

A Day in Municipal Court

Coloring and Activity Book



Prepared by the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
Funded by grants from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and Texas
Department of Transportation

Educating children about the law and the role of municipal courts in city government is an important part of the work of municipal judges and court support personnel. As more people come in contact with Texas municipal courts than any other level of the Texas court system, it is important that all citizens understand the role of the court and the rights and responsibilities of the courtroom participants. Because the cases heard in municipal courts are typically ones with which children are familiar, a visit to municipal court also presents an excellent opportunity to educate school age children about our overall justice system.

This coloring book can be used in conjunction with a school or youth group's field trip to municipal court. It can be used when judges and court support personnel visit classrooms to discuss the Texas court system or on Law Day. Or, it can be used as a handout for children present in court as visitors with their parents or friends.

This publication can also be used in conjunction with the TMCEC Driving on the Right Side of the Road (DRSR) program, funded by Texas Department of Transportation. The DRSR program offers interactive lessons for infusion in social studies classes for elementary, middle, and high schools. For additional information, contact Texas Municipal Courts Education Center (TMCEC) at the address below or access the materials on the TMCEC website

[www.tmcec.com].

Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
2210 Hancock Drive
Austin, Texas 78756
512.320.8274
800.252.3718
www.tmcec.com



Texas municipal courts, youth groups, and schools have permission to copy and distribute this document for local use.

© 2010, Texas Municipal Courts Education Center, Austin

A Day in Municipal Court

Coloring and Activity Book

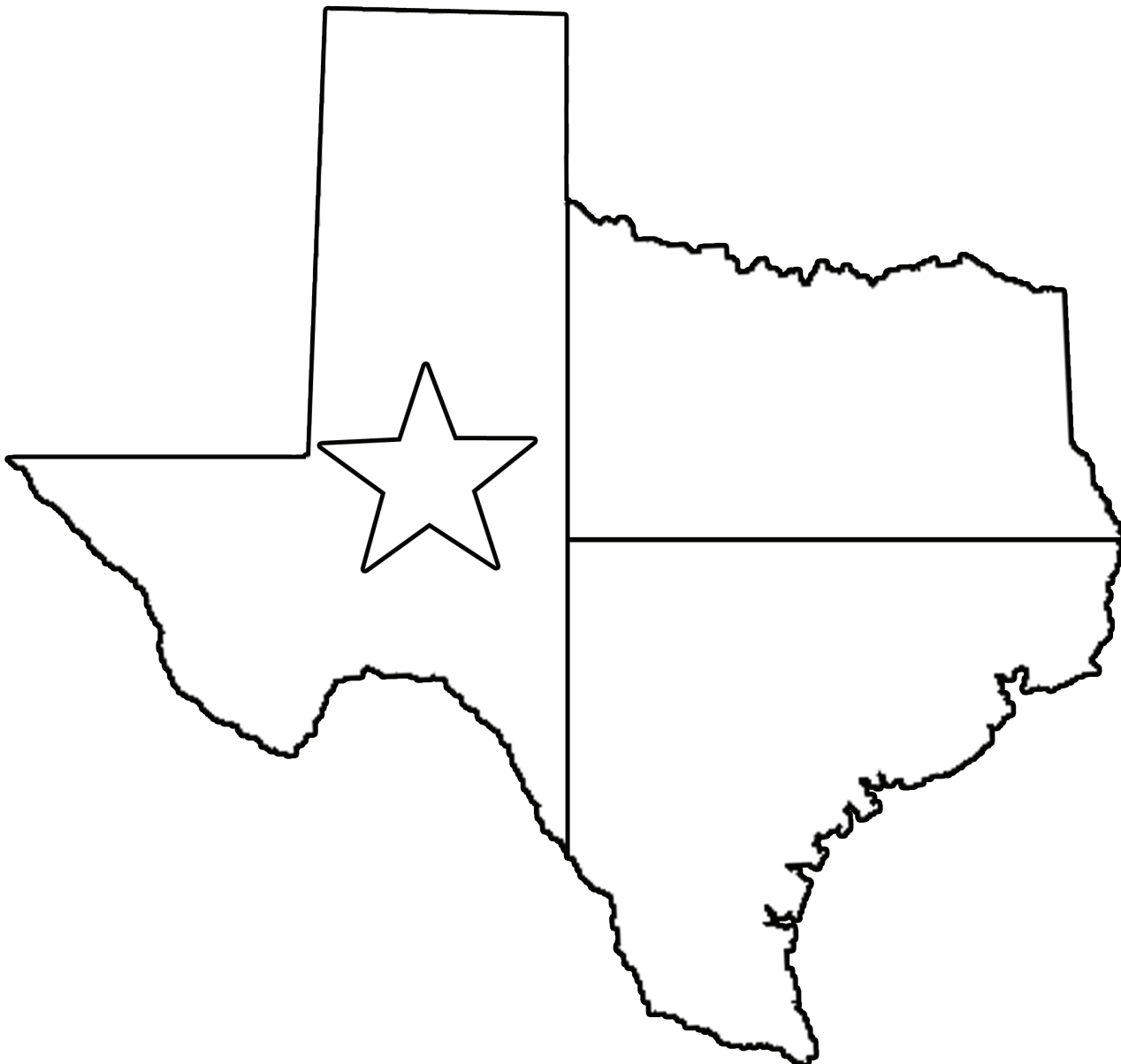
Published by the
Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
Driving on the Right Side of the Road (DRSR)
Municipal Traffic Safety Initiatives (MTSI)
Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT)

Adapted and designed by Noël Kristi Wells



About Texas Municipal Courts

In Texas, municipal courts are created by cities to hear cases involving traffic, city ordinances, and Class C misdemeanor offenses. Most traffic laws are passed by the State Legislature and are enforced by city police officers. City ordinances are laws passed by the city council that govern life within the city limits, such as laws against barking dogs, high weeds, or teen curfews. Class C misdemeanor offenses typically have a punishment of a fine and/or community service. Examples of Class C misdemeanors are not wearing a safety belt, speeding, or a minor in possession of alcohol. These cases are heard in municipal and justice courts. Most cities in Texas have a municipal court. In fact, there are more than 900 cities with at least one municipal court!



Courtroom Participants

Many people work in municipal courts as **judges**, **clerks**, **court administrators**, **bailiffs**, **warrant officers**, and **lawyers**.

The **judge** will usually be wearing a black robe and sits at the front of the courtroom on the bench. The judge makes sure that everyone follows the rules. Sometimes the judge also decides the outcome of the case.



In other cases, a group of citizens decides who wins the case. They are called jurors. Jurors are citizens who come to court to listen to each side of the case. They decide how the conflict will be settled. A group of jurors is called a jury. They sit in the jury box.



At court, these are typically lawyers (also known as attorneys) present. They give people advice to people on their reason for being in court. When a lawyer represents someone who has come to court, it means that they speak for that person. Lawyers usually sit next to the person they represent in court. Kids can have lawyers, too. The lawyer for the State in a criminal case is called the prosecutor.



Many courts have a bailiff. They usually wear a uniform that looks like a police officer's uniform. The bailiff works for the court and makes sure that everyone in court obeys the rules. The bailiff also keeps the courtroom safe.



Courts have interpreters for people who don't speak or understand English or are unable to hear. The interpreter's job is to translate what is said in court either into another language or with sign language.



Some municipal courts have a court reporter. This person records everything that is said. The reporter usually sits near the judge and types on or speaks into a small machine.



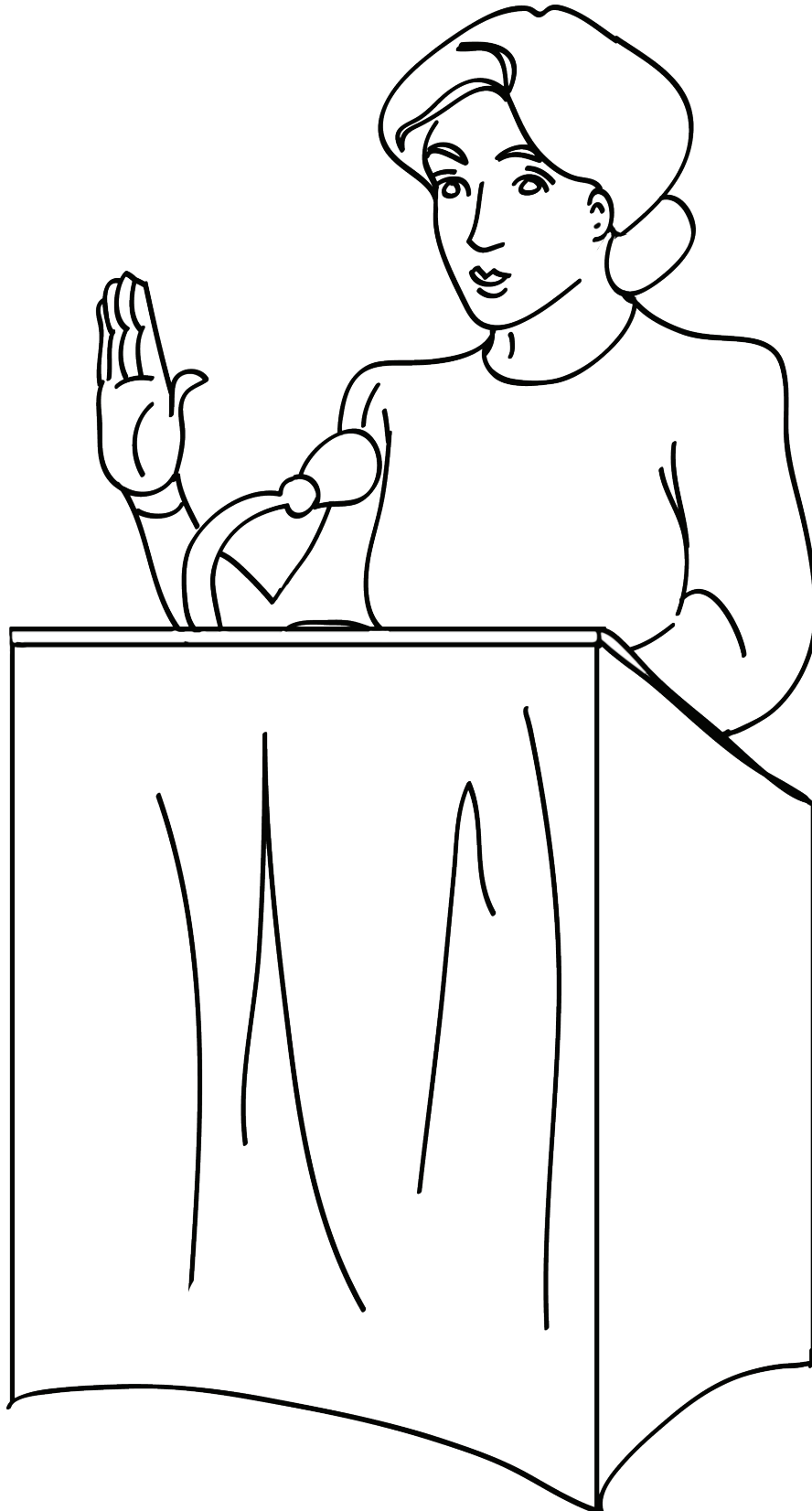
Courts have clerks and court administrators. A court clerk files all of the documents about the cases in the court and keeps them organized. The clerk also keeps track of the decisions of the judge or jury and manages the court's schedule. Court administrators oversee the court's operations.



Some courts also have warrant officers who find the people who do not come to court when they are supposed to.



Witnesses are people who come to court to explain what they have seen or heard. For example, if the dispute is over two cars that collided, a witness might be called to court to tell what he or she saw happen. Witnesses must take an oath to tell the truth. They are called to sit to one side of the judge and the lawyers ask them questions. Police officers often serve as witnesses in traffic cases.



Connect the Dots

Connect the dots on the picture shown below by following the numbers. Then look at the picture and see if you can label the names of each person or thing shown:

Judge

Court Reporter

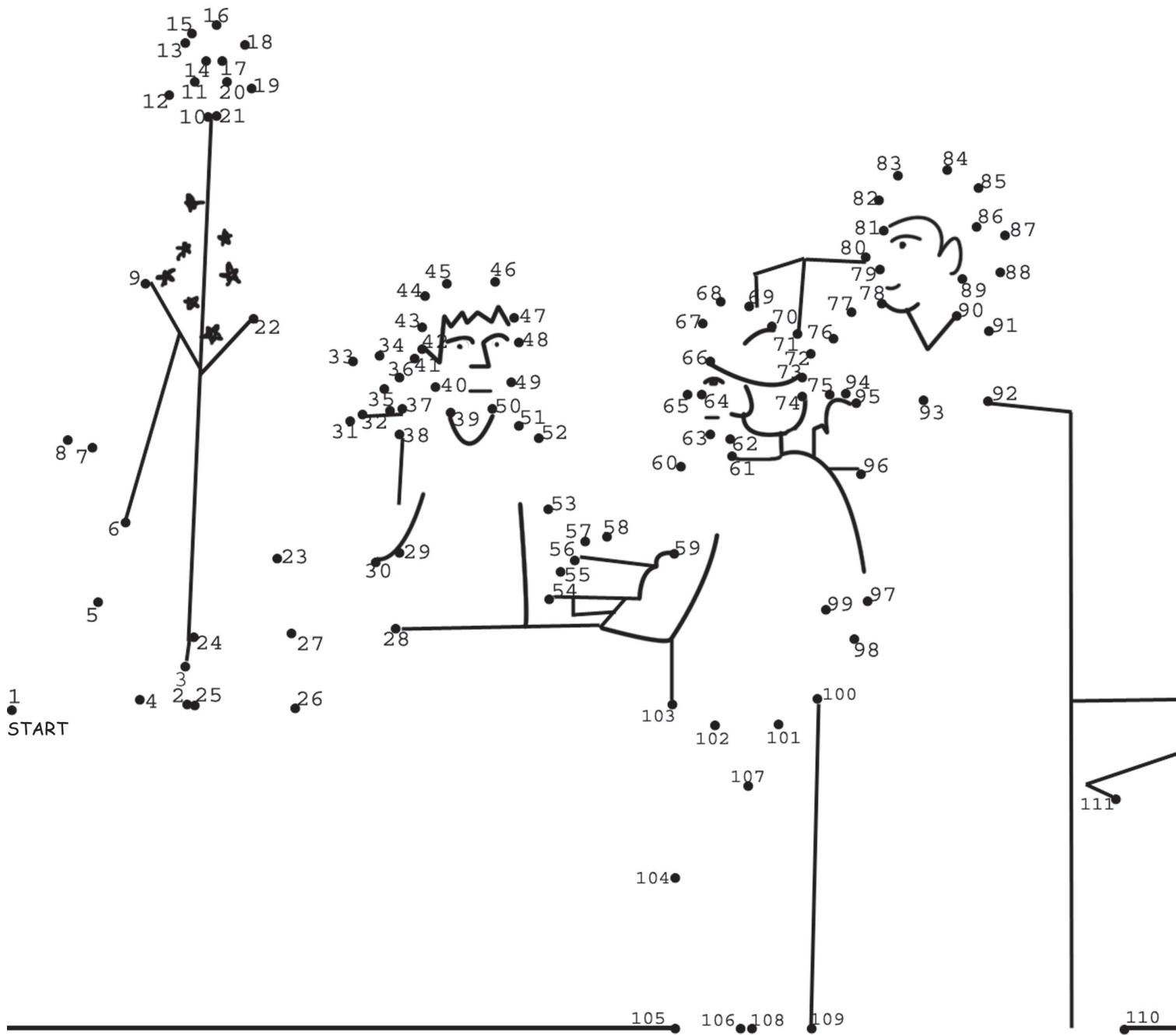
Jury

Bailiff

Witness

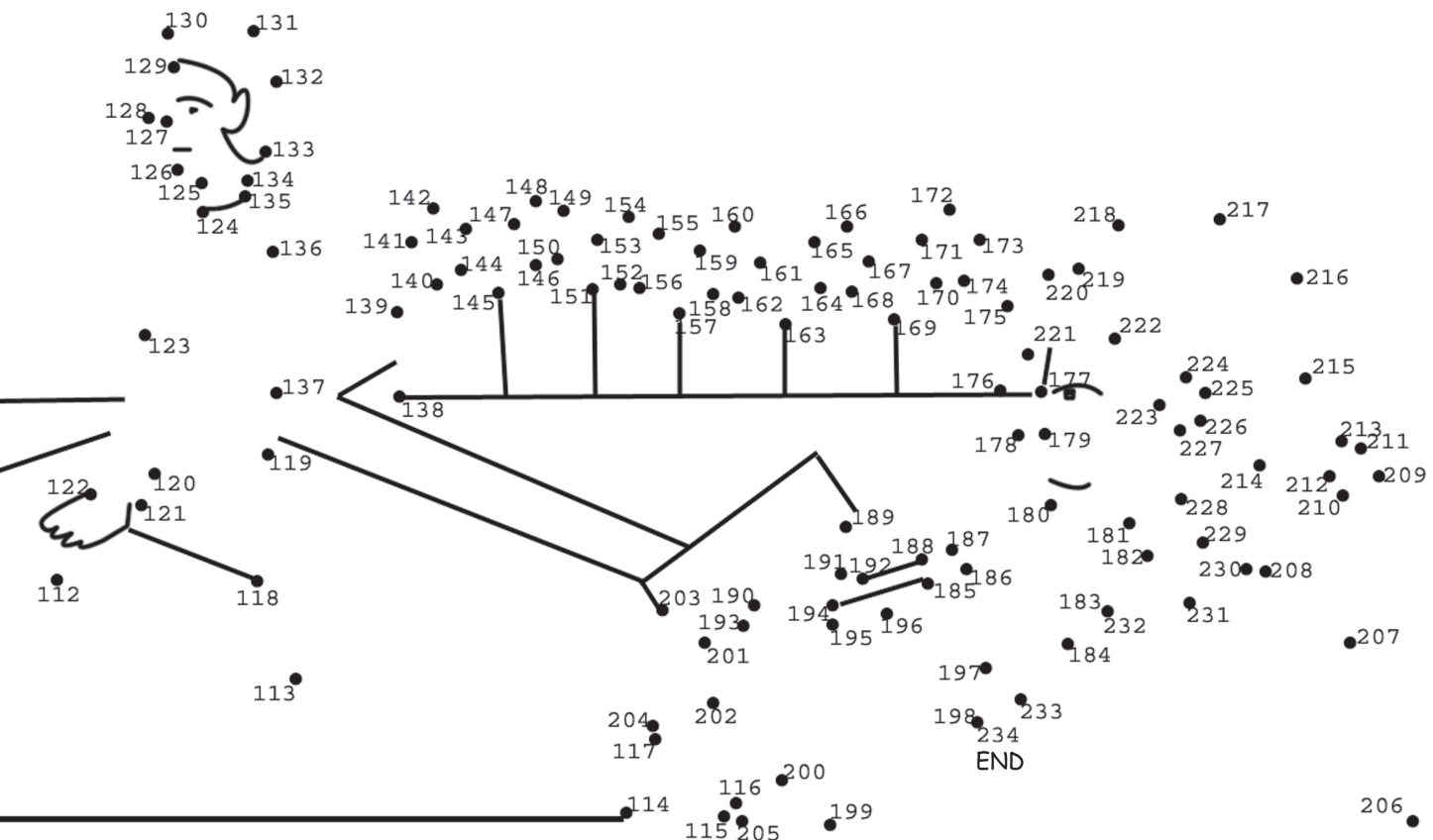
Flag

Lawyer



Remember to Obey Court Rules

- Be on time.
- Dress neatly.
- Show respect to the people who are there.
- Do not eat or drink.
- Do not chew gum.
- Do not use headphones and/or listen to music.
- Do not talk or text on the phone.
- There may be other cases before yours, so be quiet and wait patiently.
- Call the judge "Your Honor" - this is a way to show respect.
- Stand up when the judge enters the room - this also shows respect.
- Do not speak unless the judge, lawyer, your parent, clerk, or bailiff asks you to.



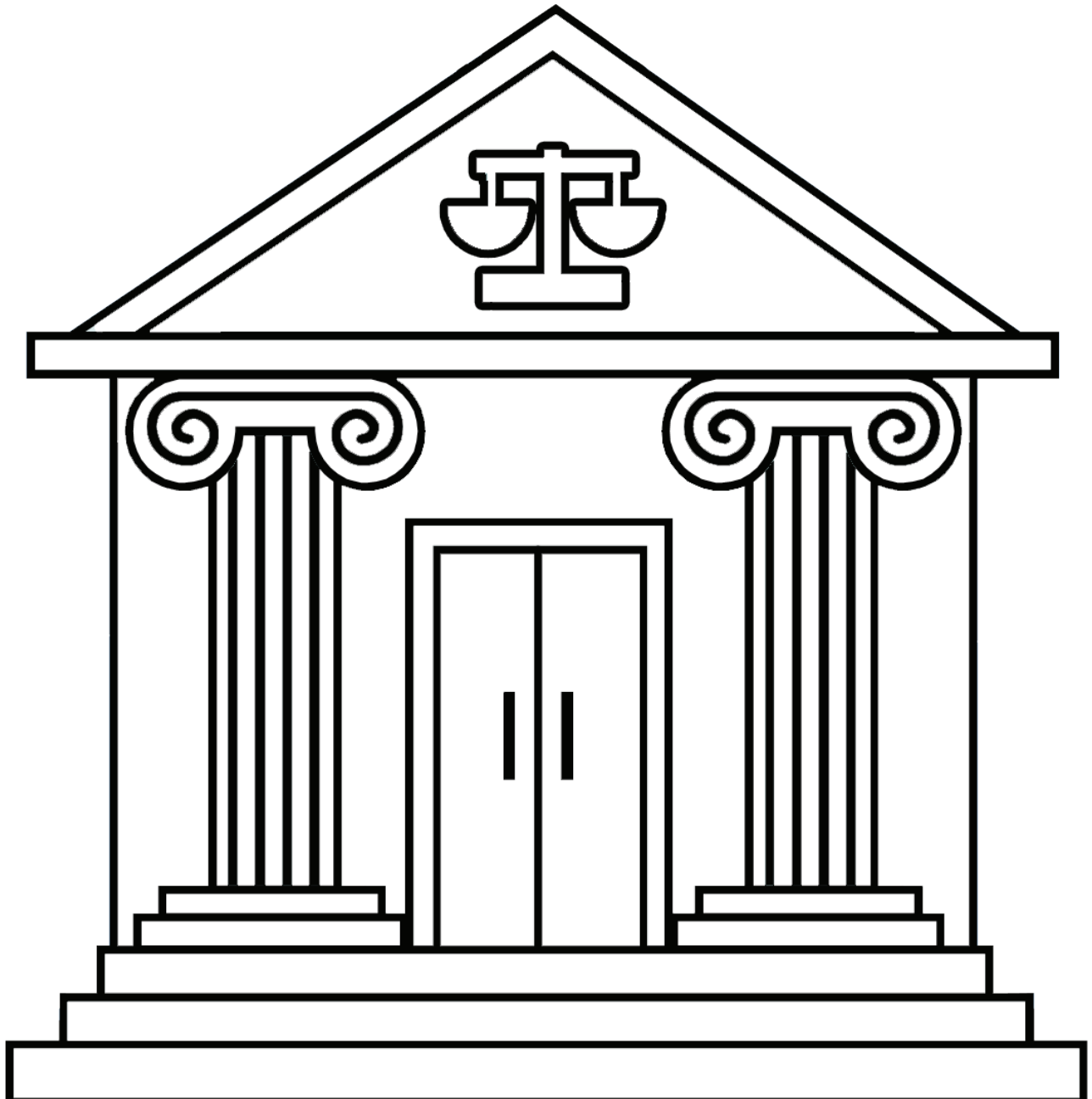
Your Day in Court

So, today you are in court. You might be here with your parent, brother or sister, guardian, foster parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, teacher, or club. You may be here because:

- You or a family member has a case in court;
- You or a person you know is a witness;
- You are visiting a friend or family member; or
- You are on a field trip with your class or club.



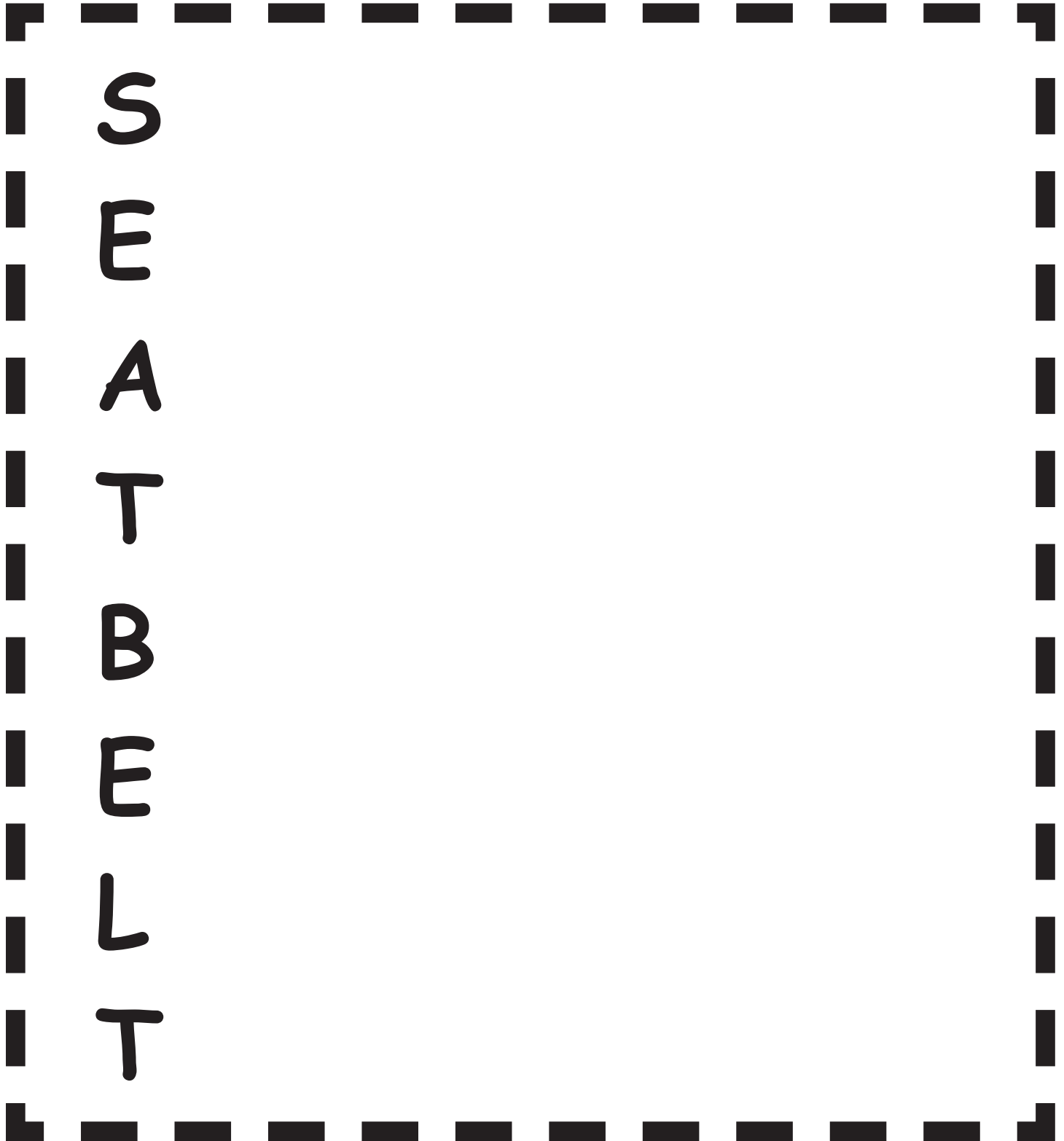
Courts help us resolve problems in our community. When people take their problems to court, lawyers help them present the facts of the case, and then the judge or jury will tell them what must be done to settle the problem. In municipal courts, the defendant is the person accused of breaking the law or causing the problem and the prosecutor is the lawyer for the government. These are typically criminal cases.



Acrostic Poem

Seat Belts and Safety Seats

Create a poem about safety belts or safety seats. Use each letter below to create a word or phrase about using safety belts and safety seats in cars.



S
E
A
T
B
E
L
T

Safety Word Search

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

CLERK

COMMUNITY

COURS

JUDGE

JURY

LAWYER

MUNICIPAL

POLICE

SAFETY

SEATBELT

Traffic Safety Word Jumble

Unscramble each of the clue words.

Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number.

IKEB LEHTEM

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

2

TEAS TLEB

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

4

TORESBO TASE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

5

WCLASSOKR

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

3

SAWLIEKD

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

1

--

,

--

		F	
--	--	---	--

1

2

3

4

5

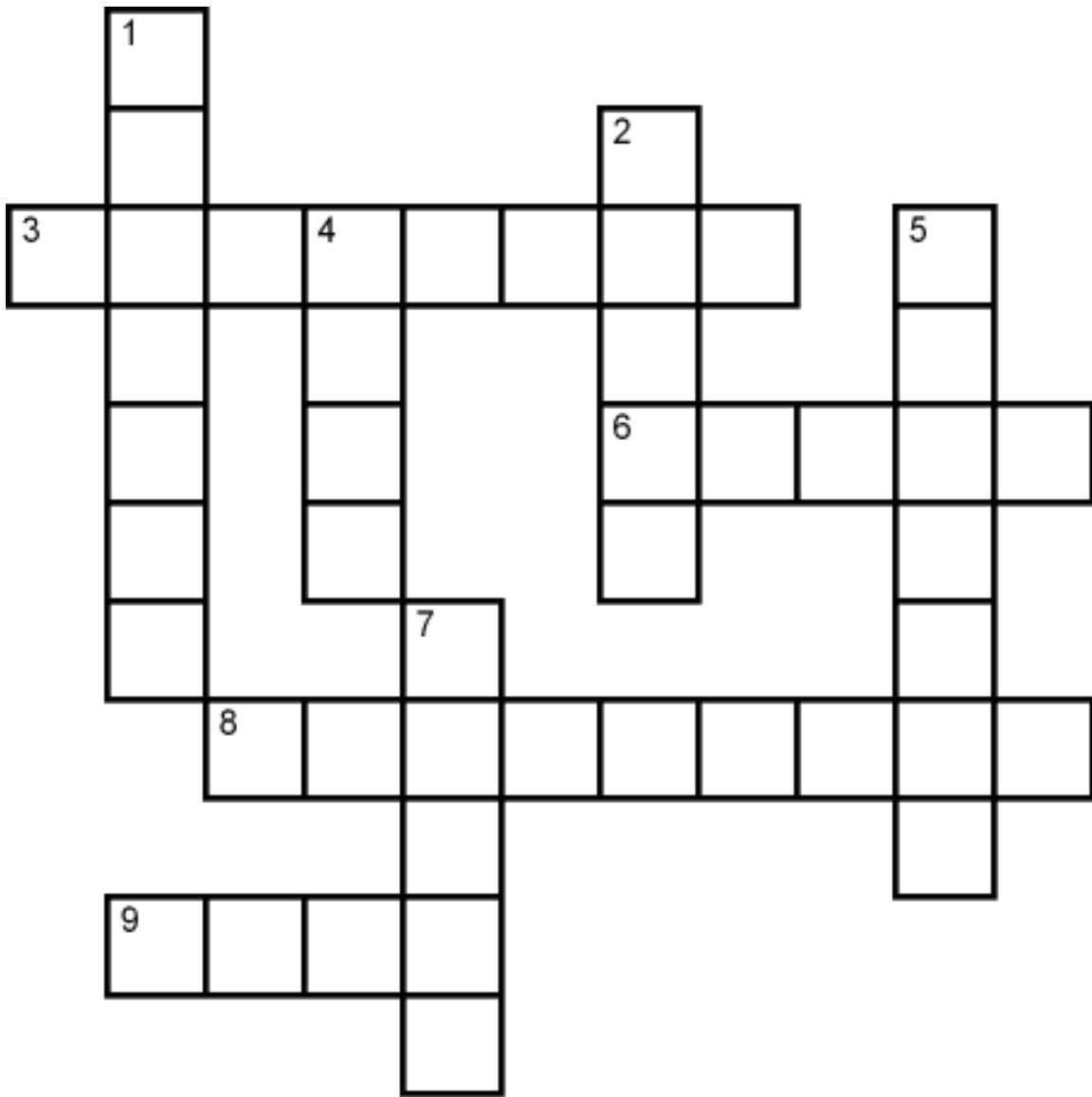
Can you match the job responsibilities?

Draw a line to connect the name of the person with the job they do.
(The first one is done for you.)

Lawyer (Attorney) •	• comes to court to tell the truth about what they have seen or heard
Judge •	• records everything that is said in court into a machine
Bailiff •	• organizes all the papers and keeps track of the judge's decisions
Juror •	• translates what is said in court
Clerk •	• makes legal decisions and makes sure that everyone follows the rules in court
Witness •	• gives advice and speaks in court for the people who have disputes
Court Reporter •	• keeps order in the courtroom and usually wears a uniform
Interpreter •	• listens to both sides of a disagreement in a trial and then decides who wins

Courtroom Crossword 1

Ages 6-12



Across

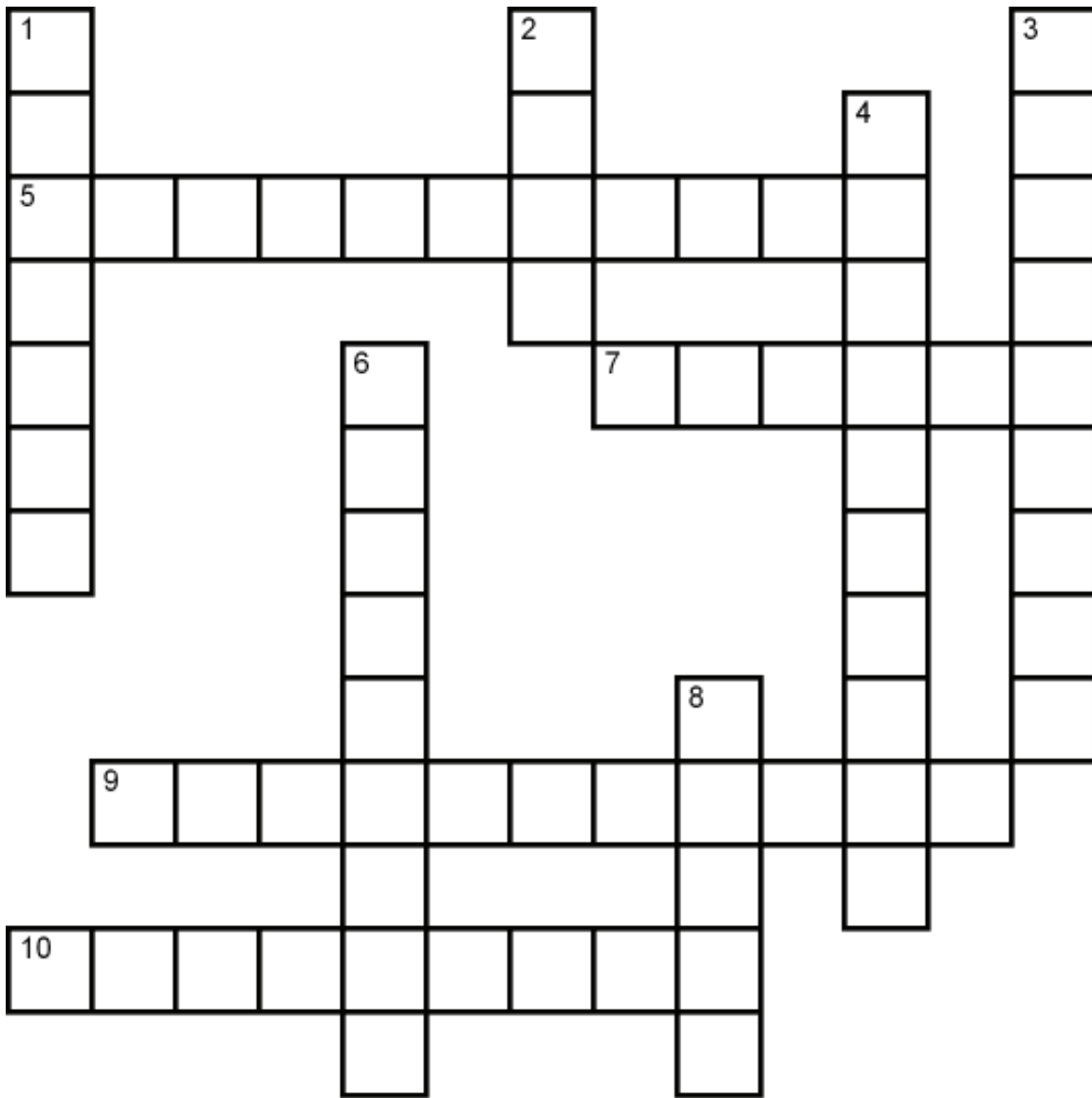
- 3. Another name for a lawyer
- 6. Keeps the files organized for the court
- 8. Room where trial is held
- 9. A symbol often found in the courtroom;
Represents freedom, justice, and truth

Down

- 1. Tells what he or she saw or heard
- 2. Seat on which the judge sits
- 4. A pledge to tell the truth in court
- 5. The place where the jury sits
- 7. Ensures court procedures are properly followed.

Courtroom Crossword 2

Ages 9-12



Across

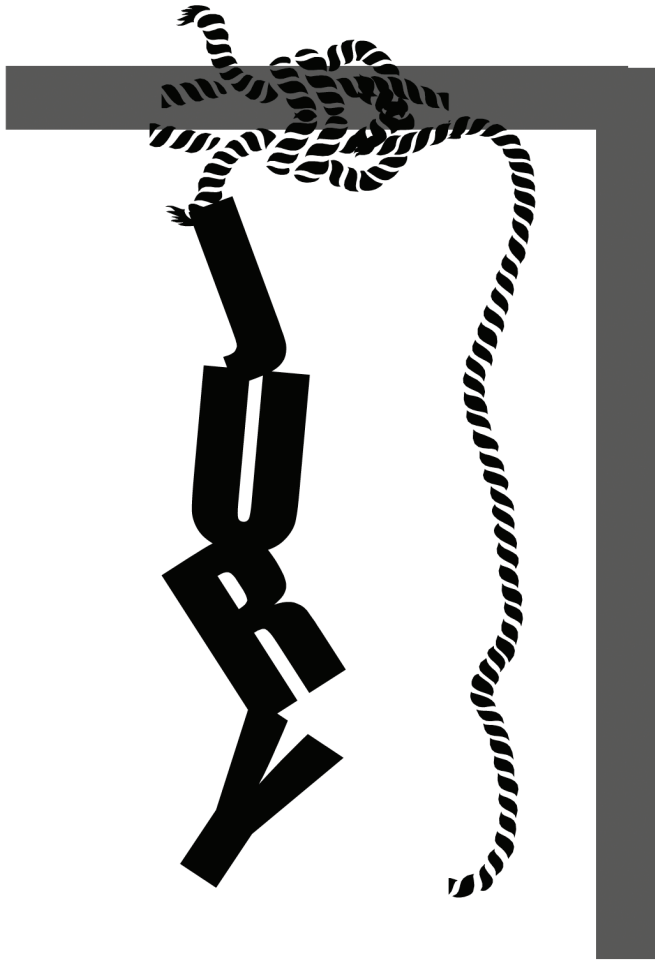
- 5. Translates what is said in court
- 7. Type of misdemeanor offenses heard in municipal court
- 9. Type of case heard in municipal court
- 10. Law passed by city council

Down

- 1. Keeps order and safety in the court
- 2. Decides who wins the case in a trial
- 3. Type of court that hears traffic cases
- 4. Lawyer for the government
- 6. Person accused of breaking the law
- 8. Judge sometimes taps this to help keep order

Law Teasers

Try and guess the word or phrase that the picture describes!



1.

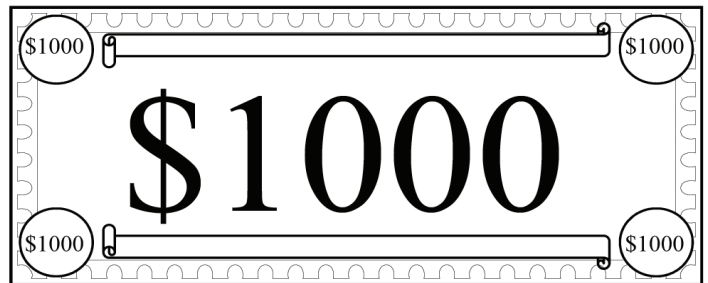
JEOPARDY

JEOPARDY

2.

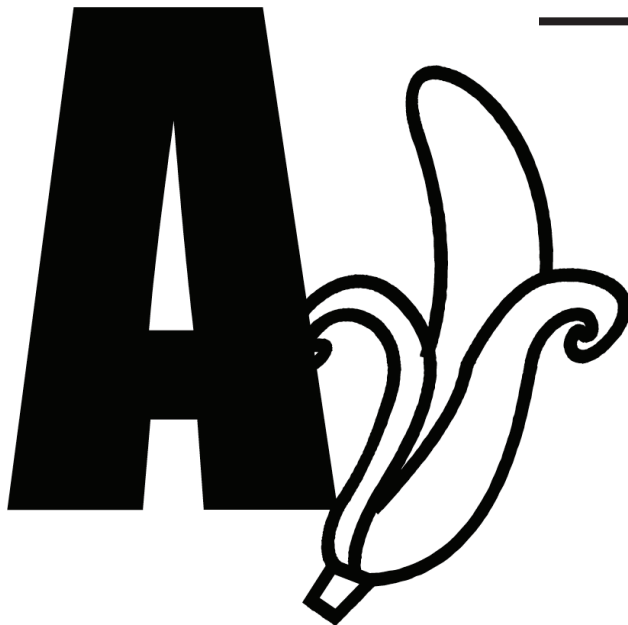


3.



JURY

4.



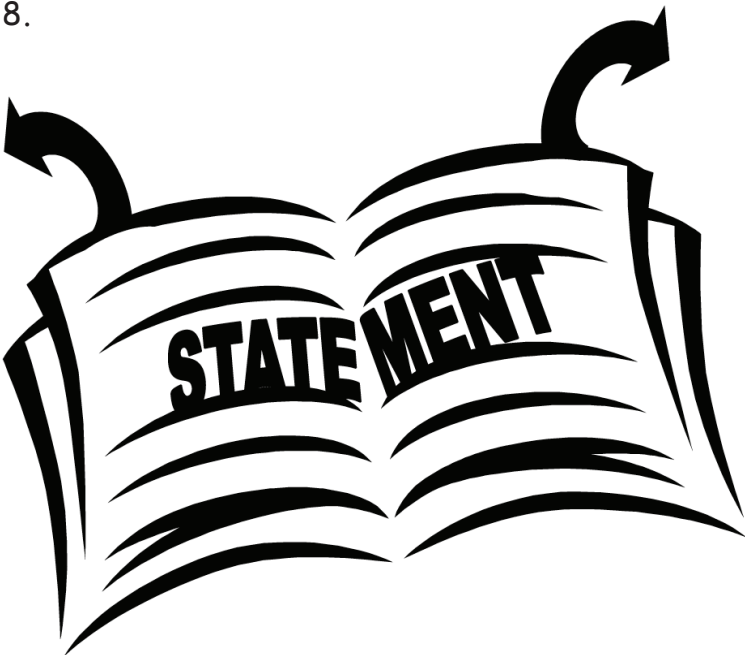
5.



7.



8.



9.



OFFICER DUTY

10.

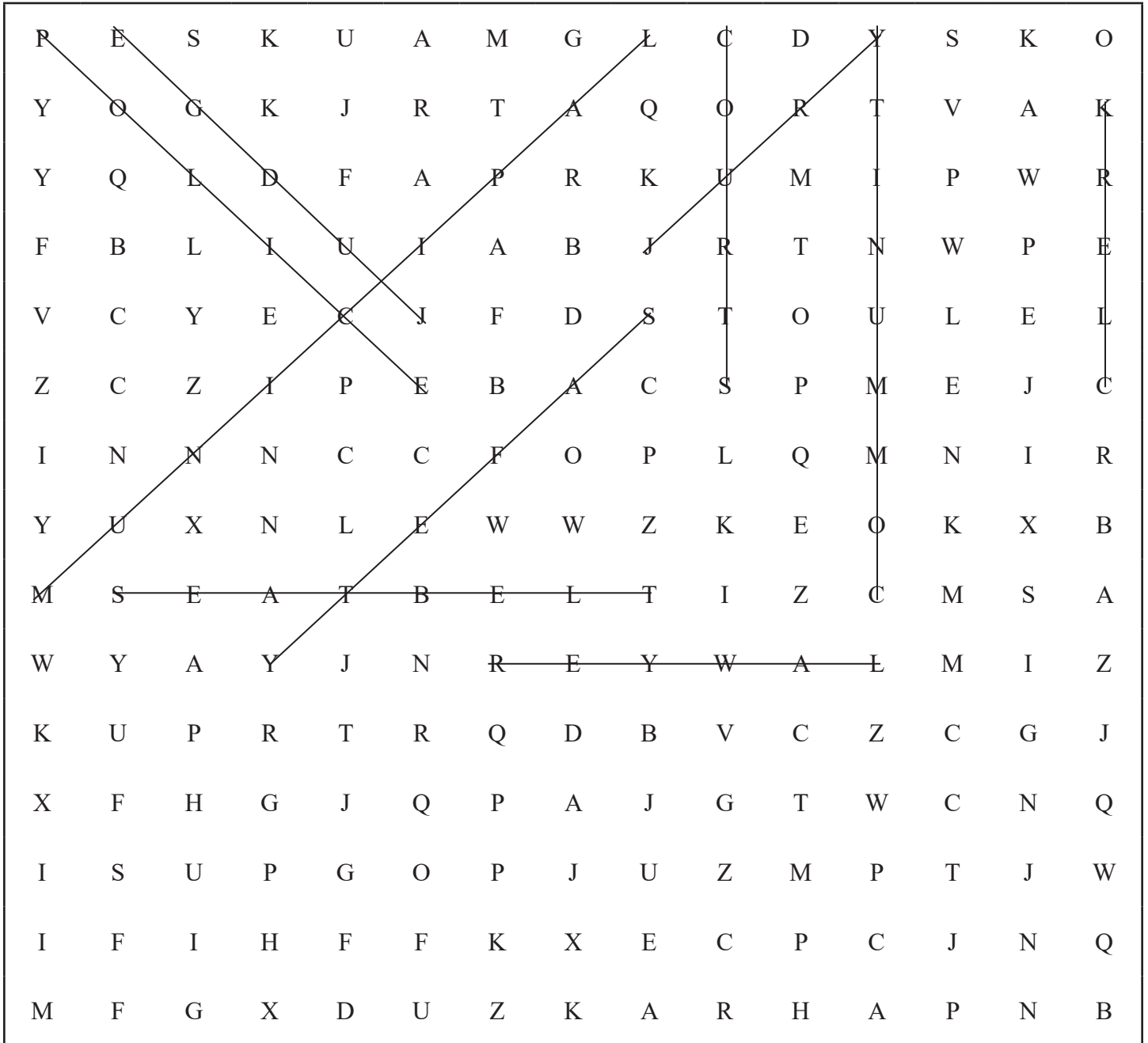


11.

Connect the Dots



Safety Word Search



Traffic Safety Word Jumble

Bike Helmet
 Seat Belt
 Booster Seat
 Crosswalk
 Sidewalk

I'm safe.

MUNICIPAL TRAFFIC SAFETY INITIATIVES AWARDS



Save a Life™
Texas Department of Transportation



Driving on the Right Side of the Road



Prepared and distributed by
Texas Municipal Courts Education Center
2210 Hancock Drive
Austin, Texas 78756
Telephone: 512.320.8274 or 800.252.3718
www.tmcec.com