

Lesson Plan: WHICH COURT SHOULD HEAR THE CASE?

ACTIVITY ONE:

- Distribute handouts: American Court Systems Flow Chart, American Court System, and American Courts System Scavenger Hunt.
- Assign Handouts to students the night before the lesson. Students are to find answers to questions on Scavenger Hunt to familiarize themselves with the distinctions between the court systems.

ACTIVITY TWO:

- Go over homework assignment with students. Discuss distinctions and differences between state and federal court.

ACTIVITY THREE:

- Introduce "Where Might a Case Be Heard" chart as an overhead. (You may also give a copy to each student to fill in during discussion.) Clarify and give examples as you fill in chart.

ACTIVITY FOUR:

- Distribute Important Facts/Important Questions handouts to students and discuss questions that the litigant must decide.
- Distribute "Hypotheticals" to students. In pairs or small groups students use charts and Facts/Questions sheets to decide which court should hear each example.
- Debrief decisions as a whole class.

ACTIVITY FIVE:

- Distribute Case Studies. Two are enclosed but you can use additional relevant cases. (Web sites where some may be downloaded are enclosed.)
- As a whole class, read one case study and determine where the case can be heard.
- Break into groups of four or five and distribute remaining case studies to groups. Students should discuss and determine jurisdiction using the same procedure and pertinent handouts.
- A spokesperson from each group shares decisions and arguments. Teacher describes the actual case result.

CONTINUING ASSIGNMENT:

- Students find and research a pending or possible court case in newspaper or on Internet news service. Using steps learned, they should determine where the case should be heard and justify their decision. They then may:
 1. Present to class as a persuasive or informational speech.
 2. Write a position paper.
 3. Informally share decision in class the following day.