



Legal Language

By Peter M. Tiersma

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Statutes, judicial opinions, contracts, deeds, and wills profoundly affect our daily lives, but their language tends to be often nearly impossible to understand. In this lively history of legal language, Peter Tiersma slices through the thicket of legalese, explaining where it comes from, why lawyers continue to cling to it, and why it's doesn't have to be an inevitable feature of our legal system.

"*Legal Language* will resonate with lawyers . . . and any non-lawyer who has waded through legal documents, or has tuned in to the latest trial on Court TV."--Carmie D. Boccuzzi, Jr., *Boston Book Review*

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Tiersma (Loyola Law Sch.) has written an interesting descriptive history of how Anglo-American "legalese" developed and continues to thrive as we move into the 21st century. He begins by tracing the roots of legalistic terminology back to Celtic times and then details its expansion during the Anglo-Saxon era as certain words were refined to minimize confusion and emphasize clarity. At the same time, this boom in terminology set the legal profession apart from all others, thereby underscoring its social importance. Tiersma contends that this dual nature of legal language profoundly affects the legal profession to this day. To drive home this theme, he thoroughly examines several facets of legal communication, such as anachronistic language, the wording of state and federal statutes, and even lawyer Johnnie Cochran's oral defense of O.J. Simpson. A scholarly effort that will perhaps be valued more by linguists than by lawyers; recommended for larger public and academic libraries. AS
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Users Review

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