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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** | Law Enforcement I |
| **Lesson/Unit Title** | United States Legal Systems: The State and Federal Court Systems |
| **TEKS Student Expectations** | **130.336. (c)** **Knowledge and Skills**  (6) The student explores the U.S. legal system and the requirements for law enforcement.  (C) The student is expected to analyze the similarities, differences, and interactions between local, state, and federal court systems  (D) The student is expected to illustrate the progression of a case as it moves through local, state, and federal jurisdictions |
| **Basic Direct Teach Lesson**  (Includes Special Education Modifications/Accommodations and  one English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Strategy) | |
| **Instructional Objectives** | The student will be able to:  1. Identify the levels and their functions of a state and federal court  2. Describe the effects each level of the court system has on a case  3. Illustrate how a case moves through the court system by creating a judge’s resumes and writing a news article on an inmate’s journey to death row  4. Critique and analyze the accuracy of other student’s resumes and reports |
| **Rationale** | An officer needs to have a basic understanding of the state and federal court structures and how it is determined which courts hear which cases so they can be adequately prepared. |
| **Duration of Lesson** | 5 to 7 hours |
| **Word Wall/Key Vocabulary**  *(ELPS c1a,c,f; c2b; c3a,b,d; c4c; c5b) PDAS II(5)* | None listed |
| **Materials/Specialized Equipment Needed** | **Materials**   * Computers with Internet access * Discussion Rubric * Group Evaluation Rubric * Peer Evaluation Rubric * Research Rubric * Writing Rubric |
| **Anticipatory Set**  (May include pre-assessment for prior knowledge) | Crime and punishment |
| **Direct Instruction \*** | I. Dual Court System  A. There are separate state and federal court systems  B. Federal courts deal with matters of federal law  C. State courts deal with matters of state law  D. Whether a case enters through the federal or state court system  depends upon which law has been broken  II. Criminal Court Structure  A. Each court system basically consists of the following:  1. Higher Courts (superior)  2. Lower Courts (inferior)  B. The type of law defines the jurisdiction of each court  C. There is one court of last resort  D. There are some specialty courts  III. Four Tier State Court Systems – state court systems are structured as  follows (from highest to lowest)  A. Court of Last Resort  B. Appellate Courts  C. Courts of General Jurisdiction  D. Lower Courts  IV. Lower Courts  A. Limited in what they can do  B. Can generally hear minor cases and conduct some pretrial activities  for more important ones  C. Most organized at the town, municipal, or county level  D. Referred to as the lower courts or misdemeanor courts  E. Dispose of minor cases  F. Sentencing options are restricted  V. Courts of General Jurisdiction  A. Controlled by state law  B. Conduct preliminary activities and trials for felonies  C. Conduct appeals from lower courts (trial de novo)  D. Have general authority to conduct trial and pretrial activities in all criminal cases  E. Courts of record  F. Have “exclusive” jurisdiction to try felony cases  VI. Appellate Courts  A. There are rights of appeal as determined by law  B. An appeal is not a new trial  C. The courts review previous trials for procedural errors  D. There may be two levels of appeals courts  E. Appellate courts do not try cases  F. An appeal is based on some contention of law  G. Oftentimes more than one judge reviews a case  H. The Appellate Courts may  1. Order a new trial  2. Allow the defendant to go free  3. Uphold (sustain) the original verdict  VII. State Courts of Last Resort  A. Each State has a court of last resort  B. In most instances, this is referred to as the State Supreme Court  C. It is the highest state court  D. It reviews issues of law and facts appealed from the trial courts  E. In Texas criminal cases, it is the Court of Criminal Appeals  F. Cases appealed from this court go to the United States Supreme Court  VIII. Federal Court Structure (From highest to lowest)  A. United States  B. Supreme Court  C. United States Courts of Appeal  D. United States District Courts  IX. United States District Courts  A. Each state has at least one Federal District  B. There are ninety-four districts in the U.S.  C. These are the primary trial courts of the U.S. system  X. United States Courts of Appeal  A. These are also called the Circuit Courts because the jurisdiction covers a large geographical area  B. They are usually located in major cities  C. They review cases from lower courts  D. These cases involve constitutional issues  XI. United States Supreme Court  A. This is the highest court in the land  B. Their decisions become precedents  C. They may choose to hear or not hear most of their cases  D. It uses the writ of certiorari to get case records  E. Nine Justices (one Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices)  F. The full Court hears about one hundred cases per year  G. Four justices must vote to hear a case  H. There are majority, minority, and dissenting opinions  *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 \*** | * Have students apply for a United States Supreme Court position. They must submit a résumé that lists the imaginary judicial positions they have held. Each student will present his or her résumé to a committee of congressmen played by the other students from the class. * The résumés will include a minimum of three state judge positions and one federal judge position and list the duties they had, such as describing the kinds of cases they ruled on and the ramifications of their rulings on the next case. The more thorough and accurate the résumé, the higher the grade. To extend the lesson have the class research additional qualifications of a Supreme Court judge online. Use or have the students playing committee members use the Résumé Rubric for assessment. * Have the students play the role of an investigative newspaper reporter. They get news of a death row inmate who is scheduled to die soon but has not wavered on his claim of innocence. The students’ assignment from their newspaper company is to research the inmate’s crime and how his case progressed through the court system. With the knowledge that the United States Supreme Court will have the final say if the inmate’s execution will go forth on the day of the execution, the students will need to document how the inmate’s case progressed through the state court system first, then proceed to the Supreme Court on the day of his execution. * The students must remember that they are writing to a public that may not be educated about the court system. To extend the activity, have the students use various software programs to create the reports. Additionally, the students may work in pairs to present their reports to the class. Use the Writing Rubric for assessment. Have the students use the Peer Evaluation Rubric to assess each other and the Group Evaluation Rubric to grade each pair. Have them watch for creativity and accuracy of the progression of the case.   *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 \*** | Have students complete the State and Federal Court System open-note review quiz.  *Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for all special education students must be followed. Examples of accommodations may include, but are not limited to:*  none |
| **Lesson Closure** | none |
| **Summative/End of Lesson Assessment \*** | The State and Federal Court Systems Exam and Key  The State and Federal Court Systems Quiz and Key  *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** | Larry Bassi, The College at Brockport, State University of New York |
| **Additional Required Components** | |
| **English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) Strategies** |  |
| **College and Career Readiness Connection[[1]](#footnote-1)** |  |
| **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) |  |
| **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)