

TEACHING TOOLS: NYS UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

The New York State Unified Court System Activity Book*

LEARNING CONTEXT

Purpose:

The purpose of these activities is to provide 2nd through 5th grade elementary students with challenging but fun worksheet activities that explore the people, places and processes involved in running the New York State Unified Court System. The activity book was designed to support and enhance elementary school students' knowledge and understanding of the content required by New York State's social studies learning standards (especially standards 1 and 5), as promulgated by the new core curriculum and the accompanying concepts and themes.

Grade Level:

Intended for grades 2 through 5

Learning Standard:

Social Studies Standards 1 and 5

Core Curriculum (excerpted from the Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum):

These activities address the core curriculum concepts and themes that relate to civic values, government, citizenship and civic life. Students study about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in their communities (grade 2). As they learn about communities throughout the world, they begin to compare the roles of citizenship and the kinds of governments found in various world communities (grade 3). The in-depth study of local government will emphasize the structure and function of the different branches and the roles of civic leaders. By participating in school activities that teach democratic values, students develop a sense of political efficacy and a better understanding of the roles of supporters and leaders. They expand their civic concepts of power, equality, justice, and citizenship as they learn about local government (grade 4). Students then build on and reinforce civic values and historic and political content learned about the United States by comparing and contrasting their government to that of other nations. Concepts such as civic life, politics, and government can be used to answer questions about what governments can and should do, how people should live their lives together, and how citizens can support the proper use of authority or combat the abuse of political power (grade 5).

* Developed with the assistance of Paula Bienia, Elementary Social Studies Coordinator, Northport-East Northport School District

Concepts/Themes:

- Understanding how every citizen is entitled to participate in local, state and national government by voting and may be required to participate in other ways, such as through jury service.
- Understanding the role of government in meeting the needs and wants of communities.
- Understanding how elected and appointed leaders make, enforce and interpret the law.
- Understanding and examining how rules and laws are developed to govern conflicts.
- Examining how government protects the rights of individuals and promotes the common good.

Prior Knowledge:

Knowledge needs will vary among different age groups. Teachers should be familiar with the activity options and select age/grade appropriate activities for their students, possibly after providing background information in lesson form.

PROCEDURE AND REFLECTIONS

The activity book can be used as a springboard for teaching about justice, civic values, government, citizenship and the courts. You may wish to use it to improve your students' knowledge of the social studies core content you will cover in class. The activity book will provide students with enjoyable ways to enhance their knowledge of our courts and justice system. It may also be used as a foundation for preparation for a field trip to a New York State court.

Teachers may vary the difficulty of some of the activities. For example, for higher grade levels, teachers may omit the word bank from the "scramble" and "fill-in-the-blank" activities.

Special Message to Teachers

The activities within each Teaching Tool are designed to build on each other to, first, develop students' knowledge of basic law-related concepts; then, show students how the concepts are utilized or implemented in the court system; and, finally, demonstrate how students should apply the concepts in their everyday lives. However, the various activities that comprise each tool may also be used as stand-alone exercises. For example, you may choose to incorporate only Day 1 or Day 3 into your course work. Or, you may choose to use Day 1 in connection with one unit and then use Day 2 in a later unit.

There is more than one way to utilize the Teaching Tools – the proper use is the use that is beneficial to your classroom.

Name: _____

Date: _____

VOCABULARY WORD SEARCH

Directions: The words below are in the Word Search Puzzle, written across and up-and-down. How many of the words can you find?

appeal
attorney
clerk
civil
complaint

court
damages
defendant
deliberation
evidence

gavel
judge
jury
oath
plaintiff

prosecutor
sentencing
trial
verdict
witness

T A D E L I B E R A T I O N
R E S I P E U G A V E L N P
U W V N R C J D E C B A I L
T I A H O N D U N D A E N A
C T R O S E L J R E L P A U
J N D N E D L O N Y O P A R
U E I E C I I W A R R A N T
D S C S U V E R D I C T M E
G S E N T E N C I N G N I T
Y E N R O T T A T A C A S E
O C U O R T O R D E R D T S
A O A T H T I H O N O N R T
C L E R K A P P O I N E I I
C O M P L A I N T I F F A F
O J U D I T H S K A Y E L Y
P T R I E S E G A M A D E R

Name: _____

Date: _____

VOCABULARY WORD SCRAMBLE

Directions: Unscramble the vocabulary words listed below.

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1. cviiI | _____ | 11. redvitc | _____ |
| 2. yruj | _____ | 12. ynoem | _____ |
| 3. erimc | _____ | 13. ljai | _____ |
| 4. haot | _____ | 14. nortatye | _____ |
| 5. raitl | _____ | 15. reywal | _____ |
| 6. vlega | _____ | 16. swintse | _____ |
| 7. ealpap | _____ | 17. lytiug | _____ |
| 8. geduj | _____ | 18. tennncoi | _____ |
| 9. relkc | _____ | 19. hturt | _____ |
| 10. tcruo | _____ | 20. enstceen | _____ |

WORD BANK:

appeal	judge
attorney	jury
civil	lawyer
clerk	money
court	oath
crime	sentence
gavel	trial
guilty	truth
innocent	verdict
jail	witness

Name: _____ Date: _____

VOCABULARY FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Directions: Use a New York State Court System vocabulary word to complete the sentences below.

1. Every criminal defendant is _____ until proven guilty.
2. Witnesses take an _____ and swear to tell the truth.
3. After the jury deliberates, the judge will ask the jury to announce its _____.
4. Every criminal defendant is entitled to be represented by an _____.
5. A civil suit is started when a plaintiff files a _____.
6. A _____ is the attorney who conducts a trial against a criminal defendant.
7. When the judge tells the defendant the amount of time that the defendant must go to jail, the judge pronounces the _____.
8. If the judge has a research question, the judge can ask his law _____ for help.
9. At a trial, attorneys use witnesses to present _____ to the jury.
10. The highest court of the State of New York is not a trial court; instead, it is an _____ court.

WORD BANK:

appellate	innocent
attorney	oath
clerk	prosecutor
complaint	sentence
evidence	verdict

Name: _____

Date: _____

VOCABULARY WORD MATCH

Directions: Match each vocabulary word from the word bank with its definition, provided below.

WORD BANK:

appeal	court	guilty	prosecutor
attorney	crime	judge	sentence
clerk	defendant	jury	trial
civil	deliberate	oath	verdict
complaint	evidence	plaintiff	witness

1. the individual charged with a crime _____
2. the legal process that uses a jury to determine who wins a lawsuit _____
3. a person that testifies at trial _____
4. lawyer _____
5. the information presented at trial _____
6. the place where a trial or appeal takes place _____
7. to consider all the evidence presented _____
8. a person who presides over the court _____
9. the decision of the jury _____
10. the person who conducts a criminal trial _____

11. what a defendant is accused of _____
12. a group of citizens that examines evidence _____
13. a witness swears to tell the truth _____
14. the jail term the defendant must serve _____
15. a case between people, usually over money _____
16. if the defendant is not innocent _____
17. the person who brings a civil case _____
18. continuing the case to see if the trial
result was wrong _____
19. assists a judge with court details _____
20. the paper filed to begin a civil case _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

ACROSTIC POETRY

Directions: Use each letter as the first letter of a word or phrase. When all of the lines are filled in and read one after the other, the result should be a poem that describes what judges do and how they help us.

JUDGES

J

U

D

G

E

S

Name: _____ Date: _____

VOCABULARY WORD GAME

Directions: Read the clue for a hint as to the answer to the word game. Use New York State Court System vocabulary words to fill in each sentence. Make a list of the designated letters. Then, unscramble the designated letters to find the answer to the word game.

1. CLUE: This is how the jury found the defendant who told jokes on the witness stand.

A person who breaks the law commits an () _ _ _ () _ _ act.

A court is the place where a () _ _ _ () occurs.

The _ () _ _ _ always has the last word.

RIDDLED WITH _ _ _ _ _ !

2. CLUE: This is the result of jury deliberation.

A guilty defendant goes to () _ () _ .

The _ () _ _ _ () _ is the decision of the jury.

Criminal defendants defend against the _ _ _ () _ _ () () _ _ .

CAREFUL _ _ _ _ _ .

Name: _____

Date: _____

COURTHOUSE MATH

Directions: Answer the questions with the proper numbers. If correct, your answers will add up to the total displayed.

	How many Chief Judges are there in the State of New York?	_____
+		
	What is the smallest number of jurors allowed in a criminal trial?	_____

		7

	How many levels of appellate courts are there in the State of New York?	_____
+		
	How many judge positions are there on the New York State Court of Appeals?	_____

		9