

## Introduction:

Have you ever wondered what happens in court? This program combines live action and animation to teach kids about the justice system. It demonstrates the activities of the judge, the jury, lawyers, witnesses and the court procedure through a mock trial. It further teaches students questions such as: What is a lawyer? What does a bailiff do? Are kids witnesses?

## Learning Objectives:

After reviewing this program, students will understand how societal disputes result in a trial, the role of lawyers, judges, bailiffs, the jury and witnesses. If a student is going to be a witness in court, this program will clarify their role at trial. After viewing the program, students will have a better understanding of the role of the court system in society and the importance of trials.

## Suggested Teaching Strategies:

Ask students what they know about the court process. Discuss television shows that involve lawyers or the police that students may have watched, to get an idea of their level of awareness.

If a courthouse is near your school, schedule a field trip. Most courthouses have a judge who oversees “juvenile” cases, (which involve defendants under the age of 17), or child abuse and neglect cases. These judges are especially interested in educating children. Ask them to arrange a tour of their courtroom and chambers.

Perform a mock trial in your classroom, assigning students to the role of lawyer, judge, jury etc. The topic of the mock trial will depend upon the age level of the students.

## Suggested Topics Include:

### Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Example: Did someone break into the house? What is the evidence of this? Witnesses include the three bears and Goldilocks herself.

### Romeo and Juliet

Example: Two young people found dead. What happened? Witnesses include the parents, the friar, the prince, friends etc.

### A story from the headlines can be used for older students

Example: The O.J. trial, the Kennedy assassination. The evidence is well documented in these cases and can be assembled by the students by referencing books or news articles.

### Presenting the Program:

To prepare a lesson plan for the presentation of the program, review the suggested outline below:

#### 1) Before Students View the Program:

Collect as many books or news articles as possible to generate class interest in the court system. News articles about trials or the court system are in the newspapers each day. Have the students keep notes of current trials or legal disputes in the television news.

#### 2) Students View the First Half of the Program:

Ask the students to take notes of key concepts and terms. View the first half of the program. Ask the students questions about the topics presented. Review the terms presented (see Concepts and Terms).

#### 3) Students View the Second Half of the Program:

View the mock trial. Illicit discussion of what the students have seen and heard. Ask the students if they understood the key concepts and terms (see Concepts and Terms).

#### 4) Post Activities and Discussion:

Discussion questions for this program may be used to stimulate further interest, reinforce concepts and evaluate student comprehension.

## Questions for Discussion and Further Study:

What is a Lawyer?

- In a trial, whom would a lawyer represent?
- What does a lawyer do in the courtroom and outside the courtroom?

What is a Judge?

- Name some of the responsibilities the judge has in the courtroom.

What is a Bailiff?

What does the Bailiff do in the courtroom?

What is the jury’s role?

How many members of the jury?

What is the difference between a civil trial and a criminal trial?

What does it mean to be “sworn in?”

What are you promising to do?

What are the kinds of disputes that can result in a trial?

What is the most important part of being a witness?

Name some of the things that a witness does in a trial.

If the witness doesn’t understand a question, what should they do?

If the witness doesn’t know the answer to a question, what should they say?

Why are courts useful in society?

## Concepts and Terms:

Courthouse  
Courtroom

Trial  
Jury

Judge  
Lawyer

Attorney  
Bailiff

Witness  
Oath

Gavel  
Guilty/Not Guilty

Jury Box  
Testimony

Court Reporter  
Verdict

Hung Jury  
Vote

Deliberation  
Truth

Swearing In  
Defense

Prosecution  
Divorce

Criminal  
Civil

Lie  
Law

Presumption  
Innocent

Evidence  
Exhibit

Defendant  
Plaintiff

# KIDS GO TO COURT



**K4037DVD**

**Teacher/Parent Guide**

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