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Awesome
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Salinas



**Where each lesson is teacher-
created, student-centered,
engaging, rigorous, and original.**

Lesson: Trials and Convictions, Students as Lawyers

**All lessons are designed to be engaging, student-centered, and include Marzano's learning strategies.*

**The lesson design is only one of the possible ways this lesson can be implemented. Teachers are encouraged to put their own students' needs, strengths, and interest into this lesson outline.*

**Documents attached at bottom*

Lesson Summary:

Students will get the opportunity to be lawyers and prosecute or defend an accused person in a criminal trial (5 total). Each group will consist of 2 lawyers (prosecuting and defending), and an accused person. The teacher will act as the judge and guide the jury as they vote on the verdict. The majority vote determines the verdict.

Objectives (Suggested):

1. Familiarize students with legal vocabulary (defendant, client, lawyer, judge, verdict, trial, attorney, evidence, conviction, etc.)
2. Write convincing arguments for/against conviction of the accused person in logical and professional manner. Written in a logical and persuasive manner.
3. Demonstrate oral/written/reading mastery of the English Language with regard to verb tense and word pronunciation.

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Materials:

1. This Lesson Plan (including 5 handouts)
2. Paper/pencil
3. Internet access
4. YouTube Videos on Court Scenes (All are links on a playlist):
 - a. [17 Again Movie clip](#)
 - b. [A Few Good Men \(whole movie\)](#)
 - c. [Trial Scene from To Kill A Mockingbird](#)

Pre-teach:

1. Discuss/write about what students know about court trials (how they work, the people involved and their roles, possible crimes and sentences, etc.) Teacher should guide.
2. Have students share with other students.

3. Guide students into what they will do in this lesson and what they are expected to learn and be able to do.

Lesson Activities (Suggested):

1. After pre-teach, watch videos linked to demonstrate how lawyers conduct themselves and present their arguments in court.
2. Model how to write arguments on board (must make sense, be in logical order, and have strongest arguments last)
3. Lawyers from both sides should communicate what their arguments are so the other lawyers can develop a rebuttal. OR, if you want to make it more realistic, they can argue on the spot and develop arguments right then and there. They can prepare for *possible* arguments that the other side may use. This may take more time to prepare for, but is more realistic to the real court setting.
4. Both lawyers and defendant write out their statements to the judge (teacher) and turned in after the case is decided by the jury and the judge. Students should also be encouraged to use the internet for help in writing their arguments. (Brief instructions: research past cases about criminal charge in case, see if any arguments can be used in their particular case.)
5. Lawyers finally present their arguments to the jury (other students), judge (teacher) taking turns in their arguments, with the judge moderating speaking time.
6. After hearing the closing arguments, judge guides the jury to vote honestly and only based on the facts. (Vote using little strips of paper). Explain to students that normally the jury has to be unanimous in a criminal case, but for time purposes the majority vote will win.

Assessments (Suggested):

1. Write a reflective paper (1-page) describing your experience as the role you played in the criminal trial. What did you learn? What surprised you? What would you do differently in the next trial?
2. Write out all the ways that the criminal trial *could've* ended.
3. Switch cases and have the students develop new arguments for the cases given.
4. Have students develop new cases for them to argue next time. Must include a criminal charge, supporting evidence, and a good amount of details of time and place. Teacher can select the best ones and develop them into new cases.

Helpful Internet Links:

[Join TeachersPayTeachers today and start earning passive income for your lessons!](#)

[Annotation Handout from ReadWriteThink.org](#)

[Brainstorming for Stories Video](#)

[More affordable teacher supplies on Amazon](#)

[The New Taxonomy \(Marzano and Kendall, 2007\)](#)

[Effective Questioning and Handouts](#)
[Revised Bloom's Taxonomy](#)
[Teach Like a Champion Book on Amazon](#)
[Edutopia's Classroom Management Article](#)
[25 Sure-Fire Strategies for Handling Difficult Students](#)
[More of my original, engaging lessons on TPT](#)

About the Author:

Hello! I am a passionate teacher and writer that loves to create lessons that are interactive, genuine, original and have a purpose. I like to make custom lesson plans and materials that engage my students and help them take ownership for their learning. I have published two books, [The Little Book of Big Quotes Vol. I](#) and [The Poems Vol. I](#), on [Amazon](#) and am currently working on a YA novel and collection of short stories (excerpts available soon). I hope you find these materials helpful!



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Case #1: Grand Theft Auto (Stolen Car)

DIRECTIONS:

1. You and your group will act out a criminal trial in class.
2. Each paper has a different criminal case for trial.
3. You assign who will be the 2 lawyers and the defendant.
4. You will each have to write a statement with arguments explaining why the person is guilty or innocent. The judge (teacher) will listen and read them, then make a decision to convict the accused person or let them go free.
5. Your grade does not depend on the **verdict** (final decision). You will be graded on how well you write your arguments, including spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Your group will need **3** people:

1. Prosecutor (lawyer trying to convict the accused person)
2. Defendant (the accused person of the crime)
3. Defendant's Lawyer (lawyer defending the accused person)

*The rest of the class will be the jury, and the teacher will be the judge and reach the final verdict.

Charges against defendant:

The defendant is charged with stealing the car of a friend.

Evidence:

1. The defendant's fingerprints were found on the steering wheel of the car stolen. The car is a 2005 Honda Accord.
2. The police were notified at 2 p.m. about the missing car. There are two witnesses that state that they saw the defendant driving the stolen car at 5 p.m. the day it was reported.
3. The defendant knew where the keys to the car were stored and had access to the friend's house while the friend was at work.
4. The defendant's cell phone was found inside the car with the last call being made at, 3 p.m., when the car was stolen.

Case #2: Home Burglary

DIRECTIONS:

1. You and your group will act out a criminal trial in class.
2. Each paper has a different criminal case for trial.
3. You assign who will be the 2 lawyers and the defendant.
4. You will each have to write a statement with arguments explaining why the person is guilty or innocent. The judge (teacher) will listen and read them, then make a decision to convict the accused person or let them go free.
5. Your grade does not depend on the **verdict** (final decision). You will be graded on how well you write your arguments, including spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Your group will need **3** people:

1. Prosecutor (lawyer trying to convict the accused person)
2. Defendant (the accused person of the crime)
3. Defendant's Lawyer (lawyer defending the accused person)

*The rest of the class will be the jury, and the teacher will be the judge and reach the final verdict.

Charges against defendant:

The defendant is charged with breaking into a house and stealing a flat-screen TV, and jewelry.

Evidence:

1. The defendant's fingerprints were found on the doorknob of the front door to the house.
2. The defendant's mother reported to police that she received new jewelry as an early birthday gift.
3. The model of flat-screen TV in the defendant's living room matched the stolen model. It also showed signs and damage of possible being moved around in a trunk of a car.
4. Neighbor's reported seeing the defendant's car at the scene of the crime (the house) when no one was home on the day of the burglary.
5. The motion-detecting alarm did not sound. The deactivation code had been entered. The only people that knew that code were the husband and wife that own the house. Their children all live in other states.

Case #3: Reckless Endangerment

DIRECTIONS:

1. You and your group will act out a criminal trial in class.
2. Each paper has a different criminal case for trial.
3. You assign who will be the 2 lawyers and the defendant.
4. You will each have to write a statement with arguments explaining why the person is guilty or innocent. The judge (teacher) will listen and read them, then make a decision to convict the accused person or let them go free.
5. Your grade does not depend on the **verdict** (final decision). You will be graded on how well you write your arguments, including spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Your group will need **3** people:

1. Prosecutor (lawyer trying to convict the accused person)
2. Defendant (the accused person of the crime)
3. Defendant's Lawyer (lawyer defending the accused person)

*The rest of the class will be the jury, and the teacher will be the judge and reach the final verdict.

Charges against defendant:

The defendant is charged with hitting another person with their car while driving because he was texting.

Evidence:

1. 3 witnesses say they say the accused driver texting while driving just minutes before the accident.
2. There was a text message draft that was going to be sent at the exact time of the accident.
3. The defendant's parents state that he has been distracted before while driving because of texting.

From PowerPoint presentation:

Student Criminal Trials



In groups of 3, you will be one of the two lawyers or the accused (defendant). Your job is to convince the jury (class) that you're innocent. The judge will count the jury's votes and declare the verdict (result). You will have approximately 20 minutes to write your arguments for or against the defendant.



Arguing a Criminal Court Case for Students

By Carlos Salinas

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