
Difference Between Lawyer And Attorney

It is not rare to see two different terms with similar meanings being used interchangeably in every language writing and speaking. There are quite a lot of them in the English language, but for the sake of this piece, we will focus on the difference between lawyer and attorney.

In the legal profession (and life generally), there are stages to everything. Being a lawyer entails graduating law school, but that alone, is not enough license to practice law. You still need to further your educational career so you can become an attorney, or you can choose to venture into other career paths seeing as there are a lot of non-traditional jobs you can do with your law degree.

We will discuss more on how these two terms differ in a more detailed format later on in this post, but before that, let us define the terms in clear comprehensive terms.

Definition of lawyer

A lawyer is defined as a person that studied law in law school. This definition stands even for a law graduate who has not passed the bar exam or functioned in the capacity of an officer in the court of law. The focus of this term is based on the fact that the person in question has completed his tertiary education on legal practice to the point of being awarded a degree. This focus, by a long shot, is the difference between attorney and lawyer.

As a lawyer, one is, by no legal standard, allowed to do certain jobs. For instance, one cannot represent a client in the court of law. This does not invalidate one's degree as a graduate of law. He or she can still help to improve the authenticity of a case handled by an attorney. In other words, he or she can be a part of a legal team but does not have any right to argue a case in the court. A lawyer of this capacity can handle the following responsibilities.

- Guidance in setting up and sustaining a corporation
- Dealing with immigration matters
- Proper interpretation of work contracts
- General legal advice
- Drafting a will or a trust
- Tax issues
- Prenuptial agreement
- Protection of intellectual property

Also, lawyers can venture into other fields since it viable and flexible source of employment. On that note, a law degree can serve perfectly well in the following professions.

- Professional counseling in areas such as mental health, rehabilitation, marriage, career, education, and lots more. Combined with a degree in counseling, a lawyer can make an exceptional career as a counselor.
- Development agencies for non-governmental organization where the knowledge of the law is required. These agencies can be focused on health, business, finance, and so on,

which is quite flexible and gives you a chance to choose.

- Entrepreneurship in virtually any field of interest. In all honesty, you really do not need a university degree to succeed as an entrepreneur. However, having a law degree will give you an edge in terms of understanding and negotiating contracts and other legal or government procedures.

Experts who understand the difference between a lawyer and an attorney are of the opinion that students and young associates should consider these factions of the legal practice while hoping to work in a top law firm (something that is less likely to happen seeing that there are not enough spots for every one).

Definition of attorney

An attorney is defined as a lawyer who has written and passed the bar to earn a license to practice law. In practicing law, they can actually represent the interest of a person in the court of law or any other legally acceptable setting. Attorneys are usually specialists in different areas like immigration, taxes, child custody, divorce, compensation of damages, malpractice, and so on.

One of the ways to see it is this: every attorney is a lawyer, but not every lawyer is an attorney. Be that as it may, there are some differences between these terms in terms of their duties. Basically, an attorney's service is employed when a client, also known as the principal, needs the professional legal, financial, or medical representation to the interest of the client. They weigh a case, considering the options in detail, before deciding and executing a critical and sensitive process on behalf of their clients.

The responsibilities of an attorney go a long way to explain what's the difference between a lawyer and an attorney. Here are some instances.

- Interacting with clients to understand their conditions and concerns, and providing them with the best legal advice as seen fit
- Explaining the possible results of legal advice, be it positive or negative
- Coming up with the best strategy according to the laws to resolve a case in favor of their client and at a cost-effective rate
- Preparation of legal documents for each case they handle
- Physical representation of their clients in a legal proceeding with appropriate argument
- Staying up to date with the current legislations

It is important to note that attorneys are different based on their specialties. If you are involved in a criminal case or a civil lawsuit, then you need a trial or civic litigation attorney. If you are involved in a case that has to do with patent, trademark, or copyright defense or contest, then you need an IP attorney.

Main differences between lawyer vs attorney

We are done with the definition of the terms. Now, let us answer the question – “what is the difference between a lawyer and an attorney?”

Basis of comparison lawyer attorney

Definition A lawyer is defined as a person that studied law in the law school An attorney is defined as a lawyer who has written and passed the bar to earn a license to practice law.

Qualification Bachelor's degree in law and specialized knowledge Bachelor's degree in law, specialized knowledge, and bar exam

- Time frame Three to four years Varies
- Nature Cannot represent a client in the court of law Can represent a client in the court of law
- Title JD meaning Juris doctor Degree Esq. meaning esquire
- Specialty May specialize Must specialize

Difference between lawyer and attorney: Conclusion

So far, we have covered the basic differences between these two terms in the most comprehensive manner possible. There are a few things you should have at the back of your mind when talking about lawyer vs attorney: attorneys are lawyers, but not all lawyers are attorneys.

Also, lawyers can practice law, but not to the fullest. They are not allowed to represent a client or argue a case in the court of law like attorneys have the right to. In some states, one can become an attorney even without going to law school. All they have to do is pass the bar exams and they can practice to a certain extent. As for lawyers, they have to go through law school and graduate before they can take the bar.