

# Understanding legal jargon in wills

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When preparing a will, it's common to encounter legal jargon that might be confusing. This article aims to clarify those terms, ensuring you understand your will completely.

## Why is legal jargon used in wills?

Legal jargon or terminology is used in wills to ensure precision and avoid ambiguity. These terms serve as shorthand to prevent lengthy explanations and to maintain clarity for those interpreting the document.

## Key terms in wills

### People

**Beneficiaries:** Beneficiaries are the individuals or organisations that will inherit portions of your estate after your death.

**Executor:** The executor is the person or organisation you appoint to manage your estate's administration. Their duties include identifying assets and debts, applying for Probate, handling Inheritance Tax issues, and distributing the estate per the will's instructions. Multiple executors can be appointed to act jointly or as substitutes.

**Guardians:** If you have minor children, you can appoint guardians to manage their affairs.

**Issue:** "Issue" refers to your descendants, including children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, named or entitled to inherit in the will.

**Testator:** The testator is the individual making the will. If you're drafting a will, you are the testator.

**Trustee:** A trustee manages any trusts established within the will. There can be one or multiple trustees.

### Money and property

**Estate:** The estate encompasses all the testator's assets minus debts or liabilities, sometimes referred to as the net estate.

**Assets:** Assets are valuable items the testator owns, including property, cash, and investments.

**Chattels:** Chattels are movable personal property, such as personal belongings, furniture, or a car.

**Bequest:** A bequest is a gift of the personal property specified in the will, such as jewellery, a car, antique furniture, or art.

**Legacy:** A legacy, like a bequest, is a gift but can include all types of property, personal items, and cash.

**Residue:** The residue is what's left of the estate after debts, bequests, and legacies are settled.

**Life Interest:** A life interest allows someone to use an asset during their lifetime without transferring ownership, often used in relation to property.

## Conclusion

Understanding legal jargon in wills is crucial for clarity. If any term or phrase in your will is unclear, consult your solicitor for an explanation.

If you need a new will or have questions about your existing one, contact private client solicitor and wills specialist [Herman Cheung](#) today.

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Note: This article is not legal advice; it provides information of general interest about current legal issues.

