

Jury Lesson Plans and Resources

The following are tried and true free lessons for each grade span related to teaching about Juries. Most of the lessons were designed by participants or leaders in the California On My Honor Civics Institute for teachers, a teacher professional development program co-sponsored by the Administrative Office of the Courts and California State University College of Education. They include the History-Social Science and English Language Arts standards covered; higher order thinking skills; and were designed with the big ideas in mind. Many include authentic assessments. All lessons have hands-on engaging activities and have been both peer reviewed and field tested in classrooms. Several additional jury related resources are also included, some of which are available for a small fee.

Elementary

1) *On My Honor: Fourth and Fifth Graders Interacting with the Court.* This short mock trial unit was developed by Judge Richard Cline, Superior Court of San Diego, in collaboration with local elementary school teachers. It involves students in deliberating and reaching a verdict in a trial. The lessons include authentic jury instructions, as well as a jury "debrief" activity. Please note that the unit is written as though the class were doing the mock trial in the courthouse, but the mock trial can also be done in the classroom.

Middle

2) *Jury Trial. 8th Grade. By Karen Jeffries.* Students explore the pros and cons of a jury trial and write a letter to a judge explaining whether they would like to have their case tried before a jury of their peers or not.

3) *Why Do I Have Jury Duty? 8th Grade. By Marianne Brittan.* This middle school mock trial compares and contrasts a trial with no jury and a trial with a jury. It includes fun and thought provoking quotes and suggested video clips about juries.

High School

5) *Criminal Trial by Jury. 11th and 12th Grade. By Karrie Carlson.* Ms. Carlson, who is currently a teacher, and was a police officer for many years, designed an authentic mock criminal trial that gives students an opportunity to deliberate as a jury. Please note that the lesson has an accompanying PowerPoint that incorporates materials from Jim Saylor, who has a copyright on the materials, and has given his permission for its use.

6) For free additional information about jury service, including the video *Ideals Made Real*, visit the California Courts Website: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/jury-service.htm?genpubtab>

Educational Jury Resources for a Fee

Elementary

7) *The People V A Wolf. Grades 3-6. From Constitutional Rights Foundation.*

Based on the award-winning children's book The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs: by A. Wolf by Jon Scieszka, this two-part simulation takes students through the process of selecting a jury and conducting a trial. <http://www.crf-usa.org/materials-catalog/catalog-people-v-a-wolf.html>

Middle and High School

8) *Justice Case Files 3: The Case of Jury Duty. From the National Center for State Courts.*

A colorful pamphlet about jury duty in an engaging graphic novel style format.

http://www.ncsconline.org/D_Comm/case-files/jury-duty/

9) *People v. Meadows: A Mock Trial Designed for the Classroom, Grades 6-12. From Constitutional Rights Foundation.*

The case of *People v. Meadows* is both an exciting mock trial and an informative lesson on the important right to privacy, perhaps one of the most debated rights in American society. Students engage in a criminal trial simulation and learn the fundamentals of due process, proof beyond a reasonable doubt, and the jury system.

<http://www.crf-usa.org/materials-catalog/people-v-meadows>