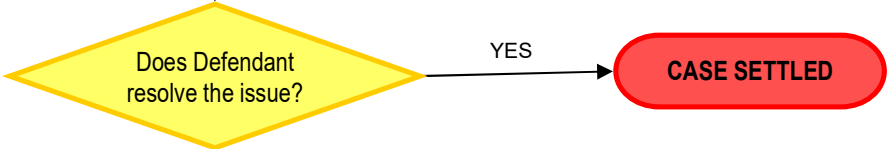
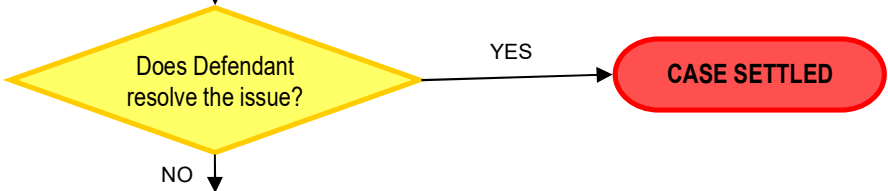


**CIVIL LITIGATION:**  
An action brought to enforce a right. To carry on a legal contest by judicial process; the act or process of bringing a civil lawsuit for dispute resolution.

**STEP 1: BEFORE A LAWSUIT IS FILED**  
The **Plaintiff** (the person considering filing a lawsuit) **demands** that the **Defendant** (the person responsible for causing the alleged damage or injury) **resolve** the issue.

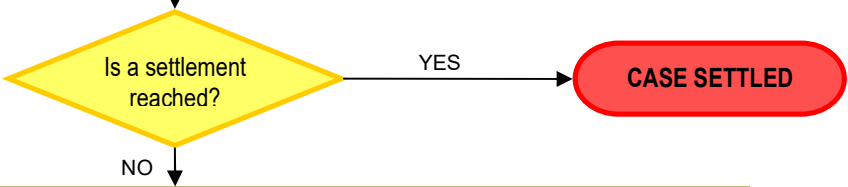


**STEP 2: BEGINNING OF A LAWSUIT**  
A legal document called a “**petition**” is presented to the court to outline the details of the lawsuit and the alleged **injury**, attributing them to the defendant, and requesting **damages** be paid to the plaintiff). A **summons** is then served which informs the defendant that a lawsuit has been filed and their presence is demanded in a civil trial court on a given date to open the matter of the lawsuit.

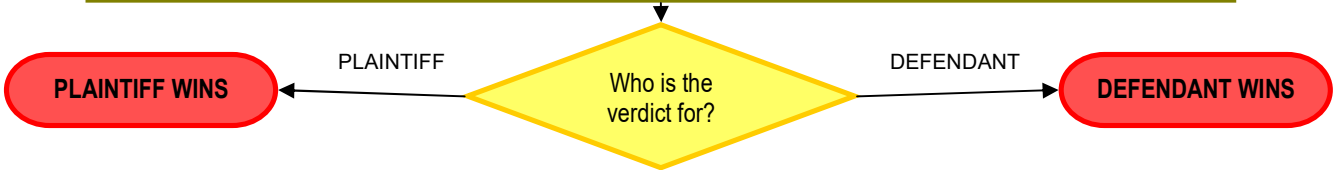


**STEP 3: THE DISCOVERY PROCESS**  
The plaintiff sends the defendant written questions called “**interrogatories**” to request information relevant to the case. The plaintiff may also request that the defendant produce documents related to the issues involved. The plaintiff may then “**depose**” the defendant and other individuals, asking them to respond to certain issues regarding the dispute; these “**depositions**” are recorded by a court reporter for possible use in a trial. The defendant is also permitted to use this same process of discovery to collect information from the plaintiff relative to the case. This back and forth process of discovery may take weeks for smaller cases, or even several months for complex issues.

**STEP 4: SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE**  
Upon the completion of discovery, matters are ready to go to **trial**. However, in most cases, an attempt is made to resolve the issues prior to the case actually going to trial. This is sometimes referred to as a **settlement conference** or **mediation**.



**STEP 5: TRIAL**  
The case goes to the actual **trial**. **Evidence** can be presented at the trial to help persuade the jury or the judge of the truth of the position of both sides. The right to a jury trial may be waived if both parties agree, in which case a judge will try the case and ultimately render the verdict. The trial continues until its conclusion and a verdict.



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