There are five kinds of lawyers in the English legal system: lawyer, attorney, notary, solicitor, and barrister. A ***barrister***pleads in the higher courts. A ***solicitor***advises clients on matters of law, draws up legal documents, such as wills, and prepares cases for barristers. An ***attorney***performs the same work as a solicitor, but only in Common law, and is often appointed to act for another person. A ***notary***, or ***notary public***, is a public official who is legally authorised to take oaths, attest and certify certain documents. ***Lawyer***is a generic term; a member of the legal profession who conducts suits in the courts or advises clients, often limited to attorneys and solicitors.

The legal system in most English-speaking countries is based on **Common law**, which developed in Medieval England. This system is based on custom and precedent established by court decisions unlike Roman or Civil law, the basis for the law of most of continental Europe—including Italy—and Latin America. Civil law is instead based on codified principles and Civil law courts do not generally employ trial by jury or the law of evidence.