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Catherine: Hello, I'm Catherine and welcome to Question and Answer of the Week.

Feifei: 大家好, 我是冯菲菲。

Catherine: Our question today comes from Li Jian, who has a question about some legal vocabulary. I hope these words don't refer to his own situation!

Feifei: 我们来听听他的问题吧!

Catherine: Yes, let's hear the question.

Question

Hi, I am from Beijing, China, a loyal listener of BBC news. There are three words in connection with the law which always confuse me. They are: convict, verdict and indict. Thank you!

Feifei: Li Jian 想知道单词 convict, verdict 和 indict 的区别。那我们先从发音说起吧。

Catherine: Yes, that's a good idea. All of the words end in 'i - c - t' but they're not pronounced the same. So why not practise saying them after me to hear the difference.

Feifei: 好的。你先说, 然后我重复。咱们开始, 第一个单词:

Catherine: Convict.

Feifei: Convict.

Catherine: Verdict.

Feifei: Verdict. 这两个词后半部分的发音是一样的, 对吧?

Catherine: Yes, this is the different one. Indict.

Feifei: Indict.

Catherine: Let's just say those together. Convict, verdict, indict.

Feifei: Convict, verdict, indict. 下面我们来讲讲这三个词的词性。

- Catherine:** Well, convict is both a verb and a noun. To convict is the verb, and a convict is the noun. Notice how the stress is on different parts of the word when it's a noun and a verb.
- Feifei:** 是的, 单词 convict 当动词使用时, 重音在第二个音节上 convict; 当名词使用时重音在第一个音节上 convict. 那另外两个词呢?
- Catherine:** Verdict is a noun, a verdict. Stress on the first syllable. Verdict. Indict is a verb, with the stress on the second syllable: to indict.
- Feifei:** Verdict 是名词, indict 是动词。下面我们来比较一下这三个词意思的区别。首先, 正如 Li Jian 说的, 这三个词都和法律有关。
- Catherine:** Yes, they are all connected with the law and the process of the justice system. First, we'll look at the verb 'to indict'. It's usually used in the passive form. If someone is 'indicted' it means that the authorities have officially accused them of a crime.
- Feifei:** 一个人因某个罪行被正式起诉或控告 is indicted – 这是法律程序开始的第一步。
- Catherine:** People who are indicted will often have to go to court to stand trial. In court, the evidence is heard and then a decision is made as to whether the person is guilty or innocent. The decision about guilt or innocence is called the verdict.
- Feifei:** The verdict 就是法官或陪审团对被告人有罪或无罪的裁决。
- Catherine:** Yes, and if there is a guilty verdict, we say that the person has been convicted. So, to convict someone means to pass down a guilty verdict in a court.
- Feifei:** 如果被告人被判有罪, 那这时我们应使用动词 convict, 意思就是宣判有罪。注意我们通常使用动词 convict 的被动形式, 而且这个词也通常会出现在现在完成时的句子里。比如, 你可能在新闻里听到 someone has been convicted of a crime. 上面我们说 convict 还可以当名词使用, 那做名词的时候这个词又是什么意思呢?
- Catherine:** Well, a convict is someone who is in prison after they have been convicted of a crime.
- Feifei:** So someone can be indicted, given a guilty verdict and convicted. That means they have become a convict.
- Catherine:** Yes, although of course I hope that never happens to you!
- Feifei:** 今天我们讲了 convict, verdict and indict 的区别。我们再来复习一遍: convict 当动词使用时的意思是裁决, 当名词使用时的意思是囚犯; verdict 只能当名词使用, 意思是裁决、裁定; 动词 indict 的意思是控告、起诉。好了, 如果你在英语学习中遇到任何难题, 欢迎通过微博或邮件的形式告诉我们你的问题。我们的邮箱是 questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk 下次再会。
- Catherine:** Goodbye!