

It's a Crime!

The Criminal Justice Process

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	200 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	4-5 class periods
Course	U.S. Government		

Essential Question

Is it important to know how the criminal justice system works? Why or why not?

Summary

Students will research the criminal justice system and participate in a mock trial as an assessment of their understanding.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch a skit played out where a crime is committed and the Miranda warning is not administered.

Explore

Students watch a short video on the Miranda warning since it is an important step in the criminal justice process.

Explain

Students research the criminal justice process using Two-Column Notes.

Extend

Students participate in a mock trial as evidence that they understand the criminal justice process.

Evaluate

Students complete an I Used to Think, but Now I Know activity as an evaluation of this lesson. Other assessments may include the two-column notes and mock trial rubric.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: United States Government (9th through 12th grade))

USG.3.7: Evaluate the importance of the rule of law on the purposes and functions of government; explain how the rule of law provides for the protection of individual liberties, including due process and equality under the law.
USG.3.11: Analyze historic and contemporary examples of landmark Supreme Court cases which have specified individual rights of due process under the Constitution, including:

Attachments

- Lesson Slides—It's a Crime.pptx
- Mock Trial Rubric - Spanish.docx
- Mock Trial Rubric.docx
- The Criminal Justice Process Two-Column Notes - Spanish.docx
- The Criminal Justice Process Two-Column Notes.docx
- new columbia v chris archer.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Two-Column Notes (attached)
- Mock Trial Rubric (attached)
- Chris Archer v. New Columbia case (attached)
- Mock trial materials
- Internet access and devices for student research

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

The day before this lesson, find two students in your class who will act in a skit at the beginning of class the next day. Tell students that they will participate in a skit. Explain the skit to your actors. One actor will be going through your desk while your back is turned and take something. The second actor will rush in and say, "I am the police officer on duty for this school. I saw what you did, and I am taking you to jail immediately. You are a thief!" The actors are allowed to ham it up a little.

After the suspect is "hauled out of the class," signaling the end of the skit, display **slide 3** from the attached **Lesson Slides**. Ask for a volunteer witness to explain what just happened. Start a conversation with the class about what might have been wrong with that scene. Ask for responses from the class. To prompt students, ask them if the thief's rights were violated by the police in any way. *See if anyone comes up with Miranda warnings or rights.*

Explore

Have students get out a sheet of scratch paper. Tell students they will be watching a short video about the Miranda warnings. They are to write down the Miranda rights in the videos that a person accused of a crime is entitled to. Then, show this short video about the Miranda rights. **Slide 4** also has a link to this video, as well as the instructions for this section.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=ICifhjRnDvg

Show **slide 5** and ask students randomly to comment on what their personal rights are if they are ever arrested (from their notes of the video). Then ask, "In the skit, what will happen to our 'theft suspect' if the Miranda warning is never stated to him or her?"

Teacher's Note: Understanding Miranda Rights

Explain to students that a crime may not be prosecuted in a court of law if the suspect has not been read his Miranda rights. Be sure to emphasize that a person must actually waive rights to speak or invoke Miranda to remain silent. It is not enough to just remain silent.

Tell students that the Miranda warning is just one small part of the criminal justice process, but it is an important step. Make sure students know that there are other due-process rights and that students will explore more of these in this lesson by understanding the steps in the criminal justice process and the rights of the accused.

Explain

Have students get out two sheets of notebook paper. You can also print the attached **Two-Column Notes** handout for each student. Students should fold each piece of notebook paper lengthwise by taking the LEFT side of notebook paper and folding it to the right, JUST to the edge of the red line on the right side. The fold makes two columns. The left column should be narrower than the right. **Slide 6** shows an example of how to set up the notes. For more explanation on Two-Column Notes, please see this document on Cornell or Two-Column Note-Taking.

Students will set up their notebook paper by copying the questions on the Two-Column Notes handout. Tell students the numbered questions are the steps to the criminal justice process. The questions with letters are important elements within those steps. Students should leave spaces between the questions and put their facts and information found in the right column.

Place students in working groups of four. Have students divide up the steps and questions in the two-column notes. Each person will research a part of the criminal justice process. All students are to use the same website so their notes will be uniform: Offices of the United States Attorneys: Steps in the Federal Criminal Process.

Allow time for groups to share notes for the other questions until all two-column notes are completed within the group. Monitor groups so they remain on-task. These notes will help students in the Extend and Evaluate sections. Depending on time, you may wish to have the class discuss their notes after they are completed.

Extend

Tell students they will APPLY what they know about the criminal justice process from their notes by participating in a mock court trial, Chris Archer v. New Columbia. It is important that the teacher read through all the case documents thoroughly and give appropriate copies of documents to participants, once roles are assigned.

Teacher's Note: Mock Trial Preparation

There are many mock trials available online. The mock trial used in this lesson, Chris Archer v. New Columbia, is from Streetlaw.org. A college student is charged with first degree murder and criminal hazing after a prospective member of his fraternity falls to her death with a blood alcohol level of .10. This trial (in the attachments) may be used for academic purposes and non-commercial use according to the website. It is important that the teacher look over the materials in the mock trial packet and hand them out to the appropriate roles as preparation for the case.

Pass out only the scenario, Statement of Stipulated Facts, to all students and read the case aloud first. Assign roles. The following roles will be needed for this trial. These roles are also displayed on **slides 7–8**.

1. Chris Archer - defendant who has plead not guilty
2. Presiding Judge
3. District Attorney (prosecution)
4. Defense Attorney
5. Pat Smith - witness for prosecution
6. Dr. Alex Richards - witness for prosecution
7. Tyler Johnson - witness for prosecution
8. Dean Jesse Johnson - witness for defense
9. Dr. Jordan Mitchell - witness for defense
10. Jury or Appellate Court Judges

In some mock trials, students first vote for the judge, trying to find the most impartial person to preside. Students will vote for the judge in this activity too. Assign other key roles randomly. You may wish to cut up role slips and have people draw for roles. All remaining students can serve as jurists. If the class is small and a jury of 12 cannot be fielded, then create a jury of a smaller number or create an appellate court of three judges.

Prior to the start of the mock trial, pass out the rubric. Have each student write their name and role on their rubric. Read aloud the expectations of the rubric. Tell students they will also self-evaluate their participation on the rubric after the mock trial is over. Allow some time for participants to read and prepare their testimony, attorneys to prepare questions, jurists to understand the criminal codes applicable to the crime, and set the class up as the courtroom. Then hold the mock trial.

Evaluate

Display **slide 9**. At the end of the trial, ask students individually to take part in an I Used to Think, but Now I Know . . . activity. Students should write about how much they understood the court process prior to this lesson and what they think about the criminal justice process now that they have finished the mock trial. Include the essential question, "Is it important to know how the criminal justice process works? Why or why not?"

Assessments for this lesson may include the Two-Column Notes, rubric/participation in mock trial, self-evaluation of participation, and/or the I Used to Think, but Now I Know summary.

Resources

- James Publishing. (2013). What are Miranda rights? Miranda rights explained [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICifhjRnDvg
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I used to think . . . but now I know. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/d9908066f654727934df7bf4f50639f2
- Cornell Notes System: Pauk, W., & Owens, R. J. Q. (2013). How to study in college (11th ed., pp. 262-267). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Publishing.
- StreetLaw Inc. (n.d.). Chris Archer v. The State of New Columbia. Criminal Mock Trials. http://streetlaw.org/en/Page/62/Criminal_mock_trials
- United States Department of Justice. (n.d.). Steps in the federal criminal process. Offices of the United States Attorneys. https://www.justice.gov/usao/justice-101/steps-federal-criminal-process