

## Unit 1      WHAT IS LAW?

**1.1 The following definitions of law we are going to focus on may help us understand what the law is:**

### [law.com Law Dictionary](#)

#### law

- 1) any system of regulations to govern the conduct of the people of a community, society or nation, in response to the need for regularity, consistency and justice based upon collective human experience. ...
- 2) a statute, ordinance or regulation enacted by the legislative branch of a government and signed into law. ...

### [Duhaime's Legal Dictionary](#)

#### law

All the rules of conduct that have been approved by the government and which are in force over a certain territory and which must be obeyed by all persons on that territory (eg. the "laws" of Australia). Violation of these rules could lead to government action such as imprisonment or fine, or private action such as a legal judgement against the offender obtained by the person injured by the action prohibited by law. Synonymous to act or statute although in common usage, "law" refers not only to legislation or statutes but also to the body of unwritten law in those states which recognize common law..

### [The 'Lectric Law Library's Legal Lexicon - Dictionary](#)

#### law

Rules established by a governing authority to institute and maintain orderly coexistence.

### [Bouvier Law Dictionary](#)

#### law

In its most general and comprehensive sense, law signifies a rule of action; and this term is applied indiscriminately to all kinds of action; whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational. In its more confined sense, law denotes the rule, not of actions in general, but of human action or conduct.

### [JURIST - Legal Dictionaries](#)

#### law

The combination of those rules and principles of conduct promulgated by legislative authority, derived from court decisions and established by local custom.

**1.2 The passive structures used in the definitions above can be understood more clearly if you transform them into active ones:**

- a. A statute is enacted by the legislative branch.  
The legislative branch.....
- b. All the rules of conduct have been approved by the government.  
The government .....
- c. All the rules of conduct must be obeyed by all persons.  
All persons .....
- d. Rules are established by a governing authority.  
A governing authority .....
- e. Rules and principles of conduct are promulgated by legislative authority.  
Legislative authority .....
- f. Rules and principles of conduct are established by local custom.  
Local custom .....

**1.3 Complete the gaps with the following verbs either in their active or passive forms:**

violate recognize establish enforce prescribe regulate

**LAW**

The principles and regulations ..... by a government and applicable to a people, whether in the form of legislation or of custom and policies ..... and ..... by judicial decision. Any written or positive rule or collection of rules ..... under the authority of the state or nation, as by the people in its constitution.

*The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*

**LAW**

A body of rules, whether proceeding from formal enactment or from custom, which a particular state or community ..... as binding on its members or subjects.

*Oxford Dictionary of the English Language*

**LAW**

Rules of conduct of any organized society, however simple or small, that are ..... by threat of punishment if they are ..... Modern law has a wide sweep and ..... many branches of conduct.

*Columbia Encyclopedia*