

Easily confused words

Many words used in legal English look and sound alike but can have very different meanings. It is important to be aware of the more common of these false pairs – the consequences of confusing them could be disastrous. *Now try the exercise below.*

Exercises

- 1) You are not (**eligible/illegible**) to practise as a lawyer in this country unless you have received official authorization to do so.
- 2) The testimony given by the witness was not entirely (**credible/creditable**).
- 3) I have always been completely (**disinterested/uninterested**) in what judges do in their spare time.
- 4) It is an important legal (**principal/principle**) that the accused should be presumed to be not guilty until proven guilty.
- 5) The present economic recession will (**affect/effect**) this company adversely.
- 6) The lawyer provided expert (**council/counsel**) to the client.
- 7) His negligent handling of the matter amounts to a (**tortious/tortuous**) act, for which he is likely to be sued.
- 8) The car was (**stationery/stationary**) at the traffic lights when it was struck from behind by another vehicle.
- 9) Payments are made (**biannually/biennially**), in other words once every two years.
- 10) The (**oral/aural**) agreement reached between them was later recorded in writing.

(Forum Legal:English by lawyers for lawyers)