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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 court2. Describe the effects each level of the court system has on a case3. 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 row4. 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
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| **Anticipatory Set**(May include pre-assessment for prior knowledge) | Crime and punishment |
| **Direct Instruction \*** | I. Dual Court SystemA. There are separate state and federal court systemsB. Federal courts deal with matters of federal lawC. State courts deal with matters of state lawD. Whether a case enters through the federal or state court systemdepends upon which law has been brokenII. Criminal Court StructureA. 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 courtC. There is one court of last resortD. There are some specialty courtsIII. Four Tier State Court Systems – state court systems are structured asfollows (from highest to lowest)A. Court of Last ResortB. Appellate CourtsC. Courts of General JurisdictionD. Lower CourtsIV. Lower CourtsA. Limited in what they can doB. Can generally hear minor cases and conduct some pretrial activitiesfor more important onesC. Most organized at the town, municipal, or county levelD. Referred to as the lower courts or misdemeanor courtsE. Dispose of minor casesF. Sentencing options are restrictedV. Courts of General JurisdictionA. Controlled by state lawB. Conduct preliminary activities and trials for feloniesC. Conduct appeals from lower courts (trial de novo)D. Have general authority to conduct trial and pretrial activities in all criminal casesE. Courts of recordF. Have “exclusive” jurisdiction to try felony casesVI. Appellate CourtsA. There are rights of appeal as determined by lawB. An appeal is not a new trialC. The courts review previous trials for procedural errorsD. There may be two levels of appeals courtsE. Appellate courts do not try casesF. An appeal is based on some contention of lawG. Oftentimes more than one judge reviews a caseH. The Appellate Courts may1. Order a new trial2. Allow the defendant to go free3. Uphold (sustain) the original verdictVII. State Courts of Last ResortA. Each State has a court of last resortB. In most instances, this is referred to as the State Supreme CourtC. It is the highest state courtD. It reviews issues of law and facts appealed from the trial courtsE. In Texas criminal cases, it is the Court of Criminal AppealsF. Cases appealed from this court go to the United States Supreme CourtVIII. Federal Court Structure (From highest to lowest)A. United StatesB. Supreme CourtC. United States Courts of AppealD. United States District CourtsIX. United States District CourtsA. Each state has at least one Federal DistrictB. There are ninety-four districts in the U.S.C. These are the primary trial courts of the U.S. systemX. United States Courts of AppealA. These are also called the Circuit Courts because the jurisdiction covers a large geographical areaB. They are usually located in major citiesC. They review cases from lower courtsD. These cases involve constitutional issuesXI. United States Supreme CourtA. This is the highest court in the landB. Their decisions become precedentsC. They may choose to hear or not hear most of their casesD. It uses the writ of certiorari to get case recordsE. Nine Justices (one Chief Justice and eight Associate Justices)F. The full Court hears about one hundred cases per yearG. Four justices must vote to hear a caseH. 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.

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| **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 KeyThe 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)