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Court, also called court of law, a person or body of persons having judicial authority to hear and resolve disputes in civil, criminal, ecclesiastical, or military cases. Additional research information here. The Law & Economics Center is dedicated to fostering academic collaboration between legal scholars, professionals, and policymakers. Court structure and organization Types of courts. There are many different types of courts and many ways to classify and describe them. Basic distinctions must be made between criminal and civil courts, between courts of general jurisdiction and those of limited jurisdiction, and between appellate and trial courts. This web-friendly presentation of the original text of the Federalist Papers (also known as The Federalist) was obtained from the e-text archives of Project Gutenberg.