

OJEN Courtrooms & Classrooms

Lesson Plan: preparing for your courtroom visit

Depending on the grade and experience of your students, choose appropriate activities from the list below.

1. Identifying the Law in Action

Have students consider a recent event or issue that was discussed in the classroom.

- ✓ What are the details of the event or issue?
- ✓ What are the relevant areas of the law?
- ✓ What are the legal issues it concerns?

2. A Look at the Law

Divide the class into small groups and distribute a newspaper to each group. Ask students to skim through the paper and circle all the items that are related to the law. As a class, discuss some of the items students found, and which type(s) of law they involve.

- ✓ What are some of the different types of law you found?
- ✓ What are other types of law?
- ✓ Were you surprised by how many events are influenced by the law?

Draw the students' attention to items they may have missed:

- The Front section is a good place to identify criminal, international, environmental, and commercial law.
- In the Sports section: sports teams and athletes are dependent on contract law, employment/labour law (e.g. the NHL players association). Also look for possible criminal issues, e.g. doping cases.
- Entertainment or celebrity news: most media productions rely on commercial law, intellectual property law, and employment law. Consider that movie ratings are defined by law (regulatory law). Celebrity news is a good place to find family law, contract law, and criminal law.
- The Classified section: job listings (employment), for sale (commercial).
- Business section – commercial and employment, environmental, international.
- Real estate or "Homes" section – condo reviews or real estate listings are regulated by real estate law and contracts.
- Advertisements – commercial law, Intellectual property, regulatory.

3. Introduction to the Courts

Review *Handout: The Jurisdiction of Ontario Courts** and *Handout: Structure of the Courts in Canada** with students.

- ✓ Which type of court will you be visiting?
- ✓ Is it a provincial or federal court?
- ✓ What kind of cases does this court have jurisdiction over?
- ✓ What type of cases/hearings are you likely to see during your visit?

Select 3-4 of the legal cases identified in the newspaper activity and have students identify which court in Canada would handle the case.

4. Roles and Traditions of the Justice System

Review *Handout: Roles in the Justice System** and *Handout: Traditions of the Courts** with students.

- ✓ What justice sector roles work in the courthouse you are visiting?
- ✓ What do the different roles do?
- ✓ Who are you most likely to see in action during your visit?
- ✓ What are some of the traditions of the courts in Canada?
- ✓ Where do the traditions come from and what purpose do they serve?
- ✓ What court traditions can you expect to see during your visit?

5. Courtroom Etiquette

Review *Handout: Etiquette in the Courtroom** with students.

- ✓ What are some things you are not permitted to do in a courtroom or courthouse?
- ✓ Why do we have rules for courtroom behaviour?
- ✓ Who do you think enforces the rules?
- ✓ What are the consequences of breaking the rules?

6. Courtroom Layout

Familiarize students with the layout of the courtroom they will be visiting –draw it on the board or move the classroom furniture to represent a courtroom.

- ✓ Why is each role positioned where it is? (Consider factors such as access, safety, closeness to jury/judge, good visibility, etc.)

7. Question Preparation

Ask students to prepare at least one question to ask a judge or lawyer during their visit to the courtroom.

* Available in the resources section of the OJEN website at www.ojen.ca