

THE LEGAL PROCESS – Glossary

The following definitions may be of help to readers without a legal background. Definitions for legal phrases were sourced from <http://dictionary.law.com>.

audi alteram partem	To hear the other side.
certiorari	(sersh-oh-rare-ee) A writ (order) of a higher court to a lower court to send all the documents in a case to it so the higher court can review the lower court's decision. Certiorari is most commonly used by the U.S. Supreme Court, which is selective about which cases it will hear on appeal. To appeal to the Supreme Court one applies to the Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari, which it grants at its discretion and only when at least three members believe that the case involves a sufficiently significant federal question in the public interest. By denying such a writ the Supreme Court says it will let the lower court decision stand, particularly if it conforms to accepted precedents (previously decided cases).
dissimulate	To hide or disguise one's thoughts or feelings
facile	Appearing comprehensive only by ignoring the complexities of an issue; superficial.
gravamen	Latin for "to weigh down." The basic gist of every claim (cause of action) or charge in a complaint filed to begin a lawsuit. The essence or most serious part of a complaint or accusation.
inter alia	Latin for "among other things." This phrase is often found in legal pleadings and writings to specify one example out of many possibilities.
mandamus	(man-dame-us) Latin for "we order." A writ (more modernly called a "writ of mandate") which orders a public agency or governmental body to perform an act required by law when it has neglected or refused to do so.
probative	Affording proof or evidence
sequelae	A medical term meaning, "A condition which is the consequence of a previous disease or injury."
ultra vires	Latin for "beyond one's legal power or authority".