

# Inside a Courtroom

There is no need to pay admission to go into a courtroom, as it is open to the public when it is in session. Most people have seen trials on television, but these dramas may bear little resemblance to an actual trial. There are many different types of jobs in a court of law. A closer look at each role will provide valuable information about the activities of a courtroom.

The most important officer of the court is the judge. In New Hampshire, a judge is appointed to office. Judges are most often selected from among respected and successful lawyers. It is their responsibility to make decisions on questions which come before the court. This is not an easy task, as the judge must be fair and know all the laws included in the Constitution, federal laws, state laws, and previous decisions made by higher courts.

The clerk of the court has a responsibility to conduct the daily business of the court, the sheriff and deputies and the justice of the peace. Another court officer is the prosecutor, who is most often called the district or county attorney. The district attorney is an elected position whose responsibility is to prosecute those who break the law.

A jury is a critical element of our court system. The jury is made up of 6 to 12 people who listen to the information presented by both sides and reach a verdict. (A verdict is the decision made by the jury and reported to the court.) The jury is composed of people of all ages (18 years old or older), races and occupations. This insures all citizens have the right and privilege to serve as a juror.

If there is an opportunity, plan a visit to a local courthouse where trials are conducted to observe one in progress. It is a real opportunity to see the nation's legal system in action and watch justice taking place in the community.

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## Word Search

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I S C S O O J A K V A R Q R P I E F N U  
T S X H T Q B J H E B V B F M G B F J X  
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