

Two Paths of Law

Read how criminal and civil cases differ in purpose, parties, and outcomes.

SS8CG4.c "Explain the difference between criminal law and civil law."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details about criminal law and circle details about civil law. Number each sentence that tells who brings a case or what result the court may order.

When a Case Goes to Court

- ① Georgia law uses different paths when a harmful act affects the public or when people have a private dispute. Criminal law deals with conduct that the government has made a crime, such as burglary or assault. A prosecutor brings the case for the state because the offense is considered a wrong against the public. If the person is found guilty, a court may impose a fine, probation, jail, or another criminal sentence under the law.
- ② Civil law handles conflicts between people, businesses, or organizations. One side, called the plaintiff, claims that another side caused harm or failed to meet a legal duty. For example, a customer might sue a repair shop for damage to a car. The plaintiff may ask the court for money to cover a loss or for an order requiring someone to do or stop doing something. Civil cases do not seek a criminal sentence, such punishment.
- ③ The two kinds of law can involve a court, lawyers, evidence, and sometimes a jury, but their purposes differ. In a criminal case, the state seeks to prove that a defendant committed a crime and asks for a criminal penalty. In a civil case, a plaintiff seeks a legal remedy for a private harm or dispute. One event can lead to both kinds of cases. A driver who injures someone may face a criminal charge and also a civil lawsuit for damages.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Who brings a criminal case, and why does that party bring it?

2 What may a court impose in a criminal case? What may a plaintiff ask for in a civil case?

3 A store owner asks a court to order a delivery company to pay for goods it damaged. Is this more like a criminal case or a civil case? Use one detail from the passage to explain.

4 Explain how one event can lead to both a criminal case and a civil case.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Create a new legal situation that is different from the examples in the reading. Write exactly three sentences that identify whether it is criminal or civil, name the parties, and state the result one side could seek.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details about criminal law and circle details about civil law. Number each sentence that tells who brings a case or what result the court may order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who brings a criminal case, and why does that party bring it?	A prosecutor brings the case for the state because the crime is considered a wrong against the public.
2	What may a court impose in a criminal case? What may a plaintiff ask for in a civil case?	In a criminal case, the court may impose a fine, probation, jail, or another criminal sentence. In a civil case, a plaintiff may ask for money to cover a loss or an order requiring someone to act or stop acting.
3	A store owner asks a court to order a delivery company to pay for goods it damaged. Is this more like a criminal case or a civil case? Use one detail from the passage to explain.	It is more like a civil case because a business is seeking money for harm or loss caused by another party.
4	Explain how one event can lead to both a criminal case and a civil case.	An event can be a crime against the public and also cause private harm. The state may pursue a criminal penalty, while an injured person may pursue a civil remedy, such as damages.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A neighbor's dog breaks a garden fence. The fence owner files a civil case against the dog's owner because one private person claims another caused harm. The fence owner could ask for money to repair the fence.

Accept any accurate, original situation that correctly identifies criminal law as a state case seeking a criminal penalty or civil law as a dispute seeking a legal remedy. Students should name relevant parties and a result that matches the type of law.