Authorities: customs and police

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 procedural legitimacy ____	**a** public acceptance of authority based on the fairness of the process rather than the outcome
2 discretionary power ____	**b** the latitude given to officials to make judgement calls within legal limits
3 mission creep ____	**c** the gradual expansion of a task or power beyond its original, narrower purpose
4 chain of custody ____	**d** the documented, unbroken record of evidence handling to preserve its integrity
5 exclusionary rule ____	**e** a legal principle barring illegally obtained evidence from being used in court
6 civil liberties ____	**f** fundamental individual freedoms protected from government interference
7 preventive detention ____	**g** holding someone in custody to prevent a future harm, before any conviction
8 sovereign immunity ____	**h** a legal doctrine protecting the state from being sued without its consent
9 institutional accountability ____	**i** the mechanisms by which institutions are held responsible for their actions
10 asymmetric enforcement ____	**j** the uneven or disproportionate application of law across different groups

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 Acceptance of authority based on fair process is procedural legitimacy / raw power.

2 The latitude for officials to make judgement calls is discretionary power / rigid rule-following.

3 Gradual expansion of a power beyond its original purpose is mission creep / a fixed mandate.

4 The documented record of evidence handling is chain of custody / informal storage.

5 Barring illegally obtained evidence from court is the exclusionary rule / unlimited admissibility.

6 Detaining someone to prevent future harm, pre-conviction, is preventive detention / post-trial sentencing.

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7 Protection of the state from being sued is sovereign immunity / full liability.

8 Uneven application of law across groups is asymmetric enforcement / equal treatment.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 legitimise ____	**a** discretionary power
2 curtail ____	**b** civil liberties
3 exercise ____	**c** procedural legitimacy
4 undermine ____	**d** due process protections
5 safeguard ____	**e** oversight mechanisms
6 institutionalise ____	**f** public trust
7 circumvent ____	**g** the rule of law
8 uphold ____	**h** legal safeguards

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

asymmetric enforcement | chain of custody | civil liberties | discretionary power | exclusionary rule | institutional accountability | mission creep | preventive detention | procedural legitimacy | sovereign immunity

Legal scholars examining policing authority emphasise that public compliance depends heavily on 1 _____, the perceived fairness of the process rather than agreement with every individual outcome. Officers necessarily exercise considerable 2 _____, since no rulebook can anticipate every circumstance, though unchecked discretion risks 3 _____ across different communities if applied inconsistently. Evidence obtained without a valid warrant may be excluded under the 4 _____, provided 5 _____ can be reliably established for material actually presented in court. Powers originally granted for narrow, exceptional circumstances sometimes expand gradually, a pattern critics label 6 _____, raising concern about erosion of 7 _____ over time. Legal doctrines such as 8 _____ can shield officials from personal liability, complicating efforts to establish genuine 9 _____ when misconduct occurs. Meanwhile, controversial measures such as 10 _____, holding individuals without full trial to prevent anticipated harm, remain contested precisely because they test the limits of due process protections.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

The paradox of discretionary authority

Legal scholars note a persistent paradox at the heart of law enforcement: some degree of discretionary power is unavoidable, since rigid rules cannot anticipate every real-world circumstance, yet the same discretion creates opportunity for inconsistent or discriminatory application. Attempts to eliminate discretion entirely through exhaustive rule-making often prove counterproductive, producing rigid outcomes poorly suited to genuinely exceptional situations. Instead, most reform proposals focus on strengthening institutional accountability, ensuring discretionary decisions remain subject to meaningful review, rather than eliminating judgement altogether. This reframing shifts the central question from whether officials should have discretion to how that discretion can be exercised transparently and reviewed effectively after the fact.

1 What persistent paradox do legal scholars note? _____

2 Why is some degree of discretionary power unavoidable? _____

3 What does the same discretion create opportunity for? _____

4 What often happens when attempts are made to eliminate discretion entirely? _____

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5 What do most reform proposals focus on instead? _____

6 How does this reframe the central question about discretion? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The evidence's documented handling record was carefully preserved. _____

2 The power gradually expanded well beyond its original narrow purpose. _____

3 The public's compliance depended on the fairness of the process used. _____

4 The law was applied unevenly across different communities. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how discretionary power in law enforcement can be balanced with accountability, distinguishing observation from inference.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Precise terms

1 procedural legitimacy 2 discretionary power 3 mission creep 4 chain of custody 5 the exclusionary rule 6 preventive detention 7 sovereign immunity 8 asymmetric enforcement

3 Academic collocations

1 c legitimise procedural legitimacy... note adjust 2 b curtail civil liberties 3 a exercise discretionary power 4 f undermine public trust
5 h safeguard legal safeguards... note adjust 6 e institutionalise oversight mechanisms 7 d circumvent due process protections 8 g uphold the rule of law

4 Analysis

1 procedural legitimacy 2 discretionary power 3 asymmetric enforcement 4 exclusionary rule
5 chain of custody 6 mission creep 7 civil liberties 8 sovereign immunity
9 institutional accountability 10 preventive detention

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 That some discretionary power is unavoidable, yet the same discretion creates opportunity for inconsistent or discriminatory application.
2 Because rigid rules cannot anticipate every real-world circumstance.
3 Inconsistent or discriminatory application.
4 It often proves counterproductive, producing rigid outcomes poorly suited to exceptional situations.
5 Strengthening institutional accountability.
6 It shifts from whether officials should have discretion to how it can be exercised transparently and reviewed effectively.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 chain of custody 2 mission creep 3 procedural legitimacy 4 asymmetric enforcement

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.