

Lesson 1: Interpreting Legal Texts and Identifying Ambiguity

1. Introduction

Legal interpretation is the process of understanding the exact meaning of a legal text. At this stage, you move from *reading* to **interpreting critically**.

في هذه المرحلة لا تقوم فقط بفهم النص، بل اكتشاف أين يمكن أن يُفهم بأكثر من طريقة

2. What is Ambiguity in Legal Texts?

Ambiguity occurs when a sentence has more than one possible meaning.

Example: *The tenant must repair the damage quickly.*

What does "quickly" mean?

- 1 day? Or 1 week? ➔ This creates **legal uncertainty** (غموض قانوني).

3. Types of Ambiguity

a. Lexical Ambiguity (word ambiguity)

A word has multiple meanings.

Example: *The bank is responsible.*

(bank = مؤسسة مالية / ضفة)

b. Structural Ambiguity (sentence ambiguity)

The sentence structure is unclear.

Example:

The lawyer discussed the case with the judge in the office.

- Who is in the office?/ which office ?

c. Vagueness (lack of precision)

Words are not specific.

Example: *reasonable time / appropriate action*

هذه كلمات قانونية شائعة لكنها تحتاج تفسير حسب الحالة.

4. How to Reduce Ambiguity in Legal Writing

- use precise vocabulary
- avoid vague expressions
- specify time, place, and conditions

Improved example:

We don't say: The payment must be made quickly.

we say: The payment must be made within 7 days.