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| **TEXAS CTE LESSON PLAN**  [www.txcte.org](http://www.txcte.org) | |
| **Lesson Identification and TEKS Addressed** | |
| **Career Cluster** | Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security |
| **Course Name** | Principles of LPSCS |
| **Lesson/Unit Title** | Introduction to the Levels and Functions of Criminal Courts |
| **TEKS Student Expectations** | **130.332. (c) Knowledge and Skills**  (9) The student identifies the roles of the public safety professional.  (B) The student is expected to identify the levels and functions of criminal courts. |
| **Basic Direct Teach Lesson**  (Includes Special Education Modifications/Accommodations and  one English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Strategy) | |
| **Instructional Objectives** | The students will be able to:   * Identify key terms associated with criminal courts. * Identify the levels and functions of criminal courts. |
| **Rationale** | The criminal courts play a key role in regulating society in Texas. It is important to understand the role that each court plays and its respective jurisdiction. |
| **Duration of Lesson** | 2 Hours |
| **Word Wall/Key Vocabulary**  *(ELPS c1a,c,f; c2b; c3a,b,d; c4c; c5b) PDAS II(5)* | * Concurrent Jurisdiction – Two levels of courts that have the same authority to try the same types of cases * Court of Record – Trial proceedings are recorded by a court reporter * Trial De Novo – A completely new trial * Probate – Proving that a deceased person’s will is valid, identifying and inventorying the deceased’s property, having the property appraised, paying debts and taxes, and distributing the remaining property as the will directs |
| **Materials/Specialized Equipment Needed** | * Court Case Research Handout * Computer with Internet access |
| **Anticipatory Set**  (May include pre-assessment for prior knowledge) | Do an Internet search for the following: Show the Hank Skinner Given Stay of Execution video. It reports the stay of execution issued by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for a death row inmate. Show the video to the class. Discuss the levels of courts this appeal would have gone through to make it from prosecution to a stay of execution. As a class, create a flow chart of which courts were involved in this type of case. Use the Discussion Rubric and the Individual Work Rubric for assessment. |
| **Direct Instruction \*** | I. Levels and Functions of Criminal Courts  A. City level courts  1. Municipal court   1. 1,414 judges 2. 917 cities 3. Exclusive original jurisdiction over the municipal ordinance criminal cases 4. Limited civil jurisdiction in the cases concerning dangerous dogs 5. Has magistrate functions 6. Includes the local trial court with limited jurisdiction   2. Justice of the Peace court   1. 821 judges 2. 821 courts 3. Handles civil actions of not more than $10,000 4. Handles small claims 5. Handles misdemeanors punishable by fine only 6. Has magistrate functions 7. Conducts death inquiries when a prisoner dies in custody 8. County level courts    1. Constitutional County Court       1. One court for each county (254 counties)       2. Established by the U.S. Constitution 9. Has concurrent jurisdiction with the Justice of the Peace courts and the district courts in civil cases    * 1. Has a county judge who serves as the head of the county government which includes administrative duties 10. Original jurisdiction in civil actions from $200 – $10,000 11. Handles probate matters 12. Exclusive jurisdiction over misdemeanors with fines greater than $500 or jail sentences 13. Handles juvenile matters 14. Appeals for new trials from lower courts or on the record from municipal courts of record     1. County court at law (statutory) 15. 222 courts 16. 84 counties 17. Created by legislature to alleviate the judicial role from the Constitutional County Courts 18. Jurisdiction includes all civil, criminal, original, and appellate actions prescribed by law for constitutional county courts 19. Jurisdiction over civil matters up to $100,000     1. Statutory probate courts        1. 18 courts        2. 10 counties        3. Jurisdiction limited to probate matters 20. State level courts     1. District court (trial court) 21. 444 courts 22. 444 judges 23. 347 districts containing one county and 97 districts containing more than one court 24. Original jurisdiction in civil actions 25. $200 to $500 26. Divorce 27. Title to land 28. Contested elections 29. Original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters 30. Handles juvenile matters 31. 13 district courts are designated criminal district courts; some others are directed to give preference to certain specialized areas 32. Civil 33. Juvenile 34. Family 35. Court of Appeals (intermediate appellate court) 36. 14 courts 37. 80 justices 38. Handles intermediate appeals from trial (district) courts in their respective Courts of Appeals districts 39. Court of Criminal Appeals (highest criminal appellate court) 40. One court 41. 9 judges (one presiding judge and eight other judges) 42. Elected by statewide election 43. Six-year terms 44. Final appellate jurisdiction in criminal cases 45. Located in Austin, TX 46. Supreme Court (highest civil appellate court)     1. One court     2. 9 judges (a Chief Justice and eight other justices) 47. Elected positions 48. Six-year terms 49. Must be at least 35 years of age 50. Must be a Texas citizen 51. Must be licensed to practice law or 52. Must have been a judge in a court of record and practiced law together for at least ten years 53. Final appellate jurisdiction in civil and juvenile cases 54. Located in Austin, TX   *Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students must be followed. Examples of accommodations may include, but are not limited to:*  None |
| **Guided Practice \*** | *Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students must be followed. Examples of accommodations may include, but are not limited to:*  None |
| **Independent Practice/Laboratory Experience/Differentiated Activities \*** | Court Case Research. Assign each student one of the levels of courts discussed in this lesson (*Note*: this assignment may also be a group research and presentation activity).  Have the students research the assigned court for their geographical area and answer the questions on the Court Case Research Handout (*Note*: students may need to contact the court for the specific information needed for this assignment). Use the Research Rubric for assessment.  *Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students must be followed. Examples of accommodations may include, but are not limited to:*  Create a flowchart of the different courts from lowest to highest. List the court, along with its jurisdiction and show how the system moves from the municipal to highest state courts. Use Individual Work Rubric for assessment. |
| **Lesson Closure** | None |
| **Summative/End of Lesson Assessment \*** | Introduction to the Levels and Functions of Criminal Courts Exam  Discussion Rubric  Individual Work Rubric  Research Rubric  *Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students must be followed. Examples of accommodations may include, but are not limited to:*  None |
| **References/Resources/**  **Teacher Preparation** | * Texas County at Law Courts <http://www.txcourts.gov/judicial-directory/court-jurisdiction-maps/> * Texas Courts <http://www.txcourts.gov/media/10753/court-overview.pdf> * Texas Court of Criminal Appeals <http://www.txcourts.gov/cca/> * Texas District Courts <https://www.txdirectory.com/online/dist/> * Texas Judicial Information Directory <http://www.txcourts.gov/judicial-directory/> * Texas Supreme Court <http://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/> * Do an Internet search for the following: * Hank Skinner Given Stay of Execution video * Legal encyclopedia probate |
| **Additional Required Components** | |
| **English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Strategies** |  |
| **College and Career Readiness Connection[[1]](#footnote-1)** | Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career and Technical Education  §130.292. (c) Knowledge and Skills  Principles of Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (One-Half to One Credit).  (9) The student identifies the roles and functions of court systems. The student is expected to:  (B) identify the levels and functions of criminal courts  College and Career Readiness Standards  Cross-Disciplinary Standards  I. Key Cognitive Skills  D. Academic behaviors   1. Self-monitor learning needs and seek assistance when needed. 2. Use study habits necessary to manage academic pursuits and requirements. 3. Strive for accuracy and precision. 4. Persevere to complete and master tasks. |
| **Recommended Strategies** | |
| **Reading Strategies** |  |
| **Quotes** |  |
| **Multimedia/Visual Strategy**  **Presentation Slides + One Additional Technology Connection** |  |
| **Graphic Organizers/Handout** |  |
| **Writing Strategies**  **Journal Entries + 1 Additional Writing Strategy** |  |
| **Communication**  **90 Second Speech Topics** |  |
| **Other Essential Lesson Components** | |
| **Enrichment Activity**  (e.g., homework assignment) | For enrichment, the students will compare and contrast the Texas court system with at least two other state court systems. Use the Research Rubric for assessment. |
| **Family/Community Connection** |  |
| **CTSO connection(s)** | SkillsUSA |
| **Service Learning Projects** |  |
| **Lesson Notes** |  |

1. Visit the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/collegereadiness/CRS.pdf>, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)