



Civil Rights Lawyer: Defending Civil Rights

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like a civil rights lawyer and create an argument to defend a client who believes his or her civil rights violated.

Activity

- Teacher note: This activity can be completed across two days. Complete Steps 1-2 on one day and Steps 3-4 on another day.

Step 1: Background Information on Civil Rights Lawyers (10-15 minutes)

- Show [Video: The Rise of the Civil Rights Movement](#).
- As a class, discuss the definition of “civil rights” and provide examples of civil rights that Americans have. Civil rights are the basic rights that people have to be free from unequal treatment. The government is required to protect these rights for every citizen.
- Ask students how the government protects these rights. Discuss how the government protects rights. Examples include:
 - A person can’t be turned down for a job because of their race, gender, or religion.
 - A grocery store can’t refuse to sell someone food because the customer belongs to a different political party than the shop owner.
 - A school can’t refuse to educate a child because the child is in a wheelchair.
- Teacher note: It is important to explain to students that civil rights and civil liberties are both in the Constitution’s First Amendment.
 - Civil liberties include freedom of speech, religion, the press, assembly (often in the form of protests), and petition the government (ask for changes in law). These are not examples of civil rights.
 - Civil rights include protection from discrimination based on factors, like race, gender, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and disability.
- Next, discuss how civil rights first developed in the United States through the 14th Amendment.
- Give students [Handout: The 14th Amendment](#) and read through the text as a class.
- After reading, ask students the following questions:
 - The 14th amendment was the first time that state governments were specifically told to follow the guidelines of the amendment. Why do you think this was important? (It meant that both state and federal governments had to recognize that the rights of all citizens, not just white ones.)
 - According to the amendment, who is considered a citizen? (all persons born or naturalized. Explain that a naturalized citizen is one who becomes a U.S. citizen after fulfilling certain requirements)
 - What are citizens of the United States promised? (Life, liberty, property, equal protection under the law)
- Remind students that the Constitution (and amendments to it) set the basis for all laws in the United States of America.

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.



Civil Rights Lawyer: Defending Civil Rights

Step 2: Choosing a Case and Creating an Argument (30 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will imagine they are a civil rights lawyer and will select a client to represent. This means they will choose a person who believes his or her civil rights were violated, create an argument to prove that they are telling the truth, and ask for action to be taken so that their civil rights aren't violated again.
- Provide students with [Handout: Steps to Create an Argument and Public Interest Video](#) and [Handout: Sources to Use](#). As a class, read through the steps.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups. Have groups complete steps 1-4 on the handout.
- As students are working, ask the following:
 - Why is it important for civil rights lawyers to understand the Constitution?
 - What should the main argument of a lawyer in this case be?
 - Why is it important to include evidence to support their argument?
 - What would happen if someone attempted to make an argument but didn't have any evidence to support their claim?

Step 3: Creating a Public Interest Video (15+ minutes)

- Explain to students that sometimes lawyers create short videos to share the story of a client that has had their civil rights violated. The purpose of these videos is to inform the public that civil rights violations are occurring and to gather support. Many people who view viral videos about civil rights violations write to or call their congress representatives to ask for change. Making civil rights violations public can help ensure that the same thing doesn't happen to other people.
- Once these videos are made, they are typically released to news outlets and shared on social media.
- Explain to students that they will now use the argument they have written to record a video that will tell their client's story.
- Provide students with a smart phone or tablet to record their videos.
- Have students complete step 5 on the handout.

Step 4: Sharing Videos and Class Discussion (5 minutes)

- Ask for volunteers to share their videos. Have students give each other feedback about how effectively they communicated their issue.
- Have a concluding discussion about the importance of civil rights.
 - Ask students to discuss why civil rights are necessary to a society.
 - Ask students to imagine different examples of discrimination they might be familiar with.

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: The Rise of the Civil Rights Movement
- Handout: The 14th Amendment
- Handout: Steps to Create an Argument and Public Interest Video
- Handout: Sources to Use

Not Provided Online:

- Smart phone or tablet for recording

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.