

January 5, 2010

Extract from Wikipedia Entry for "Shall and Will" citing Tillman & Tillman's "A Fragment on Shall and May"

Seth Barrett Tillman

Legal use

Legislative acts and contracts sometimes use "shall" and "shall not" to express mandatory action and prohibition. However, it is sometimes used to mean "may" or "can". The most famous example of both of these uses of the word "shall" is the [United States Constitution](#), and claims that "shall" is in fact or is not used with these different meanings have caused discussion and have significant consequences for interpreting the text's intended meaning.^[8]

References

^[8] [^] [Nora Rotter Tillman & Seth Barrett Tillman, A Fragment on *Shall* and *May*, 50 Am. J. Legal Hist. 453 \(2010\)](#)

External links

- ["Shall and Will". Fowler, H. W. 1908. *The King's English*](#) - thorough discussion on the subject
- ["shall". *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition*. 2000.](#)
- ["should". *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition*. 2000.](#)
- ["if". *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition*. 2000.](#) - See usage note.
- [Complete descriptions of the English Tenses](#)
- [Webster 1913 - Entry for *Shall*](#)
- ["The Origins of some Prescriptive Grammar Rules"](#) - quoting *The Origins and Development of the English Language*, Pyles and Algeo, 1993
- [The Rise of Prescriptivism in English](#) (PDF format)
- [Exercises](#)
- [Nora Rotter Tillman & Seth Barrett Tillman, A Fragment on *Shall* and *May*, 50 Am. J. Legal Hist. 453 \(2010\)](#)