

Court Structure

Law

How courts are tiered, and what each level does.

The functions by level.

First instance

Hears evidence and finds facts

Applies law to those facts

Witnesses give testimony

Judge or jury decides the outcome

Appellate

Reviews for legal error

Rarely rehears evidence

Deference to findings of fact

Sets precedent for lower courts

Educational reference. An appeal is not a second trial: it generally reviews whether the law was applied correctly.