case)- *n.* alegato, resumen

burden of proof (legal requirement of prosecution to prove the guilt of defendant)- *n.* obligación de prueba

burglary (theft, stealing)- *n.* robo, hurto

calendar, court (official scheduling calendar for a particular court, usually scheduled by the court clerk)- *n.* lista de pleitos, calendario judicial

capital punishment (death penalty)- *n.* pena capital

case (criminal or civil lawsuit)- *n.* caso, pleito

case of action (criminal or civil lawsuit)- *n.* denuncia criminal o civil

causation (a causing, something producing an effect)- *n.* causativo, causante

certified (verified as authentic or accurate)- *adj.* ; (in possession of an official certificate which identifies that its holder is qualified or professional)- *adj.* certificado, titulado

chain of custody (order of parental relationships to child)- *n.* cadena de custodia, resumen del orden de las relaciones de los padres al hijo

challenge (to object to the qualifications of a potential jury)- *v.* poner objeción, recusación

challenge for a cause (party's challenge to disqualify a potential juror)- *n.* recusación para causa

chambers (judge's office)- *n.* cámara, sala

charge (accusation; indictment)- *n.* acusación

child molestation (sexually attacking or abusing a child)- *n.* molestia sexual de niño, abuso infantil

child support (monetary responsibility to support child)- *n.* manutención de niño

circumstances, aggravating (fact or situation which increases the degree of liability or responsibility for a criminal act)- *n.* circunstancias agravantes

circumstances, mitigating (fact or situation which does not justify or excuse an offense, but does reduce the degree of liability or responsibility and may also reduce the damages [civil] or punishment [criminal])- *n.* circunstancias mitigantes

citation (official notice to appear in court, especially in traffic court)- *n.* citación, cita ; (notation of legal authority)- *n.* notación de autoridad legal

city attorney (counsel representing the city in municipal court)- *n.* abogado representando la ciudad

civil action (legal action relating to money or property)- *n.* juicio civil

claim (legal demand, complaint)- *n.* demanda

clerk (court official, judge's administrative assistant)- *n.* secretario del tribunal, oficial del juzgado

cocaine (stimulant narcotic)- *n.* cocaína

collateral (property pledged to secure a debt, e.g. bail)- *n.* resguardo, seguridad colateral

commissioner (public official with authority over court room in initial appearances before going to trial)- *n.* comisario, comisionado

commit (to institutionalize, e.g. to a mental hospital)- *v.* internar (ej. en un hospital mental) ; (to perpetuate, e.g. a crime)- *v.* cometer (ej. un crimen)

commitment (incarceration)- *n.* encarceración

community property (public property)- *n.* propiedad de la comunidad

competency (legal capacity to stand trial)- *n.* aptitud, capacidad

complaint (written statement initiating a criminal or civil action)- *n.* demanda, escrito de agravios

comply (to act as directed or ordered)- *v.* cumplir, obedecer

composite drawing (drawing of a suspect made by a police artist, based on the description from a witness)- *n.* dibujo hablado

confession (admission of guilt)- *n.* confesión

confiscate (governmental seizure of property)- *v.* confiscar

conflict of interest (reason a party to the case might be too personally involved to provide objective services)- *n.* conflicto de interés

consideration (benefit to promisor or detriment to promise)- *n.* consideración

conspiracy (an unlawful plot, a plan to do something illegal)- *n.* conspiración

constitutional right (a freedom guaranteed by the Constitution)- *n.* derecho constitucional

contempt of court (acting against the rules of the court)- *n.* desacato al tribunal, rebeldía

continuance (rescheduling a legal proceeding for a later date)- *n.* aplazamiento, continuación

controlled substance (government-regulated substance)- *n.* sustancia controlada

convict (an individual who has been found guilty and incarcerated)- *n.* convicto ; (to find a defendant guilty of a crime)- *v.* condenar

conviction (finding of guilt in a criminal case)- *n.* convicción, fallo de culpabilidad

coroner (public officer who determines the cause of death)- *n.* médico forense

corroborate (to verify)- *v.* corroborar, verificar

counsel (lawyer, legal representation)- *n.* abogado ; (to advise)- *v.* aconsejar

counsel table (table where the legal counsel sits)- *n.* mesa del consejero

count (a numbered charge)- *n.* cargo

counterclaim (lawsuit by respondent in response to initial lawsuit in a civil case)- *n.* contrademanda

counterfeit (to falsify)- *v.* falsificación

counterfeiting (falsifying)- *n.* falsificando

county jail (temporary place of incarceration until suspect released, put into prison, etc.)- *n.* cárcel del condado

court (place where trials and legal proceedings occur)- *n.* tribunal, corte

court house (building where trials and legal proceedings occur)- *n.* edificio de los tribunales

court interpreter (bilingual trained person who translates proceedings between languages for all parties in the case)- *n.* intérprete de los tribunales

court order (order issued by the court [judge, etc.] for, or prohibiting, an action)- *n.* orden de los tribunales

court reporter (court official who types all words of proceeding into a permanent record)- *n.* relator del tribunal

Court, District (court representing a certain area of a state or country)- *n.* tribunal del distrito

Court, Federal District (national court with authority over a specified region)- *n.* Tribunal, Juzgado del Distrito Federal

Court, Juvenile (court for children)- *n.* Tribunal de Menores

Court, Municipal (city court)- *n.* Tribunal Municipal

Court, Night (court taking place at night)- *n.* Tribunal Nocturno

Court, Superior (higher court)- *n.* Tribunal Superior

Court, Supreme (highest court)- *n.* Tribunal, Corte Suprema de Justicia

Court, Traffic (court dealing with traffic violations)- *n.* Tribunal de Tráfico

court-appointed counsel (attorney assigned to case by the court, esp. for indigent defendant)- *n.* asesor legal designado por los tribunales

court room (room where trials and legal proceedings occur)- *n.* sala del tribunal

covenant (sealed contract)- *n.* pacto, convenio

crack (crack cocaine, a form of cocaine)- *n.* crack

credibility (reliability, reputation for truthfulness)- *n.* credibilidad

crime (unlawful offense)- *n.* crimen, delito

criminal record (written record of previous offenses)- *n.* antecedentes criminales

crystal meth (a narcotic)- *n.* metamfetamina, cristal, vidrio

custody (case and control of children)- *n.* custodia, patria potestad ; (incarceration)- *n.* custodia, encarceración

damages (repayment for loss or injury)- *n.* daños

death penalty (sentence of death for a criminal)- *n.* sentencia de muerte

death row (incarceration for inmates awaiting the death penalty)- *n.* fila de muerte

decree (order, judgment)- *n.* decreto ; (to declare)- *v.* declarar

default judgment (judgment entered against a defendant who does not plead or defend, often by not appearing in court)- *n.* fallo por falta de comparecencia

defendant (the accused in a legal proceeding, trial)- *n.* acusado, demandado

defense (the defendant/accused and defense attorney)- *n.* defensa ; (evidence offered by an accused to defeat criminal charge)- *n.* defensa

defense attorney (legal counsel for the accused)- *n.* abogado defensor

deliberation (careful consideration)- *n.* deliberación, consultación

deportation (expelling of a non-citizen from the country)- *n.* deportación

deposition (oral statement given under oath)- *n.*

deposición, declaración jurada

Deputy District Attorney (Deputy D.A.)
(assistant to the D.A.)- *n.* Asistente al Acusador
Público

detention (being retained in custody)- *n.*
detención

discovery (pre-trial process to obtain facts from
other side)- *n.* descubrimiento

dismiss (to let go)- *v.* desechar, denegar

dismissal with prejudice (a dismissal after a
legal decision, based on the merits of the case,
barring the plaintiff from prosecuting any later
lawsuit on the same claim)- *n.* denegación con
pérdida de derecho a nuevo juicio

dismissal without prejudice (a dismissal that
does not bar the plaintiff from trying to again
prosecute the same claim within a certain time
period)- *n.* denegación sin pérdida de derecho a
nuevo juicio

disorderly conduct (acting in a way which
violates public peace or safety)- *n.* desorden
público

disposition (final outcome of a criminal case)-
n. disposición

dissolution (termination of a marriage,
partnership, etc.)- *n.* disolución

District Attorney (D.A.) (state's legal
representative in legal proceedings or a trial)- *n.*
Acusador Público, fiscal.

disturbing the peace (acting in a way which
violates public peace)- *n.* perturbación al orden
público

diversion (order for criminal defendant to
participate in alternative program, instead of
prison)- *n.* programa alternativo

divorce (legal termination of a marriage)- *n.*
divorcio

docket (list of cases before the court)- *n.*
orden del día, actas.

domestic violence (violence within a family)- *n.*
violencia doméstica

double jeopardy (trying a person twice for the
same crime)- *n.* procesamiento por segunda vez

downer (depressant narcotic)- *n.* barbitúricos

driving while intoxicated (DWI)- *n.* Conducir
bajo la influencia del alcohol

drug (substance used in or as a medicine or to
alter the functioning of one's body)- *n.* droga.

drug abuse (excessive or illegal use of a drug)-
n. abuso de drogas

drunk driving (driving while intoxicated)- *n.*
conducir bajo estado de ebriedad

due process (legal right of a defendant to a
speedy and fair trial)- *n.* debido procedimiento,
proceso de ley

ecstasy (e or x; a narcotic)- *n.* tachas, éxtasis

embezzlement (stealing money, property, etc.)-
n. desfalco, malversación

enhancement (factor that increases criminal
penalty)- *n.*

enter a plea (to plea)- *v.* registrar una
declaración

entrapment (to capture by leading into a trap)-
n. atrapar

equal protection (constitutional guarantee that
every person will be treated equally by the
government)- *n.* protección de igualdad

eviction (expel from one's residence by the
owner)- *n.* desalojo, evicción

evidence (a statement, object, etc. supporting a
point in the case)- *n.* evidencia

evidence, circumstantial (indirect evidence in a
case)- *n.* evidencia circunstancial

evidence, direct (evidence directly related to a case)- *n.* evidencia directa

evidence, prima facie (evidence which is adequate to establish a fact, unless refuted)- *n.*

examination, cross (questioning of a witness by the antagonist party)- *n.* contrainterrogatorio, repregunta

examination, direct (questioning of a witness by the supporting party)- *n.* interrogatorio directo

examination, re-cross (second questioning)- *n.* segunda repregunta

examination, re-direct (second questioning)- *n.* segundo interrogatorio directo

executed (signed and delivered)- *adj.* ejecutado, llevado a cabo

exhibit (object submitted as evidence)- *n.* documento de prueba, exhibir

exhibit, defense's (object submitted by the defense as evidence)- *n.* documento de prueba de la defensa

exhibit, people's (object submitted by the prosecution as evidence)- *n.* documento de prueba del acusador

extortion (getting money, etc. by threat)- *n.* extorsión

extradition (transferring a suspect to another state, country, etc. for trial)- *n.* extradición

eyewitness (person who saw the crime occur)- *n.* testigo ocular

failure to appear (FTA) (when person who is required to appear in court does not do so)- *n.* falta de comparecencia

failure to comply (when person is ordered to do something by the court, and does not)- *n.* falta

fair hearing (a just hearing in which proper protocol is followed)- *n.* audiencia justa

false imprisonment (finding an innocent person guilty and sentencing them to a prison sentence)- *n.* encarcelación ilegal

felony (major crime)- *n.* fechoría, felonía, crimen, delito

field sobriety test (test of blood-alcohol level at the place of first contact between the law enforcement officer and the suspect)- *n.*

file (record of case)- *n.* archivo ; (to enter into the case file)- *v.* registrar

financial responsibility (financial obligations)- *n.* responsabilidad financiera

find guilty (to judge as guilty)- *v.* juzgar culpable

finding (discovery)- *n.* descubrimiento

find not guilty (to judge as innocent)- *v.* juzgar inocente

fine (court-imposed monetary penalty)- *n.* multa

fingerprint (mark left by one's finger, used to identify individuals)- *n.* huella digital

firearm (weapon that fires a projectile, i.e- gun, rifle, shotgun)- *n.* arma de fuego

foreclosure (taking away of the right to redeem a mortgage, etc.)- *n.* juicio hipotecario, ejecución de hipoteca

forfeit (a fine or penalty for some crime)- *n.* die Strafe; (to give up, lose)- *v.* decomiso

forgery (falsification; a fake)- *n.* falsificación

foster care (temporary care of a child, but not by birth)- *n.* tutela de crianza temporal

fraud (intentional deception, lie)- *n.* fraude

gambling (game of chance)- *n.* juego

garnish (to issue process for purpose of taking away wages or money to pay a fine)- *v.* embargar

glue sniffing (inhaling glue as a narcotic)- *n.*
inhalación de pegamento

good cause (supported reason for doing something)- *n.* motivo suficiente

grand jury (jury that listens to arguments and decides innocence or guilt of defendant)- *n.*
gran jurado

grand theft (major theft)- *n.* hurto mayor

grounds (reasons)- *n.* razones

guardianship (legal protective representation of one by another, usually of a minor by an adult)- *n.* pupillage, tutela

guilty (legally judged not innocent of committing a crime)- *adj.* culpable

gun (weapon which fires a projectile; a firearm)- *n.* pistola

habeas corpus (writ declaring that a prisoner must be brought before a court to decide his or her innocence or guilt)- *n.* habeas corpus

handcuffs (pair of connected rings used to shackle a prisoner)- *n.* esposas

harassment (constant attacks or torment)- *n.* acoso

hearing (formal proceeding held before judge)- *n.* audiencia

hearing, contested (legal proceeding in which outcome is put into question by possible administrative misconduct)- *n.*
audiencia disputada

hearing, preliminary (first hearing)- *n.*
audiencia preliminar

hearsay (rumor, gossip, unsubstantiated story of event)- *n.* de oídas

heroin (narcotic, usually injected into the body)- *n.* heroína

hit and run (automobile hits a person and leaves the scene of the accident)- *n./v.* chocar y huir, chocar y escapar

holding cell (room for detention of suspect while being tried)- *n.* celda de detención

homicide (murder)- *n.* homicidio, asesinato

illegal (not legal; unlawful)- *adj.* ilegal

immigration (moving from one country to another)- *n.* inmigración

immunity (exemption from a charge or penalty)- *n.* inmunidad

impeachment of witness (discrediting a witness)- *n.* acusación de testigo

inadmissible (not acceptable)- *adj.* inadmissible, inaceptable

incest (sexual relationship within a family)- *n.* incesto

incriminate (to involve in, or make appear guilty of, a crime or fault)- *v.* incriminar

indecent exposure (taking off one's clothes in a public place)- *n.* exhibicionismo

indictment (formal charging with a crime)- *n.* procesamiento, acusación por gran jurado

indigent (poor, without money)- *adj.* indigente

informant (someone who gives information about a crime; often referring to another criminal who acts as a sort of undercover spy for law enforcement)- *n.* informador, denunciante

information (formal charge)- *n.* acusación por el fiscal

infraction (violation of a law, pact, agreement, etc.)- *n.* infracción

injunction (court order prohibiting or ordering an action)- *n.* mandamiento, juicio de amparo

inmate (prisoner)- *n.* prisionero

innocent until proven guilty- *adj.* inocente hasta ser encontrado culpable

instrument (legal document)- *n.* documento legal

intent (state of mind when performing an act)- *n.* intención

investigation (search by law enforcement to determine truth of events)- *n.* investigación

jail (place where prisoner is confined)- *n.* cárcel

join (concur)- *v.* concurrencia

joyriding (driving around in a stolen automobile for the enjoyment of doing so)- *n.* robar un vehículo para pasear

judge (public official with the authority to hear and decide cases in a court of law)- *n.* juez

judgment (final decision)- *n.* sentencia, fallo

jurisdiction (range of authority in administering justice)- *n.* jurisdicción

juror (member of a jury)- *n.* jurado

jury (group of members from the public who are assigned the task of deciding the trial's outcome)- *n.* jurado

jury box (place in the courtroom where the jury sits)- *n.* tribuna del jurado

jury foreman/jury foreperson (the chairperson of a jury)- *n.* presidente del jurado

jury trial (a trial in which the final decision will be made by a jury of one's peers)- *n.* juicio por jurado

jury, hung (a jury which is unable to make a final decision in a case)- *n.* jurado en desacuerdo, jurado sin veredicto

juvenile hall (place of incarceration for underage offenders)- *n.* cárcel de menores

kidnap (to seize and hold a person by force or fraud)- *v.* secuestrar

kidnapping (seizing and holding a person by force or fraud)- *n.* secuestro

larceny (theft)- *n.* hurto, robo

lawsuit (legal action between two parties in a civil court, having to do with money or property)- *n.* litigio, pleito

leading question (a question which leads to a point being proven)- *n.* pregunta sugestiva

lease (contract by which a landlord rents land, property, etc. to a tenant for a specified time)- *n.* alquiler

lewd conduct (indecent or obscene actions)- *n.* comportamiento

liability (something that works to one's disadvantage)- *n.* responsabilidad

libel (any written or printed matter to injure a person's reputation)- *n.* difamación escrita

lie detector (machine which measures heart rate to determine if a person is lying)- *n.* detector de mentiras

life imprisonment (punishment of spending one's life in prison)- *n.* cadena perpetua

line-up (a line of a few people for a witness to look at and identify a suspect in a crime)- *n.* línea de sospechosos

litigation (lawsuit)- *n.* litigio

loitering (lingering, spending time idly in one area)- *n.* merodear, holgazanear, vagar

lynching (murder by mob action, without lawful trial)- *n.* linchamiento

malice (purposely committing a crime with the intention of harming another person)- *n.* malicia

malicious mischief (harm or damage caused with intention of hurting another person)- *n.* agravio malicioso

malpractice (professional misconduct or improper conduct, esp. by a physician)- *n.* conducta ilegal

manslaughter (killing of a human being by another, esp. without malice)- *n.* homicidio sin premeditación

manslaughter, involuntary (accidental killing of a person)- *n.* homicidio accidental

manslaughter, voluntary (knowingly killing a person, but without malice)- *n.* homicidio voluntario

marijuana (narcotic)- *n.* marihuana

mayhem (the offense of maiming a person; any violent destruction)- *n.* mutilación criminal

mental health (health of the mind)- *n.* salud mental

Miranda Warning (the rights read to the accused at the time of arrest)- *n.* Derechos Constitucionales

misdemeanor (any minor offense with a lesser punishment than a felony)- *n.* delito menor

mistrial (a trial made void because of a mistake made or inconclusive outcome)- *n.* juicio nulo

modification (alteration; change)- *n.* modificación

motion (a petition for a ruling, formal request)- *n.* moción, petición

motion denied (content of petition not allowed by judge)- petición negada

motion granted (content of petition agreed to by judge)- petición accedida

mug shot (identifying photo of a suspect used by law enforcement)- *n.* fotografía de reo

murder (unlawful and malicious killing of another person, with intent to do so)- *n.* asesinato, homicidio

narcotic (illegal or controlled drug)- *n.* narcótico

negligence (carelessness)- *n.* negligencia

not guilty (innocent)- *adj.* inocente

null and void (invalid, without legal force)- *adj.* nulo, nulo y sin valor

oath (sworn statement)- *n.* juramento

object (to express disapproval or opposition)- *v.* objetar, impugnar

objection (the expressing of disapproval or opposition)- *n.* objeción

objection overruled (objection rejected)- objeción negada, sin lugar

objection sustained (objection agreed to)- objeción acogida, con lugar

offender (person who committed a crime)- *n.* ofensor, delincuente

offense (violation of law)- *n.* ofensa, delito

offer of proof (presentation of evidence for the record, but without a jury present, after the judge has sustained an objection to that evidence, so that the evidence can be preserved on the record for an appeal of the case)- *n.* oferta de prueba

oral copulation, forced (forced, oral, sexual contact)- *n.* copulación oral forzada

ordinance (statute or regulation)- *n.* ordenanza, estatuto

overrule (to overturn, esp. an objection)- *n.* denegar

overt act (an action taken openly and with evident intent)- *n.* acto

pandering (helping one fulfill his or her vices; procuring, pimping)- *n.* lenocidio

paralegal (person trained to aid lawyers but not to practice law)- *n.* ¿??

parole (release of a prisoner before his or her sentence is complete, on the promise of future good behavior)- *n.* libertad condicional

party (plaintiff [People, State, etc.], prosecution or defense)- *n.* parte

paternity (fatherhood)- *n.* paternidad

penalty (punishment)- *n.* castigo, multa

penalty assessment (indication of the liability of the losing party in a civil case)- *n.* asesoría de multa

pending (not yet decided)- *adj.* pendiente

penitentiary (prison)- *n.* penitenciaría, prisión

People (prosecution)- *n.* fiscalía, parte acusadora, el estado

perjury (lying while under oath to tell the truth)- *n.* perjurio, falso testimonio

permanent resident (person living long term in a country)- *n.* residente permanente

personal estate (the whole of one's property, possessions)- *n.* bienes muebles

personal recognizance (one's own care and responsibility)- *n.* ¿??

petition (formal request for an order)- *n.* petición; (to formally ask, request)- *v.* suplicar, pedir

petty theft (small scale theft)- *n.* robo menor

pimping (acting as agent for prostitutes)- *n.* alcahuetamiento

plaintiff (the complainant in a civil case)- *n.* demandante

plea (defendant's "guilty," "not guilty" or other answer to a criminal charge)- *n.* declaración

plea bargain (agreement between the prosecution and defense to lower the punishment in exchange for something else, usually for a guilty plea)- *n.* negociación de una declaración de culpable

pleadings (documents filed in a case)- *n.* alegaciones

points and authorities (legal precedence)- *n.* proposiciones

polygraph (lie detector test)- *n.* polígrafo

possession of drugs- *n.* posesión de drogas

postponement (pushing back the date)- *n.* aplazamiento

pot (slang for marijuana; a narcotic)- *n.* marihuana

power of attorney (legal authority to act as one's representative and speak for him or her)- *n.* poder, carta de personería

preemptory challenge (one of a party's limited number of challenges that does not need a reason)- *n.* ¿??

pre-sentence report (report written to argue for what kind of punishment is appropriate for a guilty party)- *n.* informe precondenatorio

prejudice (bias or preconceived opinion)- *n.* prejuicio

preponderance of the evidence (the evidence shows that it is exceedingly likely that the crime was committed in the way the prosecution argues, and the defendant is, therefore, guilty)- *n.* preponderancia de prueba

presumption of innocence (defendant is believed to be innocent, unless proven guilty)- *n.*

presunción de inculpabilidad

pretrial conference (meeting before the trial to try and resolve the case, agree on evidence, etc.)- *n.* conferencia del juez con las partes antes de iniciar el pleito

pretrial offense (offense committed before the trial begins)- *n.* ofensa cometida antes de empezar el juicio

priors (previous offenses committed by the defendant)- *n.* precedentes

prison (place of long term incarceration, where convicts fulfill their sentences)- *n.* prisión

privilege (a special right, favor, etc. granted to a person or group)- *n.* privilegio

probable cause (a reasonable explanation for why something occurred)- *n.* causa razonable

probate (having to do with the verification of official documents, i.e.- wills)- *n.* validificación de un documento

probation (suspension of defendant's sentence under supervision of probation officer)- *n.* libertad condicional

probation department (office which handles cases of probation)- *n.* departamento de libertad condicional

probation officer (official who supervises convicts who are released on probation)- *n.* agente de libertad condicional

probation, formal (conditional suspension of a convicts prison sentence)- *n.* libertad condicional formal

probation, summary (suspension of a guilty party's prison sentence so that, if he or she obeys the conditions, he or she will spend no time in prison)- *n.*

proof (evidence convincing to the judge or jury)- *n.* prueba

prosecution (the state's representative in a court room, seeks to convict the defendant)- *n.* procesamiento, enjuiciamiento

prosecutor (the attorney representing the state)- *n.* fiscal, acusador público

prostitution (selling one's body for sex)- *n.* prostitución

Public Defender (P.D.) (state-funded counsel assigned to an indigent defendant)- *n.* defensor público

quash (to set aside, i.e.- an indictment)- *v.* anular, invalidar

raise an issue (to bring an issue up for discussion)- levantar una controversia

rap sheet (file/list of previous offenses)- *n.* lista de ofensas anteriores

rape (forced sexual intercourse without consent)- *n.* violación

rape, statutory (sexual intercourse with a minor)- *n.* estupro

rape in concert (unlawful sexual intercourse against the victims will and by force, while another crime is being committed)- *n.* ¿??

reasonable doubt, beyond a (absolutely certain)- fuera de duda razonable

rebuttal (contradicting or opposing in a formal manner by argument or proof)- *n.* refutación

reckless driving (driving wildly, without control)- *n.* manejar imprudentemente

regulation (rule; law)- *n.* regla, ley

release of information (making information available to the public)- revelación de información

relinquishment (giving up, e.g. giving up a right)- *n.* renunciamento

remand (to send a person back into custody)- *v.* ; (to send a case back to a lower court or administrative hearing office)- *v.* reencarcelar

remedy (legal compensation for a wrong)- *n.* remedio

report (to state, to inform)- *v.* reportar ; (a formal account of facts or information)- *n.* reporte

respondent (defendant in a civil case)- *n.* demandado

restitution (reimbursement; giving back of something for something else that has been lost or taken)- *n.* restitución

restraining order (legal document requiring someone to stay away from another person or place)- *n.* inhibitoria, orden de entredicho

revoke (to rescind, withdraw, cancel, turn down)- *v.* revocar

right, constitutional (right which is guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution)- *n.* derecho constitucional

robbery (theft)- *n.* robo

rule (to decide, to judge)- *n.* fallo

search and seizure (investigating a place and removing something from the premises for evidence)- *n.* allanamiento

self defense (protecting oneself from harm)- *n.* defensa propia

self-incrimination (saying something which helps prove one's own guilt)- *n.* autoincriminación

sentence (punishment assigned by the court)- *n.* sentencia ; (to assign a punishment)- *v.* sentenciar

sentence, concurrent (two or more punishments of prison time to be served at the same time)- *n.* sentencia concurrente

sentence, consecutive (back to back sentences; one punishment immediately after another)- *n.* sentencia consecutiva

sentence, suspended (punishment which is held back, not put into effect)- *n.* sentencia suspendida

sentencing (assigning a punishment to a convict)- *n.* sentenciamiento

separation (separation of a married couple, but not yet divorce)- *n.* separación

serve a sentence (to complete one's punishment)- servir una sentencia

serve a summons to somebody (give an official order to respondent to appear in court)- notificar una citación

settlement (negotiated solution to a lawsuit)- *n.* arreglo

sexual molestation (making improper and unwanted sexual advances or attacks)- *n.* molestación sexual

sheriff (chief law enforcement officer of a county)- *n.* funcionario jefe de un condado

shoplifting (stealing articles, not money, from a shop during shop hours)- *n.* robo de tiendas

slander (giving a false statement that damages another's reputation)- *n.* calumnia

sodomy (any sexual intercourse considered abnormal; usually in reference to anal sexual intercourse)- *n.* sodomía

statement, closing (final argument summarizing the case, made by the attorney)- *n.* declaración final

statement, opening (initial argument summarizing the case, made by the attorney)- *n.* declaración inicial

statute (an established law or rule)- *n.* estatuto

statute of limitations (a law limiting the time within which legal action may be taken)- *n.* estatuto de limitaciones

statutory rape (sexual intercourse, even if consensual, with a minor)- *n.* estupro

stay (a delay or cessation)- *n.* suspensión

stipulate (to specify as an essential condition of an agreement)- *v.* estipular

stipulation (an essential condition of an agreement)- *n.* estipulación

submit (to present, e.g. to present evidence to the court)- *v.* presentar

subpoena (written legal order directing a person to appear in court to testify, etc.)- *n.* orden de aparición

sue (to prosecute in civil court in seeking to redress wrongs)- *v.* demanda

suit (action to secure justice in a court of law)- *n.* acción judicial

sustain (to maintain, agree to, e.g. to agree to and enforce an objection made by an attorney)- *v.* mantener

swear (to declare under oath)- *v.* jurar

testify (to give evidence under oath in a court of law)- *v.* testificar

testimony (the evidence given under oath in a court of law)- *n.* testimonio

theft (stealing, robbery)- *n.* robo

theft, grand (major robbery)- *n.* robo mayor

theft, petty (minor robbery)- *n.* robo menor

time served (the amount of time already spent in incarceration)- *n.* tiempo servido

tort (wrongful act or damage [not involving a breach of contract] for which a civil action can be brought)- *n.* agravio

traffic citation (ticket issued by law enforcement officer for a driving violation)- *n.* multa de tráfico

transcript (written record)- *n.* traslado, copia

trespassing (unlawful entry onto someone's property)- *n.* traspaso

trial (formal examination to decide a case by a court of law)- *n.* juicio

trial, court/bench (trial in which outcome is decided by a judge)- *n.* tribunal de primera instancia

trial, jury (trial in which outcome is decided by a jury)- *n.* juicio por jurado

trial, speedy (trial which begins shortly after arrest and does not last an unacceptably long time)- *n.* juicio rápido

unconstitutional (illegal, goes against the rights guaranteed by the Constitution)- *adj.* inconstitucional

undercover (acting in secret, e.g. an undercover police officer)- *adj.* bajo cubierta

unemployment (being without a job)- *n.* desempleo

unlawful detainer (illegally holding a person in custody)- *n.* detención ilegal

upper (stimulant narcotic)- *n.* aceleradores

vacate (to cancel)- *v.* cancelar

vagrancy (begging; wandering from place to place without working)- *n.* vagancia

vandalism (to maliciously destroy or damage property)- *n.* vandalismo

venue (place in which something occurs)- *n.* jurisdicción

verdict (final judgment)- *n.* veredicto

victim (one who suffers loss, is killed or injured, etc.)- *n.* víctima

violation (infringement, breaking, e.g. of a law)- *n.* violación, infracción

visitation (an official visit, e.g. to a convict in prison, or to inspect something)- *n.* inspección, visitación

voir dire (oath of competency)- *n.* interrogatorio para determinar la competencia

waive rights (to choose to give up one's constitutional rights)- renunciar a los derechos

waive time (to cut time off of a prison sentence)- renunciar al plazo

waiver of rights (official giving up of one's constitutional rights)- *n.* renuncia de derechos

warrant (order, permit, writ)- *n.* orden, decreto de prisión, garantía

warrant, arrest (order issued by the court for law enforcement officials to arrest a suspect)- *n.* orden de arresto, auto de detención

warrant, bench (a writ authorized by judge for a search, seizure, arrest, etc.)- *n.* orden de arresto por falta de comparecencia

warrant, search (permission given to law enforcement by the court to search a suspect's house, etc. for evidence)- *n.* orden de cateo/de registro

weapon (item used to attack another)- *n.* arma

weapon, concealed (weapon hidden somewhere on the suspect)- *n.* arma escondida

weapon, deadly (weapon which has the potential to take a life)- *n.* arma con potencial de matar

weight of evidence (how thoroughly the evidence convinces)- *n.* preponderancia de la prueba

will (last will and testament: one's written decree of what will happen to all of his or her possessions upon death)- *n.* testamento

witness (someone who sees a crime occur, or is otherwise an expert in some aspect of the case and asked to testify in court)- *n.* testigo

witness, defense (a witness who appears to support the defense's argument)- *n.* testigo de la defensa

witness, expert (a knowledgeable witness who argues technical or other points)- *n.* testigo experto

witness, hostile (a witness for the opposing side)- *n.* testigo hostil

witness, material (an important or essential witness in a case)- *n.* testigo material

witness, prosecution (a witness who appears to support the prosecution's argument)- *n.* testigo de cargo

witness stand (the place in the court room for the witness to sit when being questioned)- *n.* silla de los testigos

work furlough (leave of absence from one's job, esp. for military reasons or jury duty)- *n.* permiso de trabajo

work release (convict's release from prison during the day to work at a job outside the prison)- *n.* permiso para salir a trabajar

writ (a formal legal document prohibiting or ordering some action)- *n.* decreto, orden

