



“No Vehicles Allowed” Lesson

Objectives:

1. Students will identify the purpose and function of law.
2. Students will discover the intent of lawmakers.
3. Students will analyze practical applications of a law.
4. Students will appreciate that laws may be subject to different interpretations.

Grade Level: Grades 5-8

Time: One class period (approximately 50 minutes)

Materials:

- [Handout 1](#) (Three Branches of Government) You may email this to the teacher for the students to review before your visit.
- Robe and Gavel: wear/use for your visit. If you are visiting virtually and your space permits, visit from the bench and use a laptop with a camera so you can show the class the inside of your courtroom.

Procedures:

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Introduce yourself and tell students a little about what you do and where you went to school (especially if you're a local). Use common connections to warm up the class.

Part 2: Branches of Government and Levels of the State Court System

Before your visit, meet with the teacher to discuss the class's needs. How familiar are they with the court system, government, etc. Also discuss roles: who will be advancing the slides, how should students be called on. If possible, ask that students not put questions in the chat.

You can print out the presentation with notes for easy reference during your visit.

Part 3: “You Be the Judge” Activity

Have the teacher select one student for each of the scenarios contained in the presentation. For each scenario, make sure that all students understand what the law says.

Part 4: Discussion

Ask the students whether or not the law creates more situations for problems and exceptions than no law at all. Discuss whether laws should be written in great detail or if laws should be flexible to adapt to changing situations? Can they be both?

Explain to students how judges review laws like this and how they try to determine legislative intent. Share with students the difficulties inherent in this duty.

Extra Time? Have students discuss alternatives or ways to rewrite this law.