

## California On My Honor: Civics Institute for Teachers



- **Project Title:** Jury Trial
- **Grade Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (Presented to U.S. History class)
- **Presented by:** Karen Jeffries
- **Context of the Project:** This project comes at the end of my first history Unit, which deals with the beginnings of America through 1763. This project will take place after a study of government before our independence. Students will have learned about some of the rights our founders included with their foundations being from the Magna Carta.
- **Standards Addressed in the Project:**

### **Social Studies and History Standards addressed in the lesson**

1. 8.1.4 Describe the nation's blend of civic republicanism, classical liberal principles, and English parliamentary traditions.
2. 8.2.1 Discuss the significance of the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, and the May-Flower Compact.
3. 8.2.6 Enumerate the powers of government set forth in the Constitution and the fundamental liberties ensured by the Bill of Rights. (*Note right to jury by trial 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment*)

### **English Language Arts Standards addressed in the lesson**

4. 2.4 Write persuasive compositions: a. Include a well-defined thesis (i.e., one that makes a clear and knowledgeable judgment). b. Present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning to support arguments, differentiating between facts and opinion. c. Provide details, reasons, and examples, arranging them effectively by anticipating and answering reader concerns and counterarguments.
- **Big Idea(s):**
    1. Being the member of a jury is an important right that is something that was very important to our countries founders.
    2. Being a citizen comes with responsibility.

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- **Essential Questions/Issues:**

What does it mean to have the ability to have a jury of peers judge you?

What are the benefits and possibly the downfalls to being judged by your peers?

What are peers?

- **Higher Order Thinking Questions:**

Would you prefer a trial by jury or by a judge alone if you were accused of a crime and why?

- **Objective(s):** Students will be able to explain the value of trial by jury as well as the importance getting the opportunity to be a juror as a part of civic responsibility.

- **Assessment:**

Final assignment a letter to the judge explaining student's preference to trial by jury or trial before the judge with persuasive arguments.

Once assignments and letter to the judge are complete students answer final five conclusion questions.

- **Quality Criteria:**

Students must include pros and cons to both a jury trial and trial by judge. Students must show that they have thought about both forms of trial.

- **Materials and Resources Needed:**

[http://law.suite101.com/article.cfm/the\\_importance\\_of\\_the\\_american\\_jury](http://law.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_importance_of_the_american_jury)

<http://www.shawndricasimmons.com/theimportance.html>

<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/usgovernmentandlaw/courtsystem/preview.weml>

Magna Carta-review of document

[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/magna\\_carta/legacy.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/magna_carta/legacy.html)

<http://www.magnacharta.com/articles/article04.htm>

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- **Lesson Activity Steps:**

1. Complete Chapter 5 Section 2 (1- lesson) Creating America, Beginnings through World War I, CA TE. McDougall Littell, 2006. ISBN13-978-0-618-55951-0
2. Review the Magna Carta (part of 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson) (Website above)
3. View Painting of the signing of the Magna Carta (part of 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson) I Creating America, Beginnings through World War I, CA TE
4. Complete Analysis of a Primary Source (part of 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson) Attached
5. Complete Citizenship today page 1-2 (Homework after 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson) Creating America, Beginnings through World War I, CA TE
6. Give Students scenario with questions to discuss in small group (part of 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson)Attached
7. Complete Four Square on Jury vs. Non Jury trial (part of 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson)Attached
8. Write a letter to the judge explaining to the judge if you would like to have your case tried before a jury of your peers in peer court or before the judge. (Homework after 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson)
9. Peer review letters (4<sup>th</sup> lesson)
10. Complete Conclusion Questions (4<sup>th</sup> lesson)Attached
11. Turn in Final Draft of letter

### Day 1

Read Chapter 5 Section 2 Roots of Representative Government Pages 141-145  
Discuss page 142 Citizenship today: Importance of Juries

### Day 2

Briefly Review the Magna Carta especially as it pertains to trial by jury  
View a painting of the Magna Carta being signed and complete the primary source chart in small groups then review as a class  
For Homework Read Citizenship today handout about The Importance of Juries complete the attached worksheet about Teen Court

### Day 3

Give students scenario about being arrested with questions to discuss as a group  
After discussion in small group complete as a whole class discussion the 4 square on pros and cons of trial by Jury versus Trial by judge  
For Homework students need to write a letter to the judge explaining their reasoning for wanting to appear before the judge or go to teen court and appear before a jury of peers  
Students need to weigh the arguments on both sides and think about each situation

### Day 4

In small groups students share their letters and help each other with revisions

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Students are given assignment conclusion questions to work on their own  
Homework finalize letter to the judge

- **Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:** Students are given the chance to work from the adopted curriculum reading aloud together as a class. Students have a chance to view some primary documents as a class on the projector. Students work together in small groups to discuss the activities. The activities are then discussed as a class with notes provided on the overhead. Students then have an opportunity to take the reading, primary source, group work, and whole class work to complete an independent project, a letter. Students then share their letter and have an opportunity to get feedback before their final product is complete.
- **Extension Ideas:**  
Students became very interested in the judicial system and conversations branched off in many directions. Students requested a chance to go and visit a court. The importance of fair trials will come up when we begin our novel unit on Let the Circle Be Unbroken.
- **References:** ( ie: H/SS Framework, websites referenced, books)  
History Social Studies Framework  
English Language Arts Framework  
Websites from above:  
[http://law.suite101.com/article.cfm/the\\_importance\\_of\\_the\\_american\\_jury](http://law.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_importance_of_the_american_jury)  
<http://www.shawndricasimmons.com/theimportance.html>  
<http://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/usgovernmentandlaw/courtsystem/preview.weml>  
[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured\\_documents/magna\\_carta/legacy.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/magna_carta/legacy.html)  
<http://www.magnacharta.com/articles/article04.htm>  
Creating America: A History of the United States, McDougal Littell, 2001

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<p>Description of Source: What I see..... Evidence of.....</p>	<p>Meaning: What the objects, words, etc., mean</p>
<p>Message/Argument: The author is trying to tell me...</p>	<p>Questions: I wonder.... My reaction to the source is....</p>

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Scenario

You are accused of stealing from a local store. You are given the choice to go before a judge in juvenile court, or go before a jury of your peers in peer court.

What things do you need to consider when making this choice?

What is the benefit of going before a judge?

What is the risk in going before a judge?

What is the benefit of going before a jury of your peers?

What is the risk of going before a jury of your peers?

You must write a letter to the judge explaining to him/her what your decision is and why.

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Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Judge Trial Pro's	Judge Trial Cons
Jury Trial Pros	Jury Trial Cons

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Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion Questions**

Why do you think it was important to our countries creators to make sure trial by jury was a given right?

Do you think this is an important civic responsibility (serving as a juror)? Why or why not?

What is civic responsibility?

Do you know anyone who has served on a jury? If so, what have they shared with you about their experience?

After discussing how important it was to have trial by jury as a part of our rights, what does it mean to you?