

Differences Between Trial and Grand Juries

Trial Jury

6-12 members

Role is to decide whether defendant injured the plaintiff (civil case) or committed the crime as charged (criminal case).

Trials are generally public, but jury deliberations are private.

Defendants have the right to appear, testify, and call witnesses on their behalf.

Final outcome is a verdict, in favor of plaintiff or defendant in civil case, or guilty/not guilty in a criminal case.

Grand Jury

16-23 members

Role is to determine whether there is “probable cause” to believe that an individual has committed a crime and should be put on trial.

Grand jury proceedings are not open to the public.

Neither defendants nor their attorneys have the right to appear before the grand jury.

Final outcome is decision to indict (formally accuse) the defendant or not.

