

Title: Jury Interview, Brian Donlon, Montgomery County Public Schools

Grade Level: 9-12

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Content Area/ Subject: Law/ Government

This lesson explores the right to trial by jury, the process of a trial by jury and the experience of sitting on a jury.

Objective:

To understand the reasoning behind the right to trial by jury as well as to familiarize students with the procedures of the jury.

Materials Needed/ Resources for Teacher Preparation

Copies of Jury Interview Assignment Sheet and video of *Twelve Angry Men*.

Student Preparation

Prior to the first class period students should have viewed the film *Twelve Angry Men* and completed all tasks on the attached Jury Interview Assignment Sheet.

Lesson Development

Review/ Motivation

- Why did the framers include Trial by Jury in the Bill of Rights?
- How would the United States be different if this right was not included?

Activities

Each student will briefly, in 2 to 3 minutes, present their Jury Interview to the entire class. This process may take 2-3 class periods. These brief presentations will allow an overview of the many types of cases that courts hear. Students will also hear a variety of concrete examples of the process by which juries deliberate and render verdicts.

Closing/Summary

Does the Jury System in the United States work? The teacher may allow discussion within the amount of time needed and available.

Thoughtful Application

Track the news for local trials and report for extra credit.

Jury Interview Assignment

Each student is to locate a person who has previously sat on a jury in either a criminal or civil trial. Students are to interview this person about their experience on that jury trial. Students should ascertain the following:

1. What kind of case was it?
2. What were the facts of the case?
3. How did jury deliberations progress?
4. What did the juror think or feel about the other jurors and their opinions?
5. What did the juror think and/or feel about the process?
6. What conclusions did you, the student, come to because of the interview?

Students will use the information from their interview to compare this juror's experience with the film *Twelve Angry Men*. This will be done in essay form. Essays should be set up in the following manner:

Essay

First Paragraph - Provide a description of your juror's experience using the information you collected above.

Second Paragraph - Compare/contrast your juror's experience with the film *Twelve Angry Men*.

Third Paragraph - How would you respond if you were picked to be on a jury? What role would you see for yourself in this situation?

Fourth Paragraph - What changes do you think could be made to improve the jury system in the United States?

Grading

Complete-20%

Grammar-20%

Style-20%

Continuity (does it tie together?)-20%

Critical Thought-20%

All essays must be between 2-3 pages.

All essays must be typed.

Be prepared to share your essay in class.