

3-5 Grade Classroom Guide

Session One: Classroom Lesson Outline

The Classroom Lesson is interactive - discussion and student participation is highly encouraged.

Topic One: Intro

- I am a lawyer and I'm here to teach you about the practice of law and being a lawyer.
- Do you know what a lawyer does? Do you know any lawyers? Who do you know that is a lawyer? Do you know what kind of law he/she practices?
- What famous lawyers can you name: Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Kardashian, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Barack and Michelle Obama, Susan Sotomayor, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Amal Clooney, Thurgood Marshall, Andrew Yang.

Topic Two: Lawyers are Advocates

- The central task of any lawyer's job is to advocate.
- What does it mean to be an advocate? To argue for or against something? Attorneys try to advocate on behalf of someone and try and persuade others to side with them. For example, trying to persuade a jury that someone isn't guilty of a crime or should not have jail time.
- Do you have any examples of when you tried to advocate for or against someone, or tried to persuade someone to side with you? To stay out later? To buy a certain video game? To watch a certain movie? To pick what to eat for dinner?



COLORADO WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION P.O. Box 1918, Denver, CO 80201
www.cwba.org (303) 831-1040 execdir@cwba.org

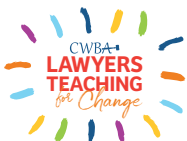
© Colorado Women's Bar Association 2022

Topic Three: What is the Law

- What are laws? Walk through a discussion of what laws are. A law is a rule that the whole community needs to follow. There are different types of laws, like contracts, torts, constitutional law, etc.
 - Examples can be formal laws - such as wearing your seatbelt, as well as informal rules - such as you have to go to sleep by 9.
- What happens if you break the law?
 - Examples can include, get fined or go to jail, or get grounded or no electronics.

Topic Four: Types of Lawyers and What do Lawyers Do

- Types of Lawyers:
 - Transactional: Draft/review contracts (e.g. cell phone agreement)
 - Criminal: Prosecute or defend people charged with crimes (e.g. criminal charges due to fighting)
 - Civil: Prosecute or defend civil cases - which is usually someone saying that someone else owes them money. (e.g. auto accident)
 - Family: Handle divorces and parenting time.
 - Immigration: Work related to people who come to the U.S. to work or live, but aren't U.S. Citizens.
 - There are a lot of types of lawyers - but in this class we are going to focus on criminal and civil attorneys.
- What do Lawyers Actually Do:
 - Many lawyers' days are filled with reading and writing.
 - Even if you don't think you are a good writer now, or you don't enjoy reading and writing, you might change your mind as you get older and the more you do it, the better you get at it.
 - Speaking to clients and other lawyers.
 - Just like reading and writing - even if you don't enjoy public speaking now, or don't think you are good at it, this may change as you get older and as you get more practice. Also, there are types of attorneys who don't have to speak in public often (if at all).

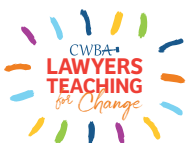


Topic Five: What Do you Need to Do to Become a Lawyer

- All personalities succeed as lawyers - shy or outgoing, if you are loud or quiet, like to talk or prefer to listen (introvert/extrovert)
 - People think all lawyers are really outgoing who like to talk and be the center of attention. (extroverted). Definitely not true!
 - What lawyers do seem to have in common is an interest in fighting for what they think is right and an interest in learning new things.
- Schooling: 4 years of college + 3 years of law school.
 - Community college can be a steppingstone to a 4 year college and law school. Some people start at community college, some start law school at 40, there are a lot of different paths to becoming a lawyer.
- Grades are important, but you can be a lawyer even if you aren't the best student.
- In college you choose a specific subject to study, such as Psychology, English, or Math, which is called a major. For example, if you want to be a zookeeper, your major would be zoology. To be a lawyer, the subject you study, or your major, can be anything - you don't have to major in law. You can get a college degree in anything that interests you and still go to law school.
- In college I (the Volunteer Lawyer) majored in _____. What did your teacher major in? What other college majors are there? Psychology, business, English, computer programming, engineering, math, history, agriculture, architecture, dance, fashion, foreign languages,

Topic Six: Personal Stories

- What kind of law does the volunteer(s) practice?
- What was the volunteer(s) path to law school?

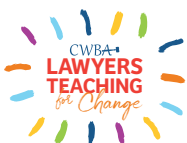


Topic Seven: Commonly Asked Questions

- Other common careers in the law are Legal Assistants and Paralegals.
 - Legal Assistants help lawyers by organizing their schedules, sending out letters, etc.
 - Paralegals draft legal documents, prepare discovery, etc.
 - In Colorado, you don't need a college degree to be a legal assistant or a paralegal, however many do have college degrees.
- How much do Lawyers make?
 - According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2020 Median Pay for Lawyers nationally was \$126,930 per year (\$61.03 per hour).
 - According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the 2020 Median Pay for paralegals and legal assistants nationally was \$52,920.00 per year (\$25.44 per hour).
- What other questions do you have?

Topic Eight: Introduction to the Legal Process

- We talked before about transactional attorneys - they draft and review contracts, for example. Although there are transactional attorneys, we are going to focus on the type of attorneys that are known for going to trial, criminal and civil attorneys.
- Parties (groups of people): Who are the parties in a civil case (Plaintiff vs. Defendant). Who are the parties in a criminal case (the government vs. the Defendant). Define Plaintiff and Defendant.
- What is each side trying to accomplish?
 - Criminal
 - Prosecutor: protecting the public and victims.
 - Defendant: protecting the rights of the defendant.
 - Civil
 - Civil cases most often involve disputes over money.
 - Plaintiff: is trying to get compensation for a breach of a contract, or an injury, for example. You may need to define "compensation", "breach of contract"
 - Defendant: doesn't think he/she owes the plaintiff anything b/c he/she didn't breach the contract or didn't cause the plaintiff's injury. Sometimes the Defendant agrees that Plaintiff is owed money, but the dispute centers on the amount - Plaintiff thinks a lot is owed and the Defendant thinks a lesser amount is owed.



- The Litigation Process
 - A case is started with the opening of a court case. Paperwork is filed with the court in which the Plaintiff essentially describes what the Defendant allegedly did wrong.
 - Next the parties exchange information and ask the other side for information.
 - Next each side presents their case to a jury or a judge. In Colorado the jury is typically 6 people. Each side gets to call witnesses and documents that they think prove their case. They also get to question (cross-examine) the other side's witnesses.

- Examples of Legal Questioning - Clips from My Cousin Vinnie:

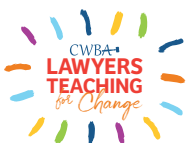
[Teachers generally have the necessary equipment to show the videos, however, we suggest you advise the teachers in advance that you are going to show video clips to the students to ensure that they have the equipment available]

 - Magic Grits: https://youtu.be/_T24IHnB7N8
 - Bushes: <https://youtu.be/5gr3jopJmVg>
 - Discussion: What do you think of the videos? What impressed you about his questioning? Would you like to do what Vinnie does? What did you think of his line of questioning? What was his theme w/ each witness (you didn't see what you thought you saw)?

- Role of a Jury - Bias Discussion

[The discussion of bias may be too advanced. Volunteers are encouraged to reduce and/or simplify this discussion as necessary depending on the individual classroom]

 - Constitution: Sixth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution where it states, "the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury." Impartial has been interpreted to mean a jury of your peers.
 - Biases: What does bias mean? Bias is a tendency to lean in a certain direction, either in favor of or against a particular thing.
 - What is types of biases that exist:
 - "Relationship" bias - if your friend accused you of stealing from them, would you want that friend's mom on the jury? Would you feel confident that person is impartial?
 - "Like me" bias - this person is a Broncos fan and I'm a Broncos fan. What if they are a Raiders fan? If someone has interests similar to yours do you think you might have a bias in favor of them?



- It's important for jurors and judges to put their biases aside and try to be fair. Attorneys get to ask the jury questions to try and determine what their biases are.
- It's important for attorneys to remember that biases exist. Should an attorney tell their client to dress up or cover tattoos so that he/she is perceived better?
- Do you think it's important for judges and juries to reflect the communities they serve? For example, if the defendant is a woman, and the jurors were all men, would that be ok? Why is it important to have peers, or jurors and judges that are like us? How does this relate to biases?

Topic Nine: Next Class - Mock Trial

- Our next class will be a mock trial.
- What is a mock trial? (Pretend trial)
- Select the mock trial script to use. (Volunteer Lawyer can select, the teacher can select, or the students can vote).
 - Two mock trial scripts are included in this packet: (1) "Cameron's Missing Lunch;" and (2) "The Problem of SpongeBob Round Pants."

Session Two: Mock Trial

- It is helpful if in advance of the mock trial the teacher assigns the students roles (for example, SpongeBob, attorney 1, attorney 2, judge, jury).
- Each student with a speaking role should have a script. Because some students have trouble projecting their voice, it can be helpful if the script is also projected to the entire classroom.
- See your chosen script for additional instructions.
- After the mock trial talk to the class about how they arrived at the verdict. What did they find was compelling, etc.

