

# The Role of the Lawyer

A lawyer is sometimes referred to as an attorney at law or a counselor. This is a person who has spent many years learning about the law and has obtained a license to practice law. As an officer of the court, it is the lawyer's responsibility to establish a relationship of trust and confidence with their client and represent the client to the best of the lawyer's ability.

Why are lawyers needed? The answer may be easier to understand if one considers the many roles of the lawyer. A lawyer can be thought of as a spokesperson hired to speak for a client to settle a conflict. A lawyer can often communicate more effectively than the client because the lawyer is not emotionally involved in the dispute and has been trained to look for ways to settle a dispute by using the legal knowledge he or she has gained. The lawyer's main responsibility and challenge is to their client.

The lawyer must sometimes play the role of an adversary. The lawyer's opponent in the courtroom is called the opposing counsel. While the lawyer must remain respectful of the opposing counsel, they must also zealously represent their clients' position.

A lawyer is sometimes called upon to perform the role of advisor or counselor to help clients with problems such as divorce, relationships between parents and children, drafting wills, drafting contracts and other matters. In this role, the lawyer must seek to meet the desires of the client while providing practical advice to accomplish their goal.

Often, the lawyer serves as a negotiator working with the client as well as the opposing side to find the best way to settle a conflict. This is a difficult role, as the lawyer must be able to find compromises and to know the right moment to present these to reach the best settlement for the client. Negotiation is a skill that requires experience and patience on the part of the lawyer.