

# THE CANADIAN COURTS

## Learning Objectives

- To introduce students to key roles in and the physical arrangement of a criminal courtroom.
- To build students' familiarity with some traditions of the courts.
- To increase students' understanding of the structure of the Canadian and Ontario court systems.

## Teaching and Learning Strategies

### ACTIVITY 1 - BUILD A COURTROOM

#### Materials

- Copies of Criminal Courtroom Diagram
- Copies of "Who Am I?" Role Cards

1. In preparation, cut out the "Who am I?" role cards, separating them from the descriptions.
2. Distribute the courtroom diagram handout for quiet reading for 5 minutes, then quiz students about the roles.
3. Prepare students to build a courtroom in the classroom. Explain that the blackboard and your desk will be the judge's podium.
4. Hand out the role cards to the students. Read the descriptions aloud and have them guess which role you are describing. When they answer correctly, have them move to their correct position in the "courtroom." This can be modified for smaller groups by using only the first eight role cards.

# IN BRIEF

TEACHER RESOURCE

## ACTIVITY 2 - A COAT OF ARMS FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

### Materials

- Copies of the handout, *Traditions of the Courts* (one per student)
- Copies of the handout, *Coat of Arms for a New Millennium* (one per student)

1. Have students read the handout, *Traditions of the Courts* and complete the related questions.



### TRADITIONS OF THE COURTS - TEACHER'S KEY

(a) Superior Courts (b) monarch (c) federal (d) 1931 (e) Arms of Canada (f) England, Scotland, Ireland, and France (g) France (h) scales of justice (i) Justicia (j) Shield of Arms (k) they are sitting in court as judges and must act in a certain way (l) Supreme Court of Canada (m) that it might have started as a gun case or a scarf (n) Superior Court of Justice (o) oath (p) evidence (q) affidavits (r) a Bible, another holy book, or a solemn affirmation (s) bow

2. Once the class has corrected their sheets, introduce their next assignment to remake the coat of arms, using the *Coat of Arms for a New Millennium* instruction sheet.
3. The students should understand they are making a new coat of arms to represent their vision of justice for contemporary Canada. This may require different symbols, mottos, colours, and even shapes.

4. Ask students to share their work in pairs or small groups, explaining the meaning of their artistic choices to peers.
5. Turn your classroom into a gallery by posting their work around the room. Divide the class in half, so that one group will “tour” the gallery first, while the other half explains their work. Switch roles and repeat with the other half of the class.

## Extension

- A visit to a local courthouse is an engaging activity for students, and in most cases, court proceedings are open to the public. To arrange a courtroom visit through OJEN, go to [www.ojen.ca](http://www.ojen.ca) and click on “Courtroom Visits” or go directly to <http://www.ojen.ca/courthouses>.

## ACTIVITY 3 - STRUCTURE OF THE COURTS

### Materials

- Copies of *Structure of the Courts in Canada* (one per student)

1. Have students read the handout, *Structure of the Courts in Canada*, and complete the related questions.



### STRUCTURE OF THE COURTS IN CANADA - TEACHER'S KEY

(1) Supreme Court of Canada (2) Court of Appeal for Ontario (3) Federal Court (4) Ontario Court of Justice (5) Justices of the Peace (6) Superior Court of Justice (7) Ontario Court of Justice (8) Federal Court of Appeal (9) Ontario Court of Justice (10) Masters

## ACTIVITY 1 - CRIMINAL COURTROOM DIAGRAM



**Judge:** I was appointed by the government to hear evidence in court and make decisions about the outcome of legal cases. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Defence Counsel:** I protect my client's rights to a fair trial and draw the court's attention to any flaws or weaknesses in the other side's case. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Accused Person:** I am the person who is alleged to have committed a criminal offence, and who has been charged with committing it. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Crown Attorney:** I act on behalf of the government to prosecute criminal cases. I must bring all credible evidence before the court to try to prove that the accused is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Court Clerk:** I assist the judge with keeping the courtroom running smoothly. I swear in witnesses, mark exhibits, and open and close the court. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Arresting Officer:** I am the police officer who investigates the crime, and then arrests and charges the accused, which starts the criminal prosecution process. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Duty Counsel:** I am paid by Legal Aid Ontario to help an accused who cannot afford counsel. I can give legal advice and basic assistance with the court process. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Court Artist:** I document what happens at the trial through drawings. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Court Interpreter:** I speak at least two languages and am hired by the government to ensure that the accused person and/or witnesses can give and hear evidence made during the hearing. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Court Reporter:** I keep a written record of everything that is said in the courtroom. What I produce during the course of a trial is essential for the appeal process. Who am I, and where do I sit?

**Court Services Officer:** I assist the judge by keeping order in the courtroom. I understand security protocol for the courthouse and make sure that people inside the courtroom are safe. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Aboriginal Court Worker:** I support Aboriginal clients navigating the criminal justice system by explaining their legal rights and obligations; assisting them with securing legal counsel; finding interpreters if they are needed; assisting with pre-sentence reports, bail hearings, and referrals; and attending court. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Justice of the Peace:** I am a judicial officer who deals with most matters in a criminal case prior to trial. I preside over bail hearings where I decide whether an accused person should be kept in jail until trial. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Surety:** I ensure that an accused person abides by the conditions of release and attends court as required until the case is over. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Witness:** I have knowledge about the accused or the event in question, and I am brought into the courtroom to give evidence. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Jury Member:** I am a citizen chosen from the community who is sworn to hear evidence and witness testimony at trial in order to reach a decision on a case. In criminal matters, I am not responsible for making a decision about sentencing if the accused person is found guilty. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Probation Officer:** I prepare reports assessing offenders' suitability for rehabilitative interventions or treatment programs. I also enforce orders that arise from the reports.

**Victim/Witness Assistance:** I support victims who are navigating the court process. Who am I and where do I sit?

**Press:** I document and publish stories about what happens at a trial for the public.



ROLE	"WHO AM I?" DESCRIPTION
Judge	I was appointed by the government to hear evidence in court and make decisions about the outcome of legal cases. Who am I and where do I sit?
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Crown Attorney	I act on behalf of the government to prosecute criminal cases. I must bring all credible evidence before the court to try to prove that the accused is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Who am I and where do I sit?
Court Clerk	I make sure the trial runs smoothly by assisting the judge. For example, before a witness testifies, I swear them in. Who am I and where do I sit?
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