

Name _____

Criminal Law

Areas of the Law: Criminal Law

Criminal law is the area of legal practice with which most people are familiar, thanks to television and the movies.

Attorneys who are responsible for trying to convict criminal defendants (those who are accused of committing a crime) are called *prosecutors*. Criminal prosecutors are employed by the federal, state, or local government. On the federal level, prosecutors, known as United States Attorneys, work within the Criminal Division of the Attorney General of the United States. In many state governments, state prosecutors work for the attorney general of that state. In most local governments, prosecutors work for an agency that is known as either the Office of the District Attorney or Office of the State's Attorney.

Imagine that you work as a prosecutor. What do you think you would like about that job? What do you think you would not like? Write two or three sentences for your answer.



Defense Attorneys

Attorneys who defend people accused of a crime are called *criminal defense attorneys*. Most local governments have an Office of the Public Defender. Attorneys who work for the public defender are generally assigned to represent accused criminal defendants who are indigent, which means they cannot afford a lawyer. If a local government does not have an Office of the Public Defender or if that office has too much criminal defense work for its lawyers to handle, criminal trial judges will assign private attorneys to handle the cases *pro bono*. *Pro bono* is a Latin phrase meaning "for the good." It describes legal work that is free.

If a criminal defendant cannot afford a lawyer, why does the government provide one at no cost? Write two or three sentences for your answer.

