

GET A GRIP ON COURT VOCABULARY

Learning Objectives: Students will

1. Recognize basic vocabulary regarding municipal courts.
2. Work in groups collaborated to learn court vocabulary.


TEKS: 6th– 6.21 A&D, 7th-7.22A&B, 8th– 8:30A-C, Government-Govt. 20A&B

Materials Needed: Handout of steering wheel

Vocabulary: See Attachment 1

Teaching Strategy:

1. Explain to students that they will be participating in a lesson on basic courtroom vocabulary.
2. Give students the list of the vocabulary words on Attachment 1.
3. Give each student the steering wheel handout/diagram (Attachment 2).
3. Divide the class into groups of four to six.
4. Explain to the students how to properly fill in each wheel.
 - A. Show students a transparency of the blank wheel graphic (Attachment 2).
 - B. Student groups should organize themselves into circles.
 - C. Explain to students that each will receive a steering wheel with a vocabulary word.
 - D. Student should look up the words in their books or a dictionary and write the definition in the part of the wheel that says “definition.”
 - E. Then students will pass their wheels to the student to their left.
 - F. Student will now look at the definition of the word that has been handed to them and use that word in a meaningful sentence. That student will put that sentence in the part of the wheel marked “Use in a sentence.” Stress to the students that the sentence must convey the contextual meaning of the vocabulary word.
 - G. Then students will pass the wheel to the student to their left.
 - H. This student will draw a picture that represents that word in the section of the wheel marked “draw a picture.” This picture does not need to be an actual representation but can also be an icon for this word.
 - I. The students then pass the wheel to the student to their left.

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- J. This student will now look at the word, the definition, the picture or icon of the word, and will act the word out, such as using sign language (ASL). An example of this would be the word “crime” represented by the forearms crossed in front of the student in the shape of an “X.” Be on the lookout for inappropriate gestures. Students should draw or write a description of the acted out word in the part of the wheel marked “act it out.”
 - K. Each student in the group should now teach his or her group the signal for the word. The group should be ready to share its wheel with the entire class.
 - L. Student groups will now present their wheels to the class, with the definition, the word used in a meaningful sentence, the pictorial representation of the word, and the sign language that represents the word.
5. The teacher should check each definition and sentence for accuracy as groups complete them (see “Legal Terms,” Attachment 1).

As a class, go over any definitions with which groups had difficulties and award small prizes (such as peppermints) to the group that has the most creative sign language for their terms.

NOTE: The teacher could use one wheel each day as an anticipatory set for the next day’s presentation of words/terms.



LEGAL TERMS

Acquittal

Affidavit

Bailiff

Bench trial

Burden of proof

Charge to the jury

City ordinance

Class C misdemeanor

Closing arguments

Contempt of court:

Counsel

Court clerk

Crime

Criminal case

Cross-examination

Defendant

Defense attorney

Direct examination

Evidence

Felony

Judge

Judicial branch

Juror

Misdemeanor

Motion

Municipal courts

Not guilty

Objection

Opening statement

Overrule

Perjury

Prosecutor

Reasonable doubt

Rebuttal

Subpoena

Sustain

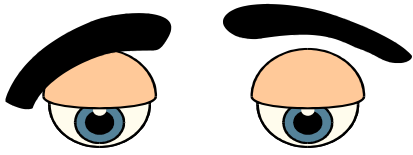
Summons

Testimony

Verdict

Voir dire

Witness



LEGAL TERMS Words Defined

Acquittal—A court decision of not guilty

Affidavit—A written statement made by a witness that is sworn to be true

Bailiff—The court official who maintains order in the courtroom

Bench trial—A trial conducted by a judge only; no jury

Burden of proof—The requirement to prove a disputed fact in court

Charge to the jury—Instructions to the jury by the judge

City ordinance—A law passed by a city or county government that may be prosecuted as a crime

Class C misdemeanor—A crime punishable by fine only

Closing arguments—An attorney's last remarks to the jury, a summary of his or her case that calls the jury's attention to important testimony

Contempt of court—Willful disregard for orders made by the judge

Counsel—The legal representative of another; an attorney

Court clerk—Manages the court and handles paperwork

Crime—An act which the legislature has made unlawful by passing a statute declaring all future such acts to be illegal

Criminal case—A case in which someone is charged in court with having violated a criminal statute

Cross-examination—The questioning of a witness by the attorney representing the opposing side

Defendant—The person being charged with a crime in court

Defense attorney—The attorney representing the defendant

Direct examination—The questioning of a witness by the attorney who called him or her to testify

Evidence—Proof presented in court through witness testimony or exhibits

Felony—A crime for which a person can be sent to a state or federal prison; typically punishable by more than one year in prison

Judge—The person who decides questions of law, rules on objections, and instructs a jury at the close of a case

Judicial branch—The governmental branch that interprets law and resolves disputes

Juror—A citizen who serves on a jury which decides the outcome of a court case

Misdemeanor—A crime punishable by fine and/or up to one year in jail

Motion—Application in court made by a lawyer to obtain a rule in favor of his or her client

Municipal courts—Courts created by the Texas Legislature in each incorporated city of the State that hear violations of city ordinances and Class C misdemeanors that occur within the city limits

Not guilty—The determination in a criminal case for the defendant; not enough proof to find the defendant committed the crime

Objection—When an attorney for one side feels the other attorney has violated a rule of evidence

Opening statement—A statement made by both sides at the beginning of the trial, which gives a brief introduction of what each side intends to prove

Overrule—When the judge disagrees with an objection made by one of the attorneys in court

Perjury—Knowingly telling a lie in court after having sworn to tell the truth

Prosecutor—A lawyer who handles the criminal case on behalf of the State or city

Reasonable doubt—The degree of proof required for a determination of guilt in a criminal trial

Rebuttal—An additional argument given by the prosecution after the defense has presented its closing argument

Subpoena—A court order to appear as a witness in a trial

Sustain—When the judge agrees with an objection that is made by one of the attorneys

Summons—An order to serve as a potential juror in court

Testimony—Evidence presented under oath by witnesses at a trial

Verdict—The decision made by a judge or jury as to the outcome of a trial

Voir dire—The process of selecting a jury; from a French phrase meaning “to see and to say”

Witness—A person who testifies in court

